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Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

When the eyes of HH the Amir welled with tears

THIS national operetta was unlike any other, featuring several tableaux imbued with the fragrance of history, and bearing the marks of creative minds. It colored the present and future with touches of Kuwait's past in a majestic visual spectacle that every Kuwaiti citizen is proud of.

The tradition of celebrating the National Day through the operetta began 54 years ago, and each time, it showcases the creative touches of Kuwaitis who love their homeland, up to the point that they are mixed with all its joys and sorrows.

For years, since Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad started overseeing this operetta, a maternal touch has been evident, especially among the children participating in the shows. These youngsters are the ones recording patriotic stories in the book of the nation with all their innocence, for they represent the future generation of Kuwait. Their parents already recorded the meanings of patriotism and loyalty in previous operetta performances.

Yesterday, Kuwait was present in every breath of the children and teenagers of both genders, who expressed their pride in their Amir and their political leadership. This was manifested in the shows titled, "The Savior" and "The Lover's Heart."

Therefore, when at the end of the ceremony, participants in the show wanted to greet the father of all, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, they surged from every direction to surround him closely and lovingly.

At the first moment, the guards tried to stop them. However, His Highness the Amir was quick to allow them to come closer. It was a patriotic scene added to the tableaux featured in the operetta. It was a scene that brought tears to the eyes.

Yes, tears welled in His Highness the Amir's eyes at this profound paternal encounter.

These children represent the young generation of Kuwait and the builders of its future. HH the Amir is their guardian father who does everything he can to secure their prosperity and well-being.

In many of the songs performed by these youngsters, we glimpsed in His Highness' eyes a glimmer of joy and the immense responsibility placed upon his shoulders, and upon the shoulders of the political leadership.

No wonder then that the political leadership keeps doing the best in order to address the issues and remove the obstacles no matter how big they are. That is for Kuwait to restore its advanced pioneering status in all fields.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:
@AhmedAlJarallah
Ahmed aljarallah
ahmed@aljarallah.com



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Kuwait Amir patronizes, attends 'Deerat Al-Khair' Nat'l Operetta

— Details Page 6 —

Wanted individuals, drug users snared in road blitz

Kuwait's crackdown pays off as violations dip

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: The General Traffic Department continued its intensified campaigns in all governorates to apprehend violators of traffic regulations.

Over the past week, these campaigns resulted in the impounding of 404 vehicles, issuance of 27 traffic violation citations and detention of 44 reckless drivers.

The weekly statistics of the department revealed that traffic officers arrested 19 minors for driving without a license, 39 individuals for holding expired residency permits, and 50 individuals with outstanding arrest warrants.

The officers also dealt with 223 traffic accidents.

Meanwhile, a security source confirmed to the newspaper that traffic accidents and violations have decreased since the implementation of the new traffic law last April.

The source stressed that the stricter penalties led to a remarkable decline in the number of traffic violations and accidents.

Moreover, during the past seven days, patrol officers apprehended 25 individuals under the influence of alcohol and narcotics. These individuals were referred to the Drug Control General Department.

The weekly statistics for patrol activity in all governorates indicated the arrest of 25 drug users and 73 wanted individuals, while four vehicles wanted by the judiciary were impounded.

Patrols also responded to a high volume of incidents, including 148 traffic accidents, five pedestrian accidents and three fights, successfully dispersing and controlling the parties involved in each case.

As part of their ongoing efforts to ensure road safety, the officers issued 2,227 traffic violation citations.

The patrols affirmed their commitment to continue the security campaigns, emphasizing that the law is applied on everyone to maintain public order and road safety.

Kuwait remains trusted partner in Sri Lanka's development journey

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Sri Lankan Ambassador to Kuwait Lakshitha Ratnayake expressed his appreciation for the strength and solidity of the relationship between Sri Lanka and Kuwait.

Ratnayake made the statement at the celebration of the 78th Independence Day of his country.

Minister of State for Municipal and Housing Abdullatif Al-Mashari, several officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government institutions attended the event. According to the Ambassador, Sri Lanka values the strong and enduring relations it shares with the State of Kuwait.

Continued on Page 5

Court upholds death for 5 drug smugglers

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Fahad Bu Salib, upheld the death sentence imposed on five Iranian men convicted of smuggling a substantial quantity of narcotics into the country with the intention of drug trafficking.

Earlier, the Criminal Court sentenced the five defendants to death as they were found guilty of smuggling about 175 kilograms of hashish and psychotropic substances from Iran to Kuwait by sea, using a speedboat belonging to one of the defendants. Coast Guard patrols intercepted the smuggling operation and apprehended the men as soon as they entered Kuwaiti territorial waters.

During investigations, the defendants admitted to the charges, disclosing that they departed from Iran after loading the 26-foot speedboat with various narcotics.

Continued on Page 5

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait strongly condemned the decisions and actions taken by Israeli occupation forces that impose an illegal reality in the West Bank, reinforcing settlement expansion and asserting control over occupied territories to alter the historical and demographic status quo.

In a statement on Monday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the need for the international community and the UN Security Council to oppose these measures, describing them as undermining prospects for peace and the two-state solution. (KUNA)

GENEVA: Kuwait stressed that ending the ongoing crisis in Sudan requires an immediate ceasefire and the adoption of de-escalatory measures to enable the resumption of a comprehensive political process led by the Sudanese themselves, with international support. (KUNA)

Day by Day

A HUNGRY dog fears no lion, a fact proven throughout history. Therefore, the justification for killing dogs by claiming they are rabid is invalid. The crucial question is: Why are they rabid? It is said that hunger and injustice teach many tricks that are difficult to restrain or stop. Fire does not care about those who have been burned by it.

Let us not forget that fear flows faster than tears.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



8 NBK is the banking sector's exclusive and strategic partner of the 2026 Arab Content Forum



9 ABK Group holds EOY 2025 analyst conference call



15 Zain Esports levels up Kuwait's gaming scene at The Base Festival



KUNA photo
US Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Kuwait Steven Butler speaking at a press conference held at the US Embassy on Tuesday.

Ties deep, longstanding: Butler

US welcomes Kuwait's role in Board of Peace

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Chargé d'Affaires at the American Embassy in Kuwait Steven Butler has underscored the strength of the US-Kuwait partnership, describing it as "flourishing, deep and longstanding" and a crucial pillar for regional security and stability.

Speaking at a press conference with local and international media on Tuesday, Butler highlighted the six decades of

Continued on Page 5

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Local

'Bringing together inventors, investors' event targets markets

Inventors from six GCC countries take part in Mideast Int'l Fair

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Participation in the 16th Middle East International Invention Fair supports Gulf inventors, helps open wider paths and creates links with investment opportunities, GCC Patent Office official Majed Al-Rafeeq said.

In a statement to KUNA on Tuesday, Al-Rafeeq said the GCC General Secretariat is participating this year with six inventors, noting the fair features more than 200 inventors.

This reflects its growing role as a platform that brings together diverse ideas and technologies and enables knowledge exchange among participants and innovation stakeholders, he pointed out.

He added the GCC Patent Office has allocated three awards to be presented to winners on the fair's final day, as part of the Secretariat's support for Gulf inventors and efforts to strengthen their presence in specialized scientific events.

This year's fair theme, "Bringing Investors Together with Inventors," aligns with the goal of supporting and marketing innovations by offering an environment where inventors can present projects to investors and interested parties and turn ideas into scalable opportunities, Al-Rafeeq remarked.

In a similar statement, Kuwaiti inventor Siham Abdullah Al-Otaibi highlighted the importance of her innovation, a "Medical Sterilization and Healthcare Bed," in providing advanced preventive and treatment solutions to confront viruses and bacteria.

She said the idea emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, then developed into a comprehensive tool to help prevent various bacterial threats in preventive medicine and burn treatment.

Al-Otaibi said the bed was designed as a multi-purpose solution serving several medical and cosmetic sectors, featuring flexible engineering with three modes: closed for sterilization, open for use, and foldable for storage. She expressed hope the product will help enhance the efficiency of the healthcare system.

Qatari inventor Mohsen Al-Sheikh presented his innovation, the "Mahallat



KUNA photo
The fair brings together investors, inventors.

Smart E-Commerce Platform," which enables shop owners to launch stores instantly via barcode technology without photographing products, while providing a large image inventory to facilitate digital transformation.

Al-Sheikh said the platform features a "smart early-warning system" to alert users when products are nearing expiry to protect public health and reduce waste, in addition to a dual delivery system for goods and individuals linked to a rewards system to encourage volunteer work.

Weather		
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Bubyan	17	14
Jahra	31	15
Failaka Island	21	14
Salmiyah	20	16
Almadi	25	11
Jal Aliyah	29	14
Nuwaib	26	15
Wafra	30	15

In sustainability, Bahraini inventor Dr. Omaima Al-Abbas presented her innovation, a "Passive Cooling System Using Perforated Clay Bricks Reinforced with Palm Fibers," offering a solution for regulating building temperatures in hot climates by integrating locally available natural materials.

Al-Abbas said the system achieved a surface temperature reduction of nearly 20 degrees Celsius at peak summer, driven by an engineering design combining airflow, thermal mass and moisture absorption, supporting concepts of sustainable construction and circular economy.

To serve the visually impaired, Emirati inventor Aisha Al-Zarouni showcased her innovation, a "Touch-Based Electronic Text Reading Device," in the form of a smart glove equipped with a Braille cell that enables reading digital content privately without audio.

In the energy sector, Omani inventor Khaled Al-Durmeiki presented a "Smart Electrical Distribution Panel," describing it as a qualitative shift through "selective protection" technology that disconnects power only from the faulty circuit while ensuring the rest of the system remains operational.

Al-Durmeiki said the panel enhances safety standards through highly sensitive protective breakers and meets smart-city requirements via a control unit that enables remote load management and monitoring of electrical and thermal data through a smart application.

Saudi inventor Mansour Ali Al-Qarni also participated with an "Acoustic Performance Testing Device" designed to train broadcasters and content creators, analyzing a trainee's voice to determine suitability for radio and television use.

Al-Qarni said the device accurately distinguishes between an "ideal" balanced voice and a "non-ideal" voice affected by performance distortion or reliance on nasal resonance, helping professionals refine vocal skills.

IIFME source of hope, optimism for Kuwait

Kuwaiti innovators put country strongly on global map

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Dr. Al-Huwailah
Dr. Al-Awadhi

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFS) Dr. Amina Farhan commended the outstanding standard of the International Invention Fair in the Middle East (IIFME), stressing that it has succeeded in putting Kuwait firmly on the global map of innovation.

Al-Awadhi expressed his pride in the exceptional level of the exhibition, describing it as a "scientific icon" and a source of hope and optimism for Kuwait.

During his tour of the exhibition, Al-Awadhi stated that the professional organization, vibrant scientific atmosphere, and dedicated efforts he observed reflect the bright image of the State of Kuwait and are a source of pride.

He added "as doctors, we are accustomed to attending scientific conferences, but what I witnessed today at the fair – particularly the dedication and tremendous efforts of the organizers and the judging committees in evaluating projects with accuracy and a high degree of professionalism – is truly impressive and deserving of appreciation."

He pointed out that the fair offers an opportunity for every innovator to present their ideas and solutions, whether related to their field of work or area of specialization, emphasizing that the State supports initial

whether in methods, work or performance – while commanding the international standard the exhibition has achieved.

She expressed her pride in the distinguished national figures and experts who are part of the panel of judges, indicating that the judging process is "not an easy task," but rather an educational and enriching experience for the judges themselves, contributing to enhanced productivity.

She congratulated the Club on the success of this major scientific event, affirming that it represents the culmination of years of diligent work, accumulated experience, and outstanding performance that have elevated the exhibition to a global level.

Talal Al-Kharafi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Club and Chairman of the Exhibition's Higher Committee, praised the visit of the ministers of Social Affairs and Health and KFAS director general, stressing that their presence at this scientific event means the government is fully aware of the importance of volunteer work and the vital role played by civil society in development.

He stated that the fair's continuity and successes confirm the ability of Kuwaitis to reach international levels, as evidenced by the widespread recognition and acclaim it has received.

He stressed that this excellence is the result of diligent efforts and fruitful cooperation between the Club and all supporting entities.

He attributed the exhibition's prestigious standing primarily to the distinguished judging panel, which includes leading academics and experts from various scientific disciplines.

He expressed his pride in their significant volunteer contributions and their continuous support throughout the year in providing the Club and inventors with the necessary scientific and technical consultations.

Other Voices

Condolences at the cemetery

By Ahmad alsarraf

Nothing seems eternal or permanent. Many things in our lives change from time to time, including our customs and traditions, the type of clothing we wear, the size and style of our homes, our modes of transportation, what we like and dislike, including morals, principles, ideals, and even our fundamental beliefs.

This is noticeable when compared to the past few decades, let alone much earlier.



alsarraf

Condolences were often held at the cemetery, then gradually shifted to the home, the diwaniya (traditional gathering place), or the hussiniya (a Shia religious center). This was more dignified, more practical, and more comfortable for some after the shift imposed by circumstances, with burials ceasing in cemeteries near homes and moving to more distant areas.

Furthermore, the simple, open-air tents or canopies used for receiving condolences offered no protection from the summer heat or the winter cold, and were uncomfortable on dusty days. Some benefactors donated funds to construct large, iron-roofed halls for receiving condolences, equipping them with air conditioning, water coolers, and other amenities, including signs indicating the queue for condolences.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many things changed, including the simplification of condolence rituals and

the near disappearance of the custom of excessive hugging, kissing, and even handshakes. Mourners simply raised their hands, without physical contact.

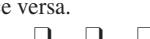
The practice of receiving condolences at the cemetery and then at home or in a diwaniya changed. Condolences are now received only at the cemetery, with the option of receiving them through email. Some families also began receiving condolences at home, in a diwaniya, or at the mosque for a day or two, as the practice had become burdensome, especially during periods of extreme heat or cold.

I have visited cemeteries many times to offer condolences for a deceased relative. I observed that the reasons for most of those who attended ranged from seeking divine reward to fulfilling a duty towards the bereaved family, or other social reasons. What was truly irritating, however, was the insistence of a disturbingly large number of citizens on disregarding the rights of others and cutting in line to offer condolences.

This behavior is characterized by a clear lack of decorum and a disregard for the solemnity of the occasion. Those offering condolences should express their objection to such behavior politely.

This behavior has persisted even after offering condolences recently become quicker and easier than before.

It is difficult to teach people good manners if they do not desire them themselves. However, it seems clear that the relationship between morality and religion is not necessarily contingent. A less religiously observant person may be more committed to morality, or vice versa.



email:a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



KUNA photo
A view of the exhibition.

'IIFME key platform to champion inventors'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Kuwaiti inventors participating in the Middle East International Invention Fair (IIFME) described the event as a key scientific platform enabling inventors to present ideas to specialists and investors and transform prototypes into promising economic projects.

In separate statements to KUNA on Tuesday, participants praised the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, saying it reflects strong political support for research and development.

They noted that the exhibition creates a competitive environment based on international judging standards and helps refine expertise and develop national capabilities. They also expressed hope their participation would help market their innovations, strengthen the national economy, and enhance Kuwait's scientific standing.

Inventor Mishari Al-Mutairi presented a "Smart Diving Helmet," designed to overcome traditional diving limitations by generating oxygen directly from seawater. The helmet draws and purifies seawater through nanofiltration before separating oxygen from hydrogen via electrolysis, supplying breathable oxygen while expelling hydrogen. The system reduces reliance on heavy air cylinders, lowers costs, extends dive duration, and enables quieter diving for maritime, research, and rescue operations.

Inventor Omar Al-Khamees introduced the "Q8 Safe Socket," a mechanical solution to household electrical hazards based on a safety-by-design concept. The socket prevents electrical current from flowing until the plug is fully inserted, enhancing child safety and reducing accidental contact risks without relying on electronic components.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, received on Monday the ministers and heads of delegations participating in the 52nd meeting of the UN Tourism Organization's Regional Commission for the Middle East.

Kuwait is set to host the high-level commission meeting to discuss strategic priorities for regional tourism development.

Among the arriving dignitaries were the Saudi Minister of Tourism, Ahmed Al-Khatib; the UAE Minister of Economy and Tourism, Abdulla Al-Marri; the Bahraini Minister of Tourism, Fatima Al-Serafi; the Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Sherif Fathy; the Iraqi Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Dr. Ahmad Al-Badrani; the Sudanese Minister of Culture, Khalid Ali; the UN Tourism Organization Secretary-General, Sheikh Al-Nuwaifi; and the Secretary-General of the Arab Tourism Organization, Dr. Mohammed Zaaqou.

They also include the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,

Yazan Al-Khudair; the Head of the Tourism Development Sector and Vice-Chair of the Regional Committee of the World Tourism Organization, Omar Al-Jaber; and the Assistant Minister of Tourism of the Syrian Arab Republic, Engineer Ghiath Al-Farah.

The meeting aims to synchronize member state efforts toward sustainable tourism, aligning with global economic shifts to diversify national income sources. Key agenda items focus on balancing rapid economic growth with resource conservation.

In parallel, the "Enhancing Tourism through Artificial Intelligence" conference and workshop will be held. These sessions highlight the integration of emerging technologies to modernize service delivery, boost sector efficiency, and foster innovation across the Middle Eastern tourism landscape.



KFF photo
Kuwait Fire Force officials during their visit to the Grand Mosque in Kuwait City.

KFF conducts tour of Grand Mosque ahead of Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: As part of its ongoing inspection of mosques to ensure the safety of worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) -- represented by its Prevention Sector and led by Director of the Capital Governorate Prevention Department Brigadier General Mohammad Yousef Buhamaid who was accompanied by several officers from the Prevention Sector -- inspected the Grand Mosque recently, reports Al-Anba daily.

Head of the Equipment and Hospitality Sec-

tion Eng. Mu'ayad Sha'ban welcomed the inspection delegation that assessed the fire suppression, alarm and ventilation systems, their functionality, and the plan in place to ensure the safety of worshippers during Ramadan.

This visit is part of the plans being implemented by KFF, in coordination with various State entities, to ascertain that buildings, facilities and mosques meet the fire safety and prevention requirements in order to protect lives and properties and guarantee community safety.

LOCAL

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A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Why do we wait for a crisis to happen before we act?

Also:

"DURING the COVID-19 crisis, it became clear to Kuwait and the entire world that food security issues are no longer theoretical assumptions or distant risks, but rather a reality affecting people's lives and the stability of nations," Bassam Fahd Thunayan Al-Ghanim wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"That period unveiled the fragility of dependence on foreign sources and demonstrated how any emergency situation can disrupt markets and jeopardize food security."

"We have witnessed how some basic commodities, such as onions, reached unprecedented prices exceeding KD5."

Bassam Al-Ghanim

"The government was forced to urgently dispatch more than three planes to import a product that is supposedly among the simplest to cultivate locally."

"Then the painful question arose: Why do we wait for a crisis to occur before we act? Why not act before borders close, supplies are disrupted and prices skyrocket?"

"With every regional escalation or military tension, the same phrase is repeated: 'The strategic food reserves are sufficient for six or nine months.' But the most important question, which is rarely asked, is: Where are these reserves? Most of these reserves are imported and tied to ports, shipping lanes, and global markets over which we have no control during crises."

"Is it reasonable for the security of an entire country to depend on ships that may not arrive or planes that may not take off? Why can't the Kuwaiti land itself be the reserve? Why don't we grant agricultural land to serious, interested Kuwaitis and genuine investors so they can cultivate, produce and build a sustainable food security that does not run out after a few months?"

"This leads us to a deeper question: Would it not be logical for Kuwait to have an independent agricultural bank, a university specializing in agriculture that could be the first of its kind in the region, agricultural colleges within universities, and a national agricultural institute that graduates professional technicians, engineers and farmers?"

"Is it conceivable that a country importing more 90 percent of its food has an institute for theater and acting, but no institute for agriculture?"

"These questions are not criticisms, but rather a warning bell, a clear message that food security is neither managed through pronouncements nor secured by temporary stockpiles, but rather built on human capital, land and long-term investment."

"This project stems from a clear objective: to achieve food self-sufficiency for the State of Kuwait within 10 years, in line with 'Kuwait Vision 2035' to diversify income sources, strengthen national security, and build a sustainable economy based on production, not rent-seeking."

"The project involves reclaiming and developing around 2,000 square kilometers in northern and northwestern Kuwait, transforming them into an integrated production system encompassing crop cultivation, livestock production and aquaculture, within a modern model that links land with people, and production with stability."

"The project includes the establishment of 120,000 small farms for families and retirees, each covering 10,000 square meters, and more than 30,000 farms for young people, each covering 4,000 square meters. It also includes large-scale farms for grains, fodder and timber, as well as massive livestock and fisheries along the borders. This project contributes to border security and the preservation of Kuwaiti lands as well."

"The project aims to empower more than 150,000 Kuwaiti families with sustainable production and income, plant 10 million trees, establish 500,000 greenhouses, and create 88 food processing, marketing and export companies, with an expected annual return exceeding three billion dollars."

"The project is being implemented in partnership with the private sector, with nominal fees for beneficiaries. Farms will be delivered ready for production from day one, without putting any direct financial burden on the State."

"Why now? Because this project was initially proposed years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic, after we all experienced complete lockdowns and the disruption of supply chains, and the bitter experience this had for countries dependent on imports."

"This vision comes at a crucial time, amidst escalating geopolitical tensions and the serious and decisive regulatory and judicial efforts underway in Kuwait aimed at protecting public funds, regulating agricultural land holdings, and establishing the rule of law for all, without exception."

"The project offers a practical and fundamental solution, emphasizing that agricultural land should not be left vacant, idle or exploited for purposes other than its intended use. Rather, it must be directed towards genuine and organized production, subject to governance and accountability."

"This project is not just an agricultural project, but a national project that redefines sovereignty through the lens of food security. He who controls his food...controls his destiny. He who cultivates his land...secures his future."

"Our security lies in our land, when we produce our food."

Compiled by Saeed Mahmoud Saleh



Education Ministry photo

Education minister honors outstanding students

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaie honored the students who won His Highness the Amir's Cup, which is part of the 'With the Students' program, at his office in the Ministry of Education headquarters on Monday.

The students, who won the first and second places, were honored at the ceremony, during which they received cash prizes totaling KD20,000 from Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), which supports educational initiatives and programs aimed at nurturing gifted students and motivating them to excel and innovate.

The first place winners are students from the Joint Talent Academy High School as follows:

Adnan Mansour Al-Ateeqi

Mohammed Hussein Al-Kandari

Yousef Abdullah Al-Khashty

Hassan Ali Boushehri

The second place winners are students from Zainab Bint Mohammad High School in Al-Jahra Governorate as follows:

Reema Mansour Mohammad

Lulwa Salah Al-Saeed

Fajr Tuleiman Al-Rashidi

Al-Ghalia Touban Al-Hussein

Al-Tabtabaie praised the outstanding level demonstrated by the participating students, highlighting their spirit of positive competition, commitment and teamwork, which embodies the program's objectives of refining the skills of students and developing their scientific and cultural abilities.

He emphasized that this achievement is a manifestation of the support and care that stu-

dents receive in the educational field.

He affirmed the commitment of the ministry to continue to support high-quality educational programs, which contribute to building a conscious and creative generation capable of competing and excelling.

He also expressed his gratitude to KFAS for its unwavering support for various educational activities.

At the end of the ceremony, Al-Tabtabaie expressed his pride and appreciation for the honorable results achieved by the students, stressing that the ministry will continue to provide a stimulating educational environment and adopt initiatives that discover young talents and develop their skills, in line with the vision of the State on investing in people and building a future based on science and innovation.

'Internal audit key to growth'

'Qaid' project manifests digital filing

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marwa Al-Jaidan said the internal audit profession is the foundation of corporate governance and the first line of defense for integrity, financial discipline and sound risk management.



Al-Jaidan

This integrated institutional approach aims to revolutionize the mechanism for submitting and analyzing financial statements, raise the efficiency of regulatory oversight, and improve the quality of financial data in the national economy.

The ministry explained that the project is based on the XBRL global standard, enabling a shift from traditional documents to structured digital financial data that can be analyzed instantly.

This will expedite audit and approval procedures, standardize disclosure concepts, reduce procedural burdens on companies, and provide regulatory bodies and audit firms with more efficient and accurate analytical tools.

According to the ministry, the project is a comprehensive institutional initiative designed to transform the process of submitting and analyzing financial statements.

It added that the optional phase of the project implementation began on Jan 1, 2026, and includes a number of legal entities.

Implementation will proceed through carefully planned transitional phases to ensure the readiness of companies and auditing firms, paving the way for mandatory implementation starting in 2027.

Furthermore, Fahad Al-Jaafour, Treasurer and Board Member of Kuwait Association of Accountants and Auditors, explained that the association's sponsorship of this forum is a manifestation of its growing interest in the importance of digital transformation and artificial intelligence technologies in the accounting profession.

He pointed out that the theme of the forum comes at a critical time, considering the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence technologies by countries in various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, agriculture, industry, energy and technology, which has led to a significant and rapid leap forward in the field of information.

Deal annulled

Jail upheld for woman in 'fake housing' case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: The Court of Cassation issued a final and binding verdict to close the 'fake student apartments' case involving a businesswoman.

The court rejected the final appeal of the woman, thereby, upholding the original sentence of four years in prison with hard labor and a fine of KD1,152,000.

The businesswoman was convicted of deceiving several citizens. The case centered on her deceitful scheme targeting parents and students during the scholarship and study abroad season. She promised them apartments near universities in the United Kingdom, collecting substantial amounts as reservation that was later proven to be fictitious.

After the exposure of the scheme, investigations revealed that her accomplice, an Egyptian, fled the country, while the businesswoman was referred to trial.

Initially, the Criminal Court sentenced her to four years in prison and imposed the fine. However, the Court of Appeals overturned this ruling and acquitted her.

This acquittal was subsequently overturned by the Court of Cassation.

Her final request for reconsideration was rejected, as the court cemented the ruling against her as final and binding.

□ □ □

Deal annulled: The Commercial First Instance Court annulled an investment agreement between an investor and a real estate company that is known for fraud and deception.

The court ordered the company to pay the plaintiff, who was represented by Attorney Ali Jawhar, an amount of KD24,500.

The defendant company promoted real estate investment opportunities in Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through newspapers and social media platforms, claiming high returns and guaranteed recovery of capital. Based on these advertisements, the plaintiff entered into an agreement with the company and paid a sum of KD24,500.

The plaintiff stated that he did not receive the profits agreed on and was unable to recover his funds in accordance with the terms of the contract. As a result, he filed a lawsuit requesting the annulment of the agreement and the return of the invested amount.

The court explained that the annulment of a contract is permissible when one of the parties fails to fulfill its contractual obligations, pursuant to Article 196 of the Civil Code.

After examining the submitted documents, the court concluded that the contractual relationship was valid and that the defendant breached its obligations. The company failed to appear before the court despite being properly notified. Accordingly, the court upheld the termination of the agreement and ordered the company to refund KD24,500, along with related expenses and attorney's fees.



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Kuwait's Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain with Bahram Salih, newly appointed UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Co-op deepens

Kuwait reaffirms UNHCR support

GENEVA, Feb 10, (KUNA): Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hain, emphasized the importance of enhancing cooperation between Kuwait and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) across various humanitarian fields.

Al-Hain made the remarks during a meeting with the newly appointed UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Bahram Salih, on Monday, following his recent discussions with member states on the UNHCR's work and future role, held at the UN office in Geneva.

The meeting focused on ways to support the strategic partnership between Kuwait and the UNHCR, particularly in responding to humanitarian crises and strengthening international efforts to protect refugees and displaced persons while meeting their basic needs worldwide.

During the meeting, Ambassador Al-Hain reaffirmed Kuwait's ongoing commitment to supporting the UNHCR and its humanitarian programs, in line with Kuwait's longstanding humanitarian approach and the directives of its leadership.

In turn, High Commissioner Bahram Salih expressed deep appreciation for Kuwait's continuous support and highlighted the close partnership between the two sides.

Officials praise historic relations and growing economic cooperation

Kuwaiti Embassies in Algeria, Ireland, Malta and Mexico mark Nat'l Days

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Embassies of Kuwait in Algeria, Ireland, Malta and Mexico celebrated the 65th anniversary of Kuwait's National Day and the 35th anniversary of Liberation Day, with the participation of ministers, officials, heads of diplomatic missions, media representatives and members of civil society.

In Algeria, the Kuwaiti Embassy held a celebration at its headquarters attended by Algerian Minister of Finance Abdelkrim Bouzred, former ministers, senior officers from the Ministry of Defense, political and cultural figures, members of the Algerian parliament, as well as a number of accredited ambassadors.

On the occasion, Charge d'Affaires ad interim of the Kuwaiti Embassy Khaled Al-Zeir told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that he extended his congratulations and best wishes to His Highness the Amir of Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the government and people of Kuwait, wishing continued security and stability upon the country.

Al-Zeir praised the strength and depth of the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, describing them as "exceptional."

He affirmed Kuwait's keenness to further consolidate its partnership with Algeria, enhance historic ties and work jointly toward a future of growth and prosperity.

He added that significant historical milestones have strengthened security, judicial and political coordination, laid solid foundations for cooperation, and



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Ireland, celebrates national holidays.

opened broad horizons for investment and economic collaboration, expressing hope that the upcoming session of the Joint Higher Committee would further advance cooperation in the interest of both nations.

The Embassy of Kuwait in Ireland held a reception to mark Kuwait's National Day, attended by senior officials, prominent figures, and members of the diplomatic corps accredited in the Irish capital.

On this occasion, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Ireland Mohammad Al-Mohammad extended his highest congratulations and blessings to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness

the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulla Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

He also conveyed his greetings to the government and people of Kuwait, praying for continued security, prosperity, and well-being for the nation.

In Malta, Kuwait's Ambassador to Malta Meshal Al-Mudhaf hosted the annual reception to mark the occasion, attended by a large number of prominent figures.

This included Malta's President Dr. Myriam Spiteri Debono, senior government officials, representatives of economic, cultural and media bodies, ambassadors and heads of diplomatic

missions accredited to Malta, as well as Maltese public figures and Kuwaiti students at the University of Malta.

In her speech, the president conveyed her congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, commanding the unique historical ties between the two countries.

She went on to say Malta's stance at the United Nations during Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait left a lasting positive mark on bilateral relations, and noted progress in exploring new areas of cooperation.

She also highlighted cooperation in education, saying the large number of



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Algeria, celebrates national holidays.



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Malta, celebrates national holidays.



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Mexico, celebrates national holidays.



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KISR opens Int'l Air Quality Conference

Experts share latest pollution studies

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

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) inaugurated the Second International Conference on Air Quality Applications in Science and Engineering on Monday and it will continue until Wednesday.

This conference is in line with the national role of KISR in supporting scientific research and addressing priority environmental issues.

Several scientists, researchers and experts from around the world participated in the conference, which is under the patronage of

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal.

Director General of KISR Dr. Faisal Al-Humaidan pointed out that the conference is being held at a crucial time, taking into consideration the increasing environmental and health challenges related to air pollution at both the regional and global levels.

He said the minister's patronage of the conference is a confirmation of the commitment of the State to support scientific research and enhance its role in addressing priority environmental issues.

He explained that air quality is no longer just an environmental issue, as it is now a matter of public health and sustainable development, requiring integrated efforts between scientific research, engineering applications and decision-makers. He affirmed that KISR is focusing on environmental and air quality issues.



Officials, scientists, and experts attend the Second International Conference on Air Quality Applications in Science and Engineering, organized by KISR under the patronage of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Patients Helping Fund opens health center in North Darfur

KHARTOUM, Feb 10, (KUNA): Patients Helping Fund Society constructed a health center in Tawila locality, North Darfur State, as part of a network of ten facilities providing services to displaced persons fleeing the city of El Fasher, in response to growing medical needs in the area.

Director of the Fund's office in North Darfur, Dafallah Al-Arki, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Tuesday that the intervention aims to support children, women and the elderly amid complex humanitarian conditions and mounting pressure on health facilities.

He noted that the center, implemented in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), provides essential health and nutrition services that help ease the suffering of displaced families and enhance their access to necessary care.

Al-Arki affirmed the Fund's commitment to continuing its support for health response efforts in displacement



KUNA photo
The Patients Helping Fund serves displaced people from El Fasher.

areas and to addressing service gaps to mitigate the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable groups.

He added that the Fund's field clinic has been providing health services to displaced persons from El Fasher at Al-Afad camp in Northern State since mid-November, receiving between 70 and 100 patients daily.

LOCAL



Members of the International Women's Group and distinguished guests gather to celebrate Kuwait's National and Liberation Days.



Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, President of IWG, and guest of honor Sheikha Dr. Alanoud Al-Sabah, join board members on stage.



Attendees show their national pride, waving Kuwaiti flags during the festive 65th Independence and 35th Liberation anniversary celebrations.

Cultural showcase highlights Kuwaiti women and traditions

International Women's Group hosts Kuwait National Day celebration

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: On February 8, the International Women's Group (IWG) hosted an exceptional and memorable celebration dedicated to the National Day of the State of Kuwait at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, bringing together members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations, ambassadors, and distinguished guests. The event was honored to have as the keynote speaker and guest of honor Sheikha Dr. Alanoud Ebraheim Duaij Al-Sabah.

As customary, the event commenced with an introduction by the IWG Public Relations Coordinator, Mrs. Layla Boulos. The ceremony then officially opened with the National Anthem of Kuwait, performed by the Brass Band of the Ministry of Defense. Guests were welcomed by Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, spouse of the Ambassador of Georgia and President of the International Women's Group, who congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah, the people of Kuwait, and all Kuwaiti friends on the 65th anniversary of independence and the 35th anniversary of liberation.

During the event, members of the organization also listened to a congratulatory message sent by the Honorary President of IWG, Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah. In a congratula-



Left: Guests enjoy an immersive cultural experience, posing with traditional Kuwaiti swords as part of the heritage displays organized by the IWG. Center: President of IWG, and guest of honor Sheikha Dr. Alanoud Al-Sabah, join members of the diplomatic corps and international representatives to share a meal featuring authentic flavors of Kuwaiti cuisine. Right: A guest takes the opportunity to pose with a falcon, a traditional symbol of Kuwaiti heritage.



IWG photos

tory message, Sheikha Hanouf highlighted the significance of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days as symbols of the nation's unity, resilience, and proud heritage. She emphasized the vital role of Kuwaiti women in preserving traditions while contributing to leadership, education, diplomacy, and community development. Her Excellency also underscored Kuwait's commitment to peace, humanitarian values, and international cooperation, reaffirming hopes for the country's continued prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, and extended her best wishes to the people of Kuwait on these national occasions.

In her remarks, Mrs. Kochlamazashvili expressed appreciation to the Honorary President of IWG, Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, also thanking Sheikha Dr. Alanoud Al-Sabah, for her invaluable contribution and guidance in shaping the program of the event.

The cultural program, themed "Women of Kuwait: Tradition and Inspiration,"

offered guests an immersive journey into Kuwait's rich heritage through music, cuisine, and traditional fragrances. Sheikha Dr. Alanoud Al-Sabah delivered an engaging presentation highlighting Kuwait's urban, desert, and coastal traditions, and prepared a traditional fragrance on-site, a skill she inherited from her grandmothers, showcasing the

enduring legacy of Kuwaiti customs. Complementing this, Ms. Yasmeen Al-Salem introduced guests to the flavors and techniques of authentic Kuwaiti cuisine, celebrating the nation's culinary heritage.

The celebration featured vibrant live performances and cultural displays presented with the participation of the Kuwait Culture and Heritage Center, Expo 96, and Kuwait Sadu House, highlighting traditional crafts, Sadu weaving, historical books, traditional attire for men and women, jewellery, and heritage artifacts. Guests were welcomed with the traditional Bakhoor hospitality ritual, enjoyed performances by Arda dancers, and listened to musical performances, including singer Mona Mansour. Calligraphers Jasser Al-Shammari and Abdul Aziz Ziad added a personal cultural touch by writing guests' names in Arabic calligraphy during the program. Ladies had the opportunity to take pictures with falcons under the supervision of the specialized falconer Mohammed Hussein Al-Khashish.

The International Women's Group extended its sincere appreciation to all partners, sponsors, and board members whose dedication and efforts contributed to the success of this remarkable celebration, strengthening cultural understanding and honoring the heritage and traditions of the State of Kuwait.

Continued from Page 1

When the

Kuwait remains

The operetta incorporated much of Kuwait's historical memory, a nation that develops for the better every year.

Every year, Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad introduces to HH the Amir her mastery in blending love and loyalty in the collective memory of the present generation. The operetta is just like a fundamental material depicting devotion for the nation.

These theatrical performances showcased much of what a "Lover's Heart" can achieve when overflowing with patriotism, and served as a reminder of a past marked by strong national unity, which formed the solid foundation for the present we live today with great national pride in all our national celebrations.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad, who oversaw the "Land of Goodness" operetta.

Also, I would like to thank the composers, musicians and everyone who contributed to the success of this grand national production.

The national operetta is an opportunity to revive memories and embody all the sentiments that resonate in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people, who are keen on passing their national experiences from one generation to the other.

I was among those who enjoyed the operetta yesterday, which rekindled memories of many events that have shaped this beloved country. Despite the difficulties it went through, the nation remained steadfast, like a towering palm tree in the sky of the region's history.

Court upholds

They also confessed to having consumed some of the drugs before setting sail in order to give them the courage to carry out the smuggling operation.

The defendants stated that they were headed to an agreed location, identified through map coordinates, to deliver the shipment to the recipient in Kuwait. However, they were surprised when a Coast Guard patrol ordered them to stop, leading to their immediate arrest.

The case was referred to the competent authorities, who initiated the investigation and trial procedures, culminating in the death sentence imposed on the defendants.

Kuwait scores

Nazaha added that the 2025 results come amidst ongoing international challenges in combating corruption, with the global average CPI score at 42 out of 100, the lowest level in over a decade, while most countries score even lower.

This reflects a worrying downward trend internationally, highlighting the importance of Kuwait maintaining its above-average performance and working towards gradual and sustainable improvement in the coming period.

Nazaha affirmed that Kuwait has continued to develop its national integrity system over the past years by strengthening the legislative and institutional frameworks, issuing and updating legislation related to conflicts of interest, whistleblower protection, and financial disclosure, in addition to enhancing transparency in government procedures.

It stressed that improving Kuwait's ranking in international indicators requires continued joint national efforts, enhanced integration among relevant entities, and the consolidation of governance and transparency principles, which contributes to strengthening institutional trust.

He considers the presence of Al-Mashari "an evidence of the friendship, cooperation and goodwill that bind Sri Lanka and the State of Kuwait."

He conveyed the greetings of his country's president, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, and the Sri Lankan government to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah on the occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day.

He added "Sri Lanka's relations with the State of Kuwait in the field of overseas employment are witnessing remarkable improvement day by day."

He revealed that Sri Lanka is currently the fifth largest expatriate community in Kuwait, and these strong people-to-people ties have opened broad horizons for further cooperation.

He went on to say that "the friendly and cooperative relations with the Kuwait Fund extend for nearly half a century," affirming that the Fund has been financing numerous development projects in Sri Lanka, including infrastructure, government facilities and academic institutions.

He said his country is known as one of the best tourist destinations and was named the 'Most Beautiful Island in the World' for 2025 by Big 7 Travel, adding that "in 2024 and 2025, Sri Lanka attracted millions of tourists from around the world. We expect an increase in the number of Kuwaiti tourists this year, as three airlines – Sri Lankan Airlines, Jazeera Airways and Kuwait Airways – are operating direct and regular flights from Kuwait to Sri Lanka."

Regarding the Iranian issue, he said the US president called on Iran to return to the negotiating table to reach a fair agreement, emphasizing that the United States has been clear for years in its position against Iran possessing nuclear weapons, given the threat this poses to the entire region.

He added that intensive diplomatic efforts are underway, including indirect talks in Muscat, stating that the US Embassy in Kuwait is in constant contact with its Kuwaiti partners and other Gulf states regarding this matter.

On the new US ambassador, he explained that the previous nominee is no longer a candidate after his nomination was returned to the White House according to Senate procedures.

He disclosed that the nominee assumed another position within the US administration, and no names have been announced for the post. He confirmed that the current nominee will continue his duties as chargé d'affaires until a new ambassador is appointed.

He went on to say that "the friendly and cooperative relations with the Kuwait Fund extend for nearly half a century," affirming that the Fund has been financing numerous development projects in Sri Lanka, including infrastructure, government facilities and academic institutions.

He explained that the temporary suspension of visas applies only to immigration visas and does not include tourist, student or medical visas, the processing of which continues as normal.

On the visa issue, Butler acknowledged delays in some cases, explaining that this is due to tightened security vetting procedures. He clarified that the goal is to ensure the correct decision is made, not to reject applications, indicating that mechanisms are in place to expedite procedures in emergency medical cases.

He explained that the temporary suspension of visas applies only to immigration visas and does not include tourist, student or medical visas, the processing of which continues as normal.

On the recent military agreements, including the Patriot missile deal announced by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Butler confirmed the deal's partial announcement by the Kuwaiti government, while offering limited specifics. He emphasized the "depth and maturity" of the defense and security partnership between the two nations.

He also touched on the improved ranking of Kuwait in the Trafficking in Persons Report, attributing this to the close coordination between the two countries and the ongoing constructive dialogue on human rights.

He confirmed the depth and continuity of the US-Kuwaiti relationship, even if not all the details are publicly available, indicating that coordination is ongoing round the clock to maintain the security and stability of the region.

Asked about any potential Iranian threat to the US bases in Kuwait, he asserted that the United States is committed to defending Kuwait and the security of the Gulf region.

He said any scenario similar to what happened in the region previously will be met with a similar response, adding that Washington always prefers diplo-

matic solutions.

Regarding maritime security, he stated that the US Naval Command coordinates with the Gulf states to protect maritime navigation, confirming the ongoing communication with Gulf partners to ensure the security of waterways and international trade.

He added that Gulf security is a collective responsibility, indicating Kuwait

enjoys legal status as a major non-NATO ally and this reflects the depth of the defense relationship between the two countries.

He explained that joint training and military integration between US and Gulf forces are essential elements in addressing security challenges.

Also, regarding the World Cup and in response to a question about visa proce-

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Amir patronizes, attends 'Deerat Al-Khair' National Operetta



KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, "Deerat Al-Khair" National Operetta was held on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Theater.

Receiving His Highness the Amir were Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, Education Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, and Voluntary Work Center Chief Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The event was also attended by His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and senior state officials.

The ceremony began with the national anthem, followed by student performances of the national operetta, which highlighted Kuwait's unity, resilience and ability to overcome challenges through the ages.

On this occasion, a commemorative gift was presented to His Highness before his departure.



Photos during 'Deerat Al-Khair' National Operetta held on Tuesday at Bayan Palace Theater.

Amiri Diwan photos

INTERNATIONAL

Republicans suggest new restrictions necessary

Dems say WH offer on ICE 'insufficient' as Homeland Security funding set to expire

WASHINGTON, Feb 10, (AP): Democratic leaders say a proposal from the White House is "incomplete and insufficient" as they are demanding new restrictions on President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown and threatening a shutdown of the Homeland Security Department.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said in a statement Monday that a White House counterproposal to the list of demands they transmitted over the weekend "included neither details nor legislative text" and does not address "the concerns Americans have about ICE's lawless conduct." The White House proposal was not released publicly.

The Democrats' statement comes as time is running short, with another partial government shutdown threatening to begin Saturday. Among the Democrats' demands are a requirement for judicial warrants, better identification of DHS officers, new use-of-force standards and a stop to racial profiling. They say such changes are necessary after

two protesters were fatally shot by federal agents in Minneapolis last month.

Earlier Monday, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., had expressed optimism about the rare negotiations between Democrats and the White House, saying there was "forward progress."

Thune said it was a good sign that the two sides were trading papers, and "hopefully they can find some common ground here."

But coming to an agreement on the charged issue of immigration enforcement will be difficult, especially as rank-and-file lawmakers in both parties were skeptical about finding common ground.

Republicans have balked at the Democrats' requests and some have demands of their own, including the addition of legislation that would require proof of citizenship before Americans register to vote and restrictions on cities that they say do not do enough to crack down on illegal immigration.

And many Democrats who are furri-



US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (center), speaks during a news conference as House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries listens, at the Capitol in Washington on Feb 4. (AP)

ous about Immigration and Customs Enforcement's aggressive crackdown have said they won't vote for another penny of Homeland Security funding until enforcement is radically scaled back.

"Dramatic changes are needed at the Department of Homeland Security before a DHS funding bill moves for-

ward," Jeffries said earlier Monday. "Period. Full stop."

Congress is trying to renegotiate the DHS spending bill after Trump agreed to a Democratic request that it be separated out from a larger spending measure that became law last week. That package extended Homeland Security funding at current levels only through Feb. 13, creating a brief window for action as the two parties discuss new restrictions on ICE and other federal officers.

Democrats made the demands for new restrictions on ICE and other federal law enforcement after ICE nurse Alex Pretti was shot and killed by a U.S. Border Patrol officer in Minneapolis on Jan. 24, and some Republicans suggested that new restrictions were necessary. Renes Good was shot by ICE agents on Jan. 7.

While he agreed to separate the funding, Trump has not publicly responded to the Democrats' specific demands.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said late last week that the Trump administration is willing to discuss some items on the Democrats'

list, but "others don't seem like they are grounded in any common sense, and they are nonstarters for this administration."

Schumer and Jeffries have said they want immigration officers to remove their masks, to show identification and to better coordinate with local authorities. They have also demanded a stricter use-of-force policy for the federal officers, legal safeguards at detention centers and a prohibition on tracking protesters with body-worn cameras.

Among other demands, Democrats say Congress should end indiscriminate arrests, "improve warrant procedures and standards," ensure the law is clear that officers cannot enter private property without a judicial warrant and require that before a person can be detained, it's verified that the person is not a U.S. citizen.

Republicans have said they support the requirement for DHS officers to have body-worn cameras - language that was in the original DHS bill - but have balked at many of the other Democratic asks.

Trump threatens to block new bridge between Detroit, Canada from opening

WASHINGTON, Feb 10, (AP): US President Donald Trump on Monday threatened to block the opening of a new Canadian-built bridge across the Detroit River, demanding that Canada turn over at least half of the ownership of the bridge and agree to other unspecified demands in his latest salvo over cross-border trade issues.

"We will start negotiations, IMMEDIATELY. With all that we have given them, we should own, perhaps, at least one half of this asset," Trump said in a lengthy social media post, complaining that the United States would get nothing from the bridge and that Canada did not use U.S. steel to built it.

The Gordie Howe International Bridge, named after a Canadian hockey star who played for the Detroit Red Wings for 25 seasons, had been expected to open in early 2026, according to information on the project's website. The project was negotiated by former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder - a Republican - and paid for by the Canadian government to help ease congestion over the existing Ambassador Bridge and Detroit-Windsor tunnel. Work has been underway since 2018.

It's unclear how Trump would seek

to block the bridge from being opened, and the White House did not immediately return a request for comment on more details. The Canadian Embassy in Washington also did not immediately return a request for comment.

Trump's threat comes as the relationship between the U.S. and Canada increasingly sours during the U.S. president's second term. The United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement is up for review this year, and Trump has been taking a hard-line position ahead of those talks, including by issuing new tariff threats.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, meanwhile, has spoken out on the world stage against economic coercion by the United States.

Sen. Elissa Slotkin, D-Mich., said the Canadian-funded project is a "huge boon" to her state and its economic future. "You'll be able to move cargo from Montreal to Miami without ever stopping at a street light," Slotkin told The Associated Press.

"So to shoot yourself in the foot and threaten the Gordie Howe Bridge means that this guy has completely lost the plot on what's good for us versus just what's spite against the Canadians," Slotkin said.

Michigan, a swing state that Trump

carried in both 2016 and 2024, has so far largely avoided the brunt of his second-term crackdown, which has targeted blue states with aggressive immigration raids and cuts to federal funding for major infrastructure projects.

Trump and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer have also maintained an unusually cordial relationship, with the president publicly praising her during an Oval Office appearance last April. The two also shared a hug last year ahead of Trump's announcement of a new fighter jet mission for an Air National Guard base in Michigan.

While Canada paid for the project, the bridge will be operated under a joint ownership agreement between Michigan and Canada, said Stacey LaRouche, press secretary to Whitmer.

"This is the busiest trade crossing in North America," LaRouche said, saying the bridge was "good for Michigan workers and it's good for Michigan's auto industry" as well as being a good example of bipartisan and international cooperation.

"It's going to open one way or another, and the governor looks forward to attending the ribbon-cutting," LaRouche said.



The Saganaw passes construction on the Gordie Howe International Bridge connecting the Detroit River connecting Windsor, Ontario and Detroit on Oct 25, 2023. (AP)

Japan to pick prime minister on Feb 18 after election: local media

TOKYO, Feb 10, (Xinhua): Japan will convene a special parliamentary session on Feb. 18 to choose the prime minister following Sunday's House of Representatives election, local media reported Tuesday.

According to Jiji Press, the Japanese Constitution stipulates that an extraordinary Diet session must be convened within 30 days after a House of Representatives election to designate a prime minister. On the opening day of the session, the incumbent cabinet will collectively resign. The newly elected House of Representatives and the current House of Councillors will then vote separately to designate a new prime minister, who will subsequently form a new cabinet.

In the prime ministerial designation election, a candidate who secures a majority in the first round of voting in each chamber wins outright. If no candidate obtains a majority, the top two vote-getters advance to a runoff, with the winner decided by a simple majority. If the two chambers designate different candidates and fail to agree after consultations, the Constitution stipulates that the decision of the powerful House of Representatives shall prevail.

Given that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) currently holds more than two-thirds of the seats in the lower house, Japanese media believe that LDP President and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is all but assured of victory in the



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), speaks during her press conference on Feb 9 in Tokyo. (AP)

designation election.

Meanwhile, Japanese lawyers on Monday filed lawsuits at high courts across the country demanding the results of Sunday's House of Representatives election be nullified because it was unconstitutional as it was conducted without correcting vote weight disparities, local media reported.

The disparity between the most and least populated single-seat constituencies was 2.10-fold in the latest election, Kyodo News reported, citing its preliminary calculation.

Rebels linked to Islamic State group kill at least 20 in eastern Congo village attack, says military

KINSHASA, Congo, Feb 10, (Agencies): Rebels backed by the Islamic State group killed at least 20 people in an attack over the weekend on a village in eastern Congo, the military said Monday.

The attack by the Allied Democratic Forces, or ADF, took place early Saturday in the village of Mambimbi-Isigo in the Lubero territory of North Kivu province, military administrator Col. Alain Kiwea Mitela told The Associated Press over the phone.

There was no immediate comment from the ADF.

The attack has caused a mass displacement of residents, aggravating an already dire humanitarian situation, Mitela said.

According to civil society activists in the area, the rebels first raided several farmers' fields before attacking civilians with knives and firearms.

"This toll is still provisional because many civilians are missing," Kinosi Kitwa, head of civil society in Bapere, said. He criticized the small number of Congolese army troops in the area.

Armed groups, including the ADF and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, have carried out several deadly attacks in eastern Congo. The ADF, which pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2019, operates along the border with Uganda and often targets civilians.

At least 62 civilians have been killed since the beginning of the year by ADF fighters in the Beni and Lubero territories, according to the North Kivu Provincial Civil Society Coordination.



Congolese Defense Forces soldiers and United Nations forces patrol the area of an attack near the town of Oicha, 30 kms (20 miles) from Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo on July 23, 2021. (AP)

On Monday, U.N. peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix began a two-day official visit to eastern Congo, including Beni, which has been particularly affected by ADF attacks.

The ADF was formed by disparate small groups in Uganda in the late 1990s following discontent with President Yoweri Museveni. In 2002, following Ugandan military strikes, the group moved to neighboring Congo and has been blamed for the killings of thousands of civilians. In July 2025, the group carried out a series of attacks

that killed more than 100 people.

Also:

GENEVA: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, warned of the danger of repeating the atrocities committed in Al-Fashir in other parts of Sudan, particularly in the Kordofan region, amid escalating clashes between Sudanese Armed Forces, Rapid Support Forces, and Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

Speaking before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday,

Turk described the October violence in Al-Fashir as a "humanitarian and human rights catastrophe" involving grave violations that could have been prevented.

He noted that his office had repeatedly warned over the past year of the risk of mass atrocities in Al-Fashir and documented similar patterns of crimes, but these warnings received insufficient response.

Turk highlighted that the International Criminal Court recently informed the UN Security Council of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Al-Fashir, and that UN investigations corroborate these findings.

He expressed deep concern over rising violence in Kordofan, noting that although the sieges on Kadugli and Dalang were lifted in the past two weeks, drone strikes continue.

According to the UN, around 90 civilians have been killed and 142 others injured in less than two weeks as of Feb 6, following strikes on markets, health facilities, residential neighborhoods, and a World Food Programme convoy in South and North Kordofan.

Turk held the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias responsible for mass atrocities in Al-Fashir, which was besieged for over a year, including the seizure of the Zamzam IDP camp in April 2025.

He described the 18-month siege as involving starvation and continuous shelling, culminating in a large-scale assault that killed thousands and displaced tens of thousands in just a few days.

Nigerian President Tinubu vows to end terrorism

AUJA, Feb 10, (Xinhua): Nigerian President Bola Tinubu said on Monday that the West African country would defeat terrorism and banditry, describing the threats as "unacceptable" and alien to core values.

Insecurity remained a major hindrance to economic growth and development, requiring urgent collective action, Tinubu said while opening the country's high-level second National Economic Council (NEC) Conference in the capital, Abuja.

According to him, insecurity had kept all citizens sleepless at night. He assured the citizens that all would soon come to an end, citing his earlier promises. "We will overcome this unacceptable terrorism and banditry. It is not part of our culture. It is foreign to us."

Tinubu tasked NEC, statutorily comprising the vice president and all governors of the country's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, to drive inclusive growth, stressing the need for the effective implementation of the Renewed Hope National Development Plan 2026-2030.

Themed "Delivering Inclusive Growth and Sustainable National Development: The Renewed Hope National Development Plan 2026-2030," the two-day conference is attended by state governors, ministers, members of the National Assembly, development partners, and private sector leaders.

Describing the Renewed Hope National Development Plan 2026-2030 as "evidence-based, realistic and anchored on inclusive and sustainable growth," the Nigerian president said it was also designed to deepen grass-



Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu gives a joint statement with Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, at the Planalto presidential palace, in Brasilia, Brazil on Aug 25, 2025. (AP)

roots inclusion through a bottom-up approach. "Nigeria's diversity is our strength. When every state grows, Nigeria grows," he said, adding that infrastructure development across transportation, power, digital connectivity, housing, and irrigation had been prioritized.

Subcontinent

Bangladesh all set for elections: Bangladesh is all set for Thursday's general elections in which more than 127 million voters are expected to cast their ballots at over 42,000 polling stations across the country, a senior official said Tuesday.

All election preparations are now complete, **Akhtar Ahmed**, Bangladeshi Election Commission's senior secretary, said.

According to the official, ballot papers and all other polling materials have already been delivered for 299 of the 300 constituencies.

He said polling in one constituency has been postponed due to the death of a candidate and will be held later. (Xinhua)

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Nepal bus accident kills 10: Ten people were killed after a passenger bus fell into a river in central Nepal's Ramchhap district on Tuesday, a senior police officer said.

The bus, en route to Okhaldhunga from Kathmandu, veered off the highway and plunged into the Tamakoshi River, injuring seven others. "While six people died at the site, four others died during treatment," Bishnu Prasad Bhatta, spokesperson for the Nepal Armed Police Force, told Xinhua. "Seven others are receiving treatment at a hospital."

He said security forces' rescue teams, backed by locals,

are conducting joint rescue operations. Police have yet to ascertain the exact number of people on the bus when the mishap occurred.

Bhatta said divers have been mobilized for search operations in the river, suspecting that some bodies may still be there. (Xinhua)

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3 policemen killed in Pakistan: At least three policemen were killed and one injured after unidentified armed men opened fire on a police mobile van in southern Pakistan's Sindh province on Monday, police said.

The incident occurred in Dadu district of the province when police responded to reports of a robbery attempt. The attackers fled the scene after the firing, according to an official statement.

Police have launched a search operation in the area, while the injured officer was shifted to a nearby hospital. (Xinhua)

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Afghanistan roof collapse kills 1: One person was killed and two others were injured when the roof of a shop collapsed in northern Afghanistan's Faryab province on Monday, according to a statement from the provincial police office on Tuesday.

The incident occurred in the Pastun Kot district on Monday afternoon.

Similar accidents claimed two lives in western Farah and four others in northern Kunduz, respectively, over the past few weeks, following rains and snowfall.

Most residential houses in Afghanistan, particularly in rural areas, are constructed from mud, making them prone to natural disasters and vulnerable to rain and snowfall, occasionally resulting in loss of life and property damage. (Xinhua)

Kuwaiti oil barrel price down to \$65.18

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil barrel went down 98 cents to reach USD 65.18 per barrel on Monday, compared with USD 66.16 pb on Friday, according to Kuwait Petroleum

Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

In international markets, Brent crude oil price went up 99 cents to USD 69.04 pb, while West Texas crude increased 81 cents to USD 64.36 pb.

Held at JACC under the patronage of the Minister of Information

NBK is the banking sector's exclusive and strategic partner of the 2026 Arab Content Forum

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Stemming from its pioneering efforts to support innovation and digital and creative projects in Kuwait and the region, National Bank of Kuwait announced its participation as the banking sector's exclusive and strategic partner in the Arab Content Creators Forum 2026, which will be held under the patronage of Mr. Omar Al-Omar, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, on 12 and 13 February at Jaber Al-Ahmed Cultural Centre.

The strategic partnership agreement between NBK and Ghmza Company - the conference organizer - was signed at the bank's headquarters.

This partnership comes as part of NBK's commitment to strengthening its role in supporting the creative economy ecosystem and empowering content creators from various fields, as they play a pivotal role in shaping the future of digital media in the region.

The Forum brings together a select group of Arab content creators, along with government agencies, commercial brands, platforms and cultural institutions, in an interactive environment aimed at bridging collaboration between the various parties in the content industry and developing influential partnerships that enhance the Arab presence in this growing field.

Moreover, this Forum provides a unique opportunity to exchange experiences and showcase the latest trends in the world of digital media, in addition to facilitating broader partnerships between content creators and institutions seeking innovative and creative solutions. The forum also constitutes a strategic platform that enhances the presence of Arab talents and enable them to access new markets, through top-tier panel discussion, specialized workshops supervised by local and regional field experts, and a content creation market that joins the creators with production and development entities.

As the strategic and exclusive partner, NBK will set up a special pavilion throughout the conference to interact with visitors and participants, in addition to showcasing the bank's digital and media initiatives and its ongoing support for young national talents.

NBK, will also participate in the discussion sessions, where he will address the bank's role in supporting the creative economy and content industry, and highlight the importance of social media in light of the growing digital media era.

On this occasion, Abdalmohsen Al-Rushaid, Senior Vice President - Head of Digital Communications at NBK commented: "The selection of NBK as a strategic partner for the conference reflects the extent of the trust that the bank enjoys and its estab-



NBK partners with Ghmza for Arab Content Creators Forum 2026.

lished position as a leading institution in supporting cultural and creative initiatives in Kuwait and the region".

"This partnership", Al-Rushaid added, "comes at a time when the content industry sector is witnessing rapid growth, which highlights the important role of major institutions in enabling and enhancing its growth, thus contributing to supporting the creative economy system and opening new horizons for talents and working entities".

Al-Rushaid: Selecting NBK reflects the extent of the trust that the bank enjoys and its established position as a leading institution in supporting cultural and creative initiatives in Kuwait and the region.

■ We strive to enhance NBK's community role and expand the scope of its initiatives that aim to empower the youth and develop digital skills, in line with its vision of supporting innovation and sponsoring national talents.

Al-Thamer: Our collaboration with NBK embodies our shared vision of supporting innovative economy and enabling Arab content creators.

Finally, Al-Rushaid emphasized that through this partnership, NBK seeks to enhance its community role and expand the scope of its initiatives aimed at empowering youth and developing digital skills, in line with its vision of supporting innovation and sponsoring national talents.

On his part, Mr. Thamer M. Al-Thamer, Managing Partner at Ghmza Company, said: "We are pleased to collaborate with a leading financial institution as NBK and have it as our banking sector's exclusive and strategic partner in this Forum. This collaboration reflects the shared vision of supporting innovative economy and enabling Arab content creators to shape the future of digital media. Through its participation, NBK adds value to this Forum and helps expand its influence on a regional level".

"Through this collaboration," Al-Thamer added, "we look forward to widening the horizon of collaborations with innovative institutions and professionals, as well as establishing new spaces for exchanging knowledge and developing digital skills. We truly believe that this Forum is an inspirational platform for young creators and an opportunity where they can showcase their talents and abilities, in addition to exposing them to connections that can turn their ideas into influential projects, which should help consolidate Kuwait's position as a regional hub for content and digital creation".

NBK's support to this Forum embodies its vision of empowering the creative economy and strengthening its role as a key partner in developing the digital and media scene in Kuwait, as it continues to invest in young national talents and promote innovation to establish a society capable of competing regionally and globally. With this sponsorship as well, NBK affirms its unwavering commitment to making initiatives that enhance Kuwait's position as a creative hub and support its efforts to have a sustainable and advanced future in the fields of media, technology and digital transformation.

Board of Directors recommends a dividend of 85 fils per share

Jazeera Airways posts record profit in FY 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Jazeera Airways today announced its financial results for FY 2025, delivering the strongest profit performance in the airline's history, on its 20th anniversary of flying. Net profit reached a record KD 21.8 million, representing a 113.7% increase year-on-year, reflecting disciplined execution, sustained demand, and improved operating efficiency.

Operating revenue increased 4.6% to KD 218.1 million, supported by steady network performance and passenger growth. Group operating profit rose 50.7% to KD 26.0 million, underscoring the effectiveness of cost discipline and operational optimization initiatives compared with FY 2024. Passenger traffic exceeded 5 million passengers during the year, marking a 2.2% increase, with a healthy load factor of 77.6%, reflecting balanced capacity deployment and resilient demand across the network.

In the fourth quarter of 2025, Jazeera Airways continued to demonstrate improving performance. Operating revenue increased 3.3% to KD 46.5 million, while quarterly losses narrowed significantly by 69.7% to KD 1.3 million, compared with KD 4.2 million in the corresponding period last year. This improvement was primarily driven by stronger revenues and the successful implementation of targeted measures to enhance operating efficiency.

Reflecting the company's strong financial position and confidence in its outlook, the Board of Directors has recommended the distribution of a dividend of 85 fils per share, subject to shareholders approval.

Marwan Boodai, Chairman, Jazeera Airways, said: "Jazeera Airways outstanding performance in 2025, our 20th anniversary year, reflects the strength of Jazeera Airways' business model, the discipline of our execution, and the commitment of our people. Delivering our highest-ever profit while operating in a complex and dynamic environment underscores the resilience of the airline and the effectiveness of our long-term strategy. As we proudly look ahead, we remain focused on sustainable growth, operational excellence, and delivering consistent value to our shareholders.

2025 Operational Review

Jazeera Airways delivered a robust operational performance in 2025, driven by disciplined execution, selective network expansion, and a sustained focus on safety, reliability, and efficiency. With 37,351 aircraft movements during the year, the airline retained its position as the most active carrier at Kuwait International Airport for the fourth consecutive year.

Despite ongoing geopolitical uncertainty and periodic regional airspace closures, operations remained stable and resilient, supported by strong operational oversight and proactive disruption management.

Network expansion was executed selectively, with new destinations including Abha, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Budapest, Damascus, Sarajevo, Sochi, and Yerevan, strengthening connectivity across key regional and international markets. Operational capability was further enhanced with the entry into service of Jazeera Airways' first A320neo aircraft equipped with Expliseat TiSeat 2X seats, delivering up to 1.2 metric tonnes of weight reduction per aircraft, lowering fuel burn and



Jazeera Airways Chairman Marwan Boodai



CO2 emissions.

During the year, Jazeera Airways was awarded a national non-scheduled (charter) air carrier tender by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), authorizing domestic and international charter operations from Saudi Arabia. In parallel, continued investment in digital and passenger-centric innovations further strengthened the end-to-end travel experience.

Overall, 2025 marked a year of operational maturity, with the airline successfully balancing growth with resilience while reinforcing the foundations for long-term expansion.

In collaboration with KFMB, Mishref Co-op, and Namaa Charity

talabat leads Ramadan Food Basket initiative

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: In preparation for Ramadan, talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, announced spearheading the Ramadan Food Basket initiative, its latest partner-centric collaboration with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company (KFMB), Mishref Co-op, and Namaa Charity. The initiative solidifies talabat's commitment to fostering a culture of partnership and collaboration that transcends business success and extends to promoting shared welfare and social cohesion across Kuwait.

The Ramadan Food Baskets campaign aims to deliver 600 boxes of essential food baskets to families in need across Kuwait, ensuring their primary needs are met throughout the holy month and fostering a culture of solidarity across society.

The initiative comes as part of talabat's year-long corporate social responsibility (CSR) program, which focuses on elevating community members' quality of daily life through joint efforts with civil-society as well as private and public sector entities, guaranteeing a lasting positive impact across Kuwait's social fabric.

In a bid to reinforce the company's culture of community engagement, talabat employees, beginning with senior managers, volunteered their time and effort to assist with food basket packing, which took place at the Mishref Co-op. More volunteers across the employment hierarchy from KFMB, Mishref Co-op and Namaa Charity participated in the packaging process, while distribution was carried out in collaboration with Namaa Charity, ensuring the food baskets were delivered to the most deserving families.

"As we approach the month of giving, we double down on our CSR efforts to assist amongst our society and to invite our partners to consolidate resources and expertise into high-impact initiatives that propel our community forward in unison," commented Bader Al-Ghanim, Vice President and Managing Director at talabat Kuwait. "We are grateful for all employees who volunteered in the Ramadan Food Basket preparation efforts and for all partners who made the campaign a success it is."

On his part, Nabil Juhail, Head of the Sales Department at KFMB, said: "The holy month is a wonderful opportunity for members of society to come together – as corporate citizens, charities, or individuals – to offer acts of service and ensure that fruits of



talabat - Ramadan Food Basket

success and growth are shared amongst us all. We are delighted to have been part of the Ramadan Food Baskets initiative in collaboration with our partners at talabat who continue to be at the epicenter of mindful positive change in Kuwait."

Meanwhile, Muath Othman Hamad Al-Yahya, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mishref Co-op, added: "We are delighted to have hosted and participated in the preparation of the Ramadan Food Baskets in collaboration with talabat and their network of proactive partners. The holy month is a reminder and a motivation for all of us, individuals and entities, to come together as one and look after one another, especially the underprivileged members of our community."

Lastly, Ibrahim Al-Sanea, Director of the Marketing Department at Namaa Charity, concluded saying: "We are always honored to collaborate with members of the community, such as talabat, who share our dedication to creating a sustainable positive change in society. On occasions like Ramadan, it is important to remember that everyone benefits when we step forward to help those in need, for only a society that leaves no one behind is one that is capable of achieving the prosperity we all dream of."

It is worth noting that talabat actively engages its network of partners through year-round CSR initiatives, inspiring collective action towards the nation's mission for achieving sustainable development goals under the umbrella of Kuwait Vision 2035.

He revealed that one of the important objectives identified by the feasibility study is to attract foreign investment into the oil sector through leasing rather than selling, while maximizing sector revenues and maintaining the current level of operational oil production at KOC without any changes.

Shaheen project aligns with Constitution

Oil remains state-owned despite pipeline leasing

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: In view of the plan of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to invest \$65 billion to raise oil production capacity to four million barrels per day by 2035, and the launching of the 'Shaheen' project—which allows foreign investment in the Kuwaiti oil pipeline sector owned by Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), the oil, economic and legal experts clarified that the project to lease portions of Kuwait's crude oil production and export pipelines does not mean the foreign companies will share ownership of the natural resources of the country.

According to the experts, this is evident in the fact that the lease agreements will be limited to a certain period in accordance with Article 21 of the Kuwaiti Constitution. They stressed that KPC will not permit any international company to own even a single drop of Kuwait's oil production.

Oil expert Hajjaj Boukhadour explained that KPC's move toward a financing mechanism based on a 'lease or leaseback' arrangement for part of the local pipeline network—valued at up to \$7 billion—falls within the framework of asset monetization to enhance financing, rather than constituting any form of partnership in ownership of oil wealth.

He pointed out that the proposed structure of the project grants investors a fixed-term contractual right in exchange for financial returns, while Kuwait retains full ownership and operational sovereignty within the announced framework.

He confirmed that this strategic project is in line with the development objectives of the oil sector under Kuwait Vision 2035 and the 2040 strategy of KPC, with the aim of improving the efficiency and resilience of infrastructure in the midst of geopolitical risks.

Regarding claims that leasing Kuwaiti oil pipelines is intended to secure alternative export routes in the event of disruption to the Strait of Hormuz remain a strategic option "under study and development," and have not yet reached the stage of a finalized or announced plan.

Economic and legal expert Adabi Al-Tahnoon said the current debate surrounding the leasing of KPC's oil pipelines is an implicit and indirect form of participation. He explained that the rental value—expected to be determined during the project's development—will be considered part of the revenues generated from the operation of these pipelines.

He added that the study conducted on leasing these pipelines did not classify the project as a sale of Kuwait's natural resources, or any portion thereof. "Rather, it strictly concerns the leasing of some—but not all—of the pipelines, in a manner that will generate additional financial returns for the corporation," he explained.

national and political agreements between KPC and major global powers, particularly since some international agreements restrict the production of certain petroleum derivatives. "Accordingly, leasing the pipelines is necessary to avoid breaching such agreements," he elaborated.

He stressed that the project to lease some of Kuwait's oil pipelines was examined from a legal standpoint to ensure full compliance with the Constitution and to prevent constitutional violations.

He reiterated that the project does not contravene Article 21 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, which stipulates that "all natural resources and their sources are the property of the State, which is responsible for their preservation and optimal utilization, taking into account the requirements of national security and the national economy."

In the same context, a reliable oil source told the newspaper that KPC will remain the unwavering guardian of the nation's oil wealth and will not allow any international company to own or participate in a single drop of the oil production of the country.

The source added that the issue of leasing Kuwaiti oil pipelines has been raised repeatedly in recent years, particularly given that the pipeline network of the Kuwaiti oil sector is interconnected through multiple routes linking northern oil fields with western fields, as well as connecting them to the refineries of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)—Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi—along with Al-Zour refinery, which currently falls under the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) and is set to be merged with KNPC following the announcement of the final stages of the merger.

The source emphasized that the oil and gas pipelines operated by KOC meet international standards, with diameters of 48 inches, and that they transport single-stage well flow lines with manifolds and an expected operational lifespan exceeding 25 years.

He added the study conducted on leasing these pipelines did not classify the project as a sale of Kuwait's natural resources, or any portion thereof. "Rather, it strictly concerns the leasing of some—but not all—of the pipelines, in a manner that will generate additional financial returns for the corporation," he explained.

He revealed that one of the important objectives identified by the feasibility study is to attract foreign investment into the oil sector through leasing rather than selling, while maximizing sector revenues and maintaining the current level of operational oil production at KOC without any changes.

ABK Group holds EOY 2025 analyst conference call



Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol, GCEO

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently hosted its EOY 2025 analyst conference attended by Giel-Jan M. Van Der Tol, Group CEO; Shiamak Soonawalla, Group CFO; Dr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer; and Osama Ezzeldin, Assistant General Manager of Strategy and Follow Up.

Strong Performance

Commencing the call, Van Der Tol highlighted, "2025 was a year marked by strong financial performance, disciplined execution, and tangible progress against our long-term strategy, as we continued to focus on building sustainable, long-term value for our shareholders."

He shared that it delivered a robust 19.4% year-on-year increase in net profit attributable to shareholders to KD 62.6 million in 2025. Earnings per share also strengthened to 22 fils, up from 20 fils last year, reflecting the quality and sustainability of our earnings.

He affirmed, "This performance was driven by disciplined balance sheet management, an improved funding mix, and continued cost control. At the same time, our capital position further strengthened, with the total capital adequacy ratio increasing by 217 bps to 19.11%, up from 16.94% last year, underpinning the quality and strength of our balance sheet and supporting our disciplined growth strategy."

Van Der Tol continued, "We continued to prioritize asset quality over balance sheet expansion, focusing on higher-quality, prudently underwritten assets that deliver attractive risk-adjusted returns. On the funding side, we continued to rely on our strong and stable deposit base. This deliberate strategic focus enabled us to maintain disciplined underwriting standards, and as a result, asset quality metrics remained well controlled, with the NPL ratio marginally increasing by a mere 6 bps to 1.29%."

He added, "From a capital perspective, we remain in a strong and resilient position. Our CET1 ratio of 13.37% and total capital adequacy ratio of 19.11% are well above regulatory thresholds, providing us with the strategic capacity, flexibility, and confidence to support the next phase of growth while maintaining prudent buffers across the cycle."

The GCEO mentioned that, in the fourth quarter, ABK completed a KD 30 million Tier 2 bond issuance which was oversubscribed by more than five times. He emphasized, "This strong demand reflects investor confidence in ABK's credit profile and strategic direction. The issuance was aligned with our proactive capital planning approach, while preserving flexibility for selective growth."

Furthermore, Fitch reaffirmed the Bank's 'A' rating with a stable outlook in February 2026, while Moody's maintained its 'A2' rating with a stable outlook in May 2025. These affirmations underscore the consistency of ABK's financial performance, capital strength, and disciplined risk management framework.

Beyond financial performance, Van Der Tol elaborated that ABK continued to advance its digital transformation agenda, with enhancements across the Bank's mobile and online platforms aimed at improving customer experience and operational efficiency. In parallel, ABK continued to modernize its branch and ATM network by expanding self-service capabilities and optimizing core processes, resulting in higher digital adoption, improved turnaround times, and a more efficient operating model.

He added, "Our performance continues to be supported by a strong focus on human capital. With Kuwaitis representing approximately 73% of leadership roles and women accounting for 40% of our workforce, we continue to strengthen our execution capability through a diverse and high-performing talent base. We remain committed to investing in our people, fostering a performance-driven culture, with a clear commitment to building a capable, diverse, and future-ready organization."

Closing his statement, Van Der Tol said, "Looking ahead to 2026, we are confident in the Group's strategic positioning. Our focus will remain on selective expansion, disciplined execution, and capturing value-accretive opportunities across regional and global markets. We will continue to prioritize risk-adjusted returns over scale, uphold the highest standards of governance, and deliver best-in-class solutions aligned with the evolving needs of our customers."



Shiamak Soonawalla, Group Chief Finance Officer

Financial Indicators

On his part, Soonawalla highlighted, "Overall, the year reflects a stronger and more sustainable earnings profile, supported by solid financial performance and a continued focus on sustainable, risk-adjusted returns."

Turning to the key financial metrics, net profit attributable to shareholders increased by 19.4% year-on-year to reach KD 62.6 million. Earnings per share rose to 22 fils, reflecting the underlying quality and strength of ABK's performance.

Operating income reached KD 221.5 million, up 10.3% year-on-year, driven by broad-based and diversified revenue growth across core business lines. Importantly, this translated into stronger profitability, with operating profit increasing by 15.9% to KD 124.5 million, supported by revenue momentum and disciplined cost management. He emphasized, "Overall, this reflects the resilience of our operating model and its ability to deliver profitable growth."

On efficiency, he added that ABK's strategic initiatives continued to deliver, as reflected in its cost-to-income ratio, which improved to 43.8% in 2025.

From a business mix perspective, Commercial Banking remained the primary operating income driver, contributing 48%, followed by Retail Banking at 36% and Treasury and Investments at 16%. This was mirrored in a broadly stable balance sheet, with 56% of assets allocated to Commercial Banking, 14% to Retail Banking, and 30% to Treasury and Investments.

Net interest margin (NIM) improved to 2.35%, supported by effective pricing and funding cost management, while return on average equity (ROAE) stood at 8.65% for the year ended 2025, broadly in line with last year.

Turning to the balance sheet, as at 31 December 2025, the Group's total assets reached KD 6.9 billion. Net loans and advances stood at KD 4.6 billion, reflecting our selective and prudent strategy of prioritizing portfolio quality and value over volume.

Soonawalla added that customer deposits stood at KD 4.1 billion, representing 66% of ABK's total liabilities, underscoring the stability of our funding base and the continued confidence of our customers.

He continued, "Asset quality remained well controlled during the year. The Group's non-performing loans (NPL) ratio remained broadly in line with last year, contained at a healthy level of 1.29%, while the loan loss coverage ratio remained strong at 366%. In addition, loan loss provisions held in accordance with Central Bank of Kuwait guidelines exceeded IFRS 9 requirements by KD 215 million, providing additional protection and buffers further reinforcing our balance sheet."

In addition, liquidity and funding positions remained comfortable, with a liquidity coverage ratio of 269% and a net stable funding ratio of 113%, both maintained well above regulatory thresholds.

"To bring it all together, 2025 was a year of measured execution and high-quality earnings. We remained selective in our growth, focused on balance sheet quality, and managed risk and costs carefully, resulting in more resilient and sustainable outcomes," Soonawalla concluded.

Executing Plans

Jawad proceeded to elaborate that ABK continued to sharpen its focus on targeted execution, particularly across the youth and high-value segments, supporting retail customer acquisition through participation in key consumer platforms. The Bank also deepened private banking engagement through tailored client initiatives and a strengthened wealth proposition.

He said, "Collectively, these efforts supported market share gains across mass and premium segments, with products such as cards contributing positively to lending portfolio growth. In parallel, we continued to strengthen our payments offerings by expanding acquiring capabilities, growing the merchant ecosystem, and enhancing our digital payment solutions."

As part of this continued execution, ABK received four recognitions from International Finance in Q4 2025. These awards were for Best New Mobile Banking App, Most Innovative Investment Advisory Company, Fastest Growing Wealth Management Solution Provider, and Best Investor Relations Bank. He stated, "These recognitions are consistent



Dr. Abdulaziz Jawad, Chief Strategy Officer

with the progress we are making across digital capabilities, advisory services, and stakeholder engagement, and align with our broader focus on customer-centric delivery."

The UAE and Egypt

In the UAE, Jawad shared that ABK-DIFC continued to build momentum during the quarter. "We successfully concluded our first corporate DCM mandate, acting as joint lead manager and bookrunner. The debut USD 850 million senior unsecured transaction was 3.8 times oversubscribed and achieved the tightest spread in the GCC for a BBB-rated corporate bond, representing a strong endorsement of our credit and our execution capability," he shared.

Furthermore, the Bank successfully delivered the planned expansion of its real estate escrow services in the UAE. He disclosed, "In Q4 2025, ABK-UAE became the first Kuwaiti GCC bank to receive approval from the Abu Dhabi Real Estate Center (ADREC) to act as a real estate escrow agent bank in Abu Dhabi, further reinforcing our presence and positioning in the UAE market."

He continued, "Zooming in on ABK-Egypt, we focused on strengthening capital efficiency and risk management. In December, the Bank applied for a Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) to support capital optimization and expand access to financing, particularly for SMEs, while encouraging climate-related lending in line with ABK-Egypt's strategy."

Alongside these balance sheet initiatives, ABK-Egypt advanced its operating and digital transformation agenda, including the rollout of a 360-degree CRM platform and the successful migration of the corporate franchise to a new digital banking platform, enabling the full decommissioning of legacy systems and driving strong early client adoption.

ABK Wealth Management

Jawad touched upon ABK Capital's recent rebranding and consolidation with Private Banking to become ABK Wealth Management, aligning the Bank's private banking and investment capabilities under a single, more coherent offering. He said, "This was complemented by enhancing our digital capabilities, including the launch of an online multi-market trading application and seamless digital onboarding via KNET and the mobile banking application."

Furthermore, during Q4 2025, ABK Wealth Management acted as joint lead manager on two bond issuances, reflecting its expanding role in supporting capital markets' activity and client solutions. This translated into solid financial performance, with AUM growing by about 9% to cross the KD 1 billion mark and net income increasing by an impressive 36%.

ESG

Finally, turning to ESG, Jawad claimed, "We made meaningful progress in 2025 by moving from commitment to execution through stronger governance and the development of foundational capabilities for effective delivery. We also conducted a bank-wide ESG training program to sharpen awareness and ownership across the organization."

He added that ABK enhanced transparency and accountability through improved ESG disclosures aligned with leading international frameworks, including stronger reporting on ESG-linked lending and sustainable finance activities. He continued, "In parallel, we advanced key ESG enablers by strengthening sustainable finance readiness, integrating climate risk into risk management discussions, establishing ESG performance monitoring tools, and completing a baseline assessment of Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas emissions to support our carbon-reduction planning. These actions supported improvements in ESG ratings across Bloomberg, MSCI, and S&P Global."

He emphasized that ABK remains focused on executing its 2026 ESG priorities, building long-term resilience, supporting inclusive growth, and reinforcing alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the broader transition toward a low-carbon economy.

Concluding his statement, Jawad said, "Looking ahead, our focus is on accelerating delivery and deepening impact across our markets. We have built solid momentum on the back of strong fundamentals, continued progress on our transformation agenda, and expanding digital reach. The upcoming strategy refresh will build on this progress, setting a clear path for ABK's next phase of growth and value creation."

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?

Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
We'll feature it on our What's On page!

Under the theme 'Driven by You and Your Safety is Our Responsibility'

Burgan Bank & Kuwait Fire Force launch safety awareness campaign during camping season

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Stemming from its national role in supporting community safety and promoting responsible behaviors, Burgan Bank announced its cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Force to launch a joint awareness campaign during the desert camping season, under the slogan "Driven by You and Your Safety is Our Responsibility." The campaign aims to raise awareness of camping safety precautions, reduce accidents, and promote sound practices that contribute to protecting lives and property and preserving the natural environment. This aligns with the Burgan Bank's social responsibility and sustainability pillars, including its adherence to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.

Both managers and volunteer employees from Burgan Bank actively participated in the campaign, underscoring the Bank's dedication to fostering a culture of community engagement, which manifests in many efforts such as involving employees in social campaigns and events as part of its corporate mission. This invitation to take part in community initiatives echoes Burgan Bank's position as a supportive employer and a certified Great Place to Work®.

In addition, leaders from the Kuwait Fire Force supported the awareness efforts by participating in field activities, reinforcing the importance of leadership presence in initiatives that affect public safety.

"We are proud of this campaign and the positive feedback we have received through direct interaction with campers," commented Ms. Hessa Al-Najada, Senior Manager – Media Relations and CSR at Burgan Bank. "Our social responsibility has become a national responsibility, which drives Burgan Bank to implement field initiatives with a real impact, promoting public safety and preserving the environment through effective partnerships that support government efforts and



Hessa Al-Najada, Senior Manager – Media Relations and CSR at Burgan Bank



Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Al-Hajji, Public Relations and Media Officer at the Kuwait Fire Force



Burgan Bank team with Kuwait Fire Force personnel in a group photo during the awareness campaign.

- The campaign aims to raise awareness of camping related safety procedures and reduce the risk of accidents.
- Active participation from management and volunteer employees underscores the Bank's commitment to community engagement and its involvement in social campaigns and events.
- Field visits were conducted at several locations and camping safety kits, containing essential camping equipment, were distributed.

are in line with the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035."

The campaign included field visits to several camping sites where desert visitors were educated on fire prevention guidelines and the safe use of camping equipment. Burgan Bank, in cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Force, also distributed desert safety kits that included essential tools for preparedness during camping, such as a first aid kit, a fire blanket, a fire extinguisher, in addition to awareness materials on safety guidelines. The kits also included print material that highlights key messages of the "Let's Be Aware" (Diraya) banking awareness campaign, under the supervision of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Kuwait Banking Association, with the support of Kuwaiti banks. The awareness printouts include financial literacy essentials as well as vital tips on averting the risk of financial fraud, altogether promoting the safe use of banking services.

On part, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Al-Hajji, Public Relations and Media Officer at the Kuwait

Fire Force said: "We thank Burgan Bank for this constructive collaboration, reaffirming that the partnership between the public and private sectors represents a fundamental pillar in the success of awareness campaigns and the promotion of a culture of safety among members of society. This initiative also contributes to raising the level of awareness among campers and supporting our efforts in reducing accidents and protecting lives and property."

It serves to note that Burgan Bank remains committed to organizing and supporting purposeful community and awareness initiatives throughout the year, affirming its national role in serving the community and its dedication to reinforcing safety principles. The Bank's unwavering responsibility towards its community manifests in strategic partnerships that achieve a sustainable positive impact and enhance its position as an active partner in serving the Kuwaiti community.



Minister Dr. Nader Al-Jalal and University Director Dr. Dina Al-Mailem at the Warba Bank's booth, in the presence of Chairman Hamad Al-Sayer and CEO Shaheen Al-Ghanem.

'Investing in future leaders'

Warba sponsors the Kuwait University Cultural Festival

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting local academic institutions and fostering cultural dialogue within the society, Warba Bank announced its sponsorship of the cultural and entertainment festival organized by Kuwait University on campus.

The event brought together students and faculty members and is attended by Their Excellencies the ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, along with a number of ambassadors accredited to the State of Kuwait. The presence of Warba Bank's Chief Executive Officer further confirms the importance the Bank places on this strategic partnership.

This sponsorship reaffirms Warba Bank's pivotal role in supporting initiatives that enrich the cultural and academic landscape, while providing a platform for constructive engagement between young generations and the country's intellectual and diplomatic leaders. The festival stands out as a unique gathering that blends purposeful entertainment with cultural exchange, contributing to broadening students' perspectives and strengthening their sense of belonging to both their academic community and the nation.

On this occasion, Mr. Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, Chief Executive Officer of Warba Bank, stated: "Our sponsorship of the Kuwait University Cultural Festival reflects our deep pride in this distinguished national academic institution, which represents a beacon of knowledge and learning in the State of Kuwait. At Warba Bank, we firmly believe that supporting academic institutions is an integral part of our social responsibility and a direct investment in the minds that will lead our nation into the future."

Al-Ghanem added: "Our presence, alongside Their Excellencies the ambassadors, sends a clear message that we are committed partners in building bridges between the private sector and the academic and diplomatic communities. We do not view this sponsorship as mere support for an event, but rather as an opportunity to promote cultural dialogue and reaffirm that our role extends beyond banking services to include meaningful contributions to the intellectual and cultural development of society. Kuwait University is a cornerstone in shaping future leaders and thinkers, and our support is, ultimately, support for Kuwait's future."

On the same occasion, Dr. Dina Musa Al-Mailem, President of Ku-

wait University, extended her highest congratulations and best wishes to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah - may God protect him - to His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah - may God protect him - and to the people of Kuwait, on the occasion of the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day anniversaries. She noted that national celebrations embody deeply rooted values of patriotism and reflect Kuwait University's pioneering role - as the country's oldest academic institution, in supporting national development through preparing national talent and fostering an environment that encourages innovation and excellence. She also expressed her appreciation to all supporting and participating entities in this national celebration.

The festival provided students with an opportunity to engage, interact and participate in a variety of activities. Warba Bank's presence at this academic gathering reflects its commitment to building sustainable relationships with leading educational institutions in Kuwait and its continued support for cultural and social initiatives that contribute to the development of a knowledge-based society and reinforce Kuwait's position as a regional cultural and intellectual hub.

Warba Bank continues to invest in numerous initiatives and programs aimed at empowering youth. Among the most prominent is the "Rowad" program, which recently celebrated its sixth edition and attracts outstanding Kuwaiti and GCC students studying at leading European universities, providing them with training in advanced financial technology and artificial intelligence. The Bank also offers the "Intilaqa" internship program, designed to prepare new graduates for the job market by equipping them with practical experience, in addition to sponsoring entrepreneurship events and conferences that support young innovators.

Warba Bank is among the banks that have achieved significant success in a relatively short period, securing a leading position in Islamic digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases among local banks, the Bank remains close to all segments of society. This sponsorship further reinforces Warba Bank's position as a trusted banking partner that combines innovation with social responsibility in delivering high-quality financial services and products.

Refined Iftar and Ghabga banqueting

Specially crafted banqueting menus rotate weekly and highlight a vast array of regional and international flavours: mezze and salads; sushi, Ouzi, and pasta; live tandoori sta-

tions, and premium date and cheese selections. A lavish dessert room takes guests on a decadent journey through traditional treats from Turkish delights, kunafa and Arabic sweets to ice cream, fresh fruit, and a chocolate fountain.

Li Beirut, the hotel's Lebanese restaurant, presents a thoughtfully crafted Iftar buffet and à la carte Ghabga plus seasonal Ramadan menus. With indoor and outdoor terrace seating, it also features a refined Arabic coffee service and daily live music from 9:00 pm to 12:00 am.

The Four Seasons Ramadan cake

Adding a sweetly symbolic touch to the celebrations, Executive Pastry Chef Ahmed Said Abdelrahman Mohamed has designed a signature Ramadan cake. Inspired by the quiet nights of the holy month, it layers ripe dates, golden honey, roasted pistachios, and silky white chocolate, complete with delicate Arabic-inspired decorations. Guests can enjoy the same signature cake across all Four Seasons hotels celebrating the holy month in a meaningful gesture of unity and connection.

Connection across generations

Marking a cherished, centuries-old Gulf Ramadan tradition, the hotel's Gergean celebrations bring families together after Iftar and prayers to share themed activities and connection. Taking place on the 13th, 14th and 15th day of Ramadan, the festivities include a sweet gift for the children.

Special spa and room offers

Serene moments come courtesy of a Ramadan spa offer, with guests who book a 60-minute massage at KD 65 receiving an extra 30 minutes complimentary. Flexible 24-hour stays in any room or suite category from KWD 115+ include a delicious dawn Iftar meal in the Jawaher Tent (only available for bookings made through the hotel).

An opulent Eid Al Fitr:

Closing out the month's meaningful festivities, guests can celebrate Eid Al Fitr at Sky 21 with a 360-degree buffet brunch experience, featuring live stations, indoor and outdoor seating, and panoramic city views. Children aged between six and 11 years receive a 50% discount.

"Ramadan is one of our favourite times of year to welcome people together at Four Seasons Kuwait," says General Manager Martin Kipping. "This year we've turned the Jawaher Tent into a luminous sanctuary complete with 300 chandeliers; a beautiful place to slow down, connect, and share special moments with family and friends throughout the holy month." Executive Chef Thierry Papillier adds, "Our menus are all about generosity and variety, bringing together comforting Ramadan favourites and global flavours, and celebrating the joy of coming together around the table. We look forward to welcoming all."

The Jawaher Tent experience runs daily throughout Ramadan with reservations recommended. For more information, visit FourSeasons.com/Kuwait or email reservations@fourseasons.com or call 22006000.

Inspired by tradition, comfort, and celebration

Home Centre unveils its Ramadan 2026 collection

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: As homes across Kuwait prepare to welcome the holy month of Ramadan, Home Centre has unveiled its latest Ramadan collection "Your Ramadan Answered", thoughtfully designed to reflect the season's spirit of togetherness, generosity, and meaningful gatherings at home.

Ramadan is a time when homes take on a deeper role. Spaces transform into hosting, longer evenings, shared meals, and quiet moments of reflection. Recognizing this shift, Home Centre's Ramadan collection has been curated to support the way families truly live during the season, blending comfort with elegance, tradition with modern design, and beauty with everyday practicality.

Guided by a deep understanding of home life in Kuwait, Home Centre continues to design collections that feel lived-in and authentic. Rather than focusing on seasonal aesthetics alone, the brand approaches Ramadan as an experience shaped by connection, warmth, and the moments that unfold around the home.

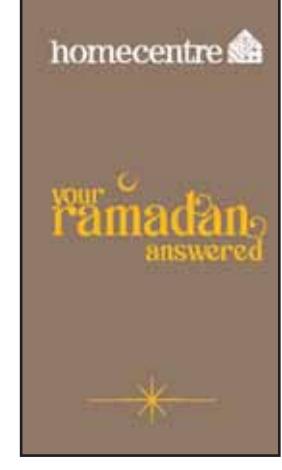
This year's collection is introduced through three distinct design narratives, each offering its own interpretation of Ramadan living.

Dahab draws inspiration from regional heritage and timeless elegance, characterized by warm tones, subtle gold accents, and rich textures. The collection creates a sense of grounded sophistication, ideal for hosting gatherings that feel both welcoming and refined.

Raqiya reflects balance and calm, designed for everyday comfort throughout the month. With its clean lines, soft finishes, and understated elegance, the collection supports spaces that adapt effortlessly to family living, from quiet mornings to intimate evening gatherings.

Fanous captures the festive spirit of Ramadan through light and atmosphere. Inspired by the symbolism of the traditional lantern, the collection introduces decorative touches that add warmth, glow, and a celebratory feel to the home, enhancing the ambience of Ramadan nights.

Commenting on the launch, Rohit Nanda, Executive Vice President and Coun-



Group photo.

try Head – Kuwait at Landmark Group, said: "Ramadan is a deeply meaningful time for families, where homes become the heart of connection and shared moments. At HomeCentre, our approach has always been to design for real life. This collection reflects how people in Kuwait live, gather, and celebrate during the month, creating

spaces that feel warm, comfortable, and welcoming. Our aim is to support those moments that truly matter, in a way that feels natural and authentic."

The Ramadan collection is now available across HomeCentre stores in Kuwait, delivering value-driven collections that evolve with the way people live, celebrate, and connect.

meaning and comfort into their homes throughout the holy month.

As part of Landmark Group, HomeCentre continues to strengthen its role as a trusted home destination for families in Kuwait, delivering value-driven collections that evolve with the way people live, celebrate, and connect.

Ransom deadlines pass; FBI urges public help

FBI unaware of any Guthrie family contact with suspected kidnappers

TUCSON, Ariz., Feb 10, (AP): The FBI is not aware of ongoing communication between Savannah Guthrie's family and any suspected kidnappers more than a week after the "Today" show host's mom went missing, the agency said Monday.

The FBI has also not identified any suspects or persons of interest in the disappearance of 84-year-old Nancy Guthrie, Connor Hagan, a spokesperson for the FBI, said in a statement. The agency is operating a 24-hour command post equipped with investigative teams and crisis management experts while asking for help from the public.

"Someone has that one piece of information that can help us bring Nancy home," he said.

In a video released Monday, Savannah Guthrie said the family was "at an hour of desperation" but that they continue to believe her mother is out there and hearing everyone's prayers.

"She was taken and we don't know where, and we need your help," Guthrie said in the video posted on Instagram, urging people nationwide to be on the lookout "no matter where you are, even if you're far from Tucson, if you see anything, if you hear anything."

By Monday evening, a purported ransom deadline apparently set by her mom's abductors appeared to have

passed.

The mysterious disappearance and search has riveted the country - from President Donald Trump, who spoke with Savannah Guthrie last week, to the online sleuths who've flooded social media with tips, theories and rumors.

The FBI is asking for the public's help on digital billboards up in several major cities in Texas, California, Arizona and New Mexico. The FBI has offered a \$50,000 reward for information.

Multiple news outlets received alleged ransom letters during the past week. At least one letter made monetary demands and set deadlines for receiving the money. The first deadline passed last Thursday and a second one was set for Monday evening.

Law enforcement officials declined to affirm that the letters were credible but said all tips were being investigated seriously. The Pima County Sheriff's Department said Monday that law enforcement tip lines have received thousands of calls.

Authorities say they have growing concerns about Nancy Guthrie's health because she needs daily medication. She is said to have a pacemaker and has dealt with high blood pressure and heart issues, according to sheriff's dispatcher audio on broadcastify.com.



In this image provided by NBCUniversal, Savannah Guthrie, right, her mom Nancy speak, April 17, 2019, in New York. (AP)

In a video Saturday, Savannah Guthrie said the family was prepared to pay for her mother's return. "This is the only way we will have peace. This is very valuable to us,

and we will pay."

Authorities believe Nancy Guthrie was taken against her will from her home just outside Tucson. She was last seen there Jan. 31 and reported missing the next day after not attending church. DNA tests showed blood on Guthrie's front porch was a match to her, and her doorbell camera was disconnected in the early hours of Sunday morning, Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos has said.

Outside the home on Monday, neighbors strolled by on their morning jogs and walks, while a county sheriff's deputy remained stationed out front.

Law enforcement's work at Guthrie residences will continue Tuesday "as part of the ongoing investigative process, including the expansion of the search and follow-up on new leads," the Pima County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Monday.

Detectives and agents carried out follow-up work in the neighborhood and other locations over the weekend as part of the investigation, the Pima County Sheriff's Department said Sunday.

Investigators on Saturday were inside daughter Annie Guthrie's home, about 4 miles (6 kilometers) from Nancy Guthrie's house. On Sunday, an investigator was seen using a pole to search an underground tank behind Nancy Guthrie's home.

Music

Singer's streams soar

Bad Bunny's show unites all of America

NEW YORK, Feb 10, (AP): To better understand some of the significance of Bad Bunny's historic Super Bowl halftime performance on Sunday night, start at the end.

"God Bless America," were the first and few English-language words uttered by the Spanish-language performer, who then proceeded to list countries in the Americas, including the United States and Canada. Behind him, a screen read: "The only thing more powerful than hate is love," a direct reference to his speech at the 2026 Grammy Awards where the Puerto Rican superstar took home the top prize.

America, he seemed to be reminding his global audience including viewers in the US, makes up a number of countries in the Western Hemisphere.

It was a poignant gesture for an artist whose performance was politicized the moment it was announced, labeled un-American by his detractors despite the fact that Puerto Ricans are US citizens. Most recently President Donald Trump described his set as "an affront to the Greatness of America."

In the final moments of his performance, Bad Bunny was joined by a crowd waving flags of different countries in the Americas, but also "territories of other countries like Bonaire or the US Virgin Islands," said Petra Rivera-Rideau, associate professor of American studies at Wellesley College and co-author of "P.F.K.N.R.: How Bad Bunny Became the Global Voice of Puerto Rican Resistance."

He was also surrounded by plena musicians - a Puerto Rican genre associated with community and protest - and held a football that read, "Together, we are America."

Statement

"This is a really profound statement of Latino belonging in the United States and immigrant belonging in the United States," Rivera-Rideau said. "Bad Bunny is obviously very aware of the backlash against this halftime show. And a lot of that backlash has to do with this assumption that because it's in Spanish, it's somehow excluding people. And I think what we saw last night with Bad Bunny's halftime show is that he was actually including people, inviting people into his world and at the same time, making a case that immigrants and Latinos are as much a fabric of the United States as anything else."

Simultaneously, he made the argument for "America" as a larger, hemispheric identity.

"He is trying to reframe America as this continent-spanning container," said Reanna Cruz, music critic and senior producer for Vox Media's music podcast Switched on Pop. "The main takeaway I have from the performance is the highlight of community. ... If we have nothing else in times of hardship, we have community and we have joy, and a way to access that is to not shut out your fellow humans in whatever country it may be. The reframing of America as something that spans half the globe is really radical."

There's a long history of that idea. "Everyone from Rubén Lárez to Los Tigres del Norte have created songs that have used this idea of all of the Americas coming together ... of America being a kind of a cohesive unit," said Rivera-Rideau. "But I think what it really boils down to is a statement that Latinos, Latin Americans, Caribbean people, immigrants, they belong and they're just as American as anybody else."

Also:

SAN FRANCISCO: Bad Bunny's Super Bowl halftime performance translated into an immediate surge in global listening, with new data from Apple Music showing sharp gains across streaming charts, playlists and music discovery platforms in the hours following the show.

Apple Music, a Super Bowl halftime show sponsor, said Monday that Bad Bunny's show playlist became the most-played set list on the music streaming platform shortly after the performance. The Puerto Rican superstar went on to dominate the Apple Music Daily Top 100 Global chart, landing 23 songs in the Top 100, including nine in the Top 25 and five in the Top 10. His track "DLMF" rose to No. 1.

Several of the charting songs marked notable returns. Six of the 23 tracks re-entered the daily Top 100 Global for the first time since at least February 2025. His collaboration on the song "I Like It" with Cardi B and J Balvin re-entered the chart for the first time since January 2020.



Bad Bunny performs during halftime of the NFL Super Bowl 60 football game between the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots, Sunday, Feb. 8, in Santa Clara, Calif. (AP)

Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie in a scene from 'Wuthering Heights.' (AP)

Brontë's classic feels more fan fiction than fury

Fennell's 'Wuthering Heights' is bold but shallow

LOS ANGELES, Feb 10, (AP): It's hardly a surprise that filmmaker Emerald Fennell, who possesses a particular interest in shocking and riling her audience, was drawn to Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights." This is a novel that has vexed critics since the beginning, with one in 1848 decrying its "crude depravity and unnatural horrors." Nearly 179 years after its publication, "Wuthering Heights" may have been re-appraised a classic, but it continues to haunt with that "wild, wicked slip" Catherine Earnshaw and her tumultuous relationship with Heathcliff, he of the "half-civilized ferocity."

It's not just because of the teenagers who can't make it work: Swirling around them are issues of class, race, property, education, inheritance, desire, revenge, trauma and the miserable weather of the Yorkshire moors.

Adaptations have taken various liberties with Brontë's story, cutting characters and plot points in vain attempts to condense and tame its wildness and stubborn amorality. A poster for the 1920 film carried with it the tagline "Emily Brontë's tremendous Story of Hate." More than a century later, it's being sold as a great love story, but, you know, with a wink. This is love (if you want to call it) of the tortured, toxic, obsessive variety.

In a noble attempt to do something different, Fennell decided to make a movie that captured how "Wuthering Heights" made her feel the first time she read it, at age 14. It's a heady experiment - a defiantly anti-academic interpretation that lets Catherine (Margot Robbie) and Heathcliff (Jacob Elordi) finally do something about all that passion. Those quotation marks on the title card promise that this is not Brontë's book at all.

Fennell reduces her story to a more simplistic narrative about hate and its polluting ripple effects. The film begins with a hanging that has young Cathy (Charlotte Mellington) downright ecstatic, but she might just be a product of her environment: Her father (Martin Clunes) is an abusive, unloving drunk and their home is shabby, cold and deteriorating under mounting debts and harsh conditions. Her only companions are essentially employees: a maid, Nelly (Vivian Nguyen as a child and Hong Chau as an adult), and Heathcliff (Owen Cooper), whom she claims as her pet. No Hindleys

or Haretons here.

The miserable Earnshaw way of life stands in stark contrast with their happier, gentler neighbors, the Lintons, who inhabit the primly manicured Thrushcross Grange. Their home is within walking distance of Wuthering Heights and yet, in a sheltered valley, it seems worlds away. As in the book, Cathy decides to deny her heart for the promise of a comfortable life with Edgar Linton. Heathcliff overhears Cathy saying it would degrade her to marry him, and he disappears for years only to reemerge bathed, wealthy and with revenge and some light bondage on his mind. When they meet up again, their dynamic feels like "Wuthering Heights" by way of "Cruel Intentions."

In these sex-deprived times at the cinema, if some corset kink, power games and smoldering star power from two genetically blessed Australians is what you're looking for, "Wuthering Heights" might just satisfy that big-screen itch. There are myriad pleasures to be had in the bold, absurd pageantry and devilish scheming. Alison Oliver's comic timing as the naive, skittish Isabella Linton is a particular delight. With the right crowd, it could make for a fun night out at the movies.

Yet for all the big swings, Fennell's "Wuthering Heights" amounts to something oddly shallow and blunt: garish and stylized fan fiction with the scope and budget of an old-school Hollywood epic.

As Heathcliff, Elordi is certainly brooding, effectively passionate and surprisingly pro-consent, although it's hard to accept the idea that he could pick up a grown woman by the corset string, as tantalizing a prospect as that might be. But for a character famous for his rage, there is little of that primal ferocity he showed so well through all those prosthetics in "Frankenstein." As an actor, he was more unsettlingly toxic as Elvis.

This Heathcliff is mostly there to pine for, protect and punish Cathy. Fennell removes the racial component of Heathcliff's otherness completely by casting Shazad Latif as Edgar Linton. Instead, Heathcliff is just an orphan from Liverpool with a chip on his shoulder.

Robbie plays her role as a kind of gothic Scarlett O'Hara,

selfish, vain, vindictive and bored. Her most interesting moments are those in which she's flustered by stirrings she doesn't quite understand. It's the only thing she can't seem to control and manipulate.

There is also a conscious artificiality to the film, especially at the Grange. Costume designer Jacqueline Durran was beholden to no specific period and drew on all manner of inspiration to create the looks, including 1950s soundstage melodramas. The set design is a little absurd too - Catherine's bedroom has been painted to match her skin color (moles and veins and all). It's not uninteresting to look at, but as a storytelling aid, the surreal, pop art choices are often more distracting than additive. Is it a good thing if the audience is wondering why Catherine is wearing a cellophane dress for her wedding night? If that red skirt is latex (it's not)? Or why all the white hands adorning the fireplace?

A disposition for provocation put Fennell on the map with "Promising Young Woman," a colorfully subversive tale of revenge. "Salburn" might have lost the plot in all the gleeful debauchery, but there's usually at least a loose justification for everything she chooses to show - even a bathtub-slurping social climber.

In her own messy but literate way, she is exploring human capacity for vulgarity and, in turn, pushing mass audiences to the edge into a sometimes tantalizing, sometimes exhausting zone of entertainment and embarrassment. One might suspect that "crowd-pleasing" would be the greatest insult you could throw at her films; still, audiences seem to, well, lap them up. "Wuthering Heights" may also hit a nerve.

Fennell clearly has so many ideas swirling around, which is fitting for a story like "Wuthering Heights." And yet as a viewing experience, it is an undernourishing feast, neither dangerous nor hot enough.

"Wuthering Heights," a Warner Bros. release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "sexual content, some violent content and language." Running time: 136 minutes. Two stars out of four.

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Catherine O'Hara died from a pulmonary embolism, with cancer as the underlying cause.

A Los Angeles County death certificate issued Monday lists the pulmonary embolism, which occurs when a blood clot blocks an artery in the lungs, as the immediate cause of the actor's Jan. 30 death at age 71. Rectal cancer was the long-term cause.

The oncologist who signed off on the certificate indicated that he had been treating O'Hara since March of last year, and last saw her on Jan. 27. She died at a hospital in Santa Monica, California.

The beloved Canadian-born comic actor and "SCTV" alum starred as Macaulay Culkin's mother in two "Home Alone" movies and won an Emmy as the dramatically oblivious wealthy matriarch Moira Rose in "Schitt's Creek."



O'Hara

Her death was a surprise to most, and an initial statement from her representatives said only that she died "following a brief illness." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: In an appreciative nod to Chinese culture, Hollywood kicked off three weeks of Chinese New Year celebrations in Southern California with Ovation Hollywood's annual party on Saturday.

One of Tinseltown's most iconic venues as the home of the Academy Awards, Ovation Hollywood offered a stage for dazzling performances. The shopping center and entertainment complex was adorned with signature red lanterns and intricate paper cuttings, reflecting the traditional symbolism of luck and prosperity.

The air was filled with the rhythms of gongs, drums and laughter as thousands of guests, many new to the holiday, participated in interactive workshops, sampled regional delicacies and watched mesmerizing performances on stage.

The highlights included a special high-profile fashion show by renowned designer Kiki Wang, entitled "East Meets West." Her unique blend of Western high-fashion sophistication with glittering Asian elements, influences and motifs

proved a showstopper, drawing appreciative murmurs from the audience.

The event featured a lively lineup of performers, each bringing a unique aspect of Chinese culture to the fore. Front and center were traditional lion and dragon dance troupes, whose colorful costumes and acrobatic movements captivated audiences of all ages. (Xinhua)

KABUL: A three-day exhibition of women's handicrafts kicked off in western Afghanistan's Herat province, the local media outlet Tolo news reported on Monday.

Featuring a diverse range of handmade products and artistic creations by local women and girls, the event sought to promote both traditional and contemporary crafts, including carpets, flat-weave rugs, felt items, miniature artworks, paintings, ceramic pieces, laser engravings and hand-carved works, the report said, citing the organizer of the fair.

This follows a similar exhibition held last week, also in Herat, which displayed over 120 intricate pieces of miniature art, calligraphy and painting created by 53 Afghan women artists.

These events underscore ongoing efforts to preserve and promote Afghanistan's rich artistic heritage. (Xinhua)

Technology

Opening statements begin in landmark trial against tech giants

Social media 'addicting the brains of children': plaintiff's lawyer

LOS ANGELES, Feb 10, (AP): Comparing social media platforms to casinos and addictive drugs, lawyer Mark Lanier delivered opening statements Monday in a landmark trial in Los Angeles that seeks to hold Instagram owner Meta and Google's YouTube responsible for harms to children who use their products.

Instagram's parent company Meta and Google's YouTube face claims that their platforms addict children through deliberate design choices that keep kids glued to their screens. TikTok and Snap, which were originally named in the lawsuit, settled for undisclosed sums.

Jurors got their first glimpse into what will be a lengthy trial characterized by dueling narratives from the plaintiffs and the two remaining defendants.

Meta lawyer Paul Schmidt spoke of the disagreement within the scientific community over social media addiction, with some researchers believing it doesn't exist, or that addiction is not the most appropriate way to describe heavy social media use.

Lawyers representing YouTube will begin their opening statement on Tuesday.

Lanier, the plaintiff's lawyer, delivered lively first remarks where he said the case will be as "easy as ABC" - which stands for "addicting the brains of children." He said Meta and Google, "two of the richest corporations in history," have "engineered addiction in children's brains."



Young people use their phones to view social media in Sydney, Nov. 8, 2024. (AP)

He presented jurors with a slew of internal emails, documents and studies conducted by Meta and YouTube, as well as YouTube's parent company, Google. He emphasized the findings of a study Meta conducted called "Project Myst" in which they surveyed 1,000 teens and their parents about their social media use. The two major findings, Lanier said, were that Meta knew children who experienced "adverse events" like trauma and stress were particularly vulnerable for addiction; and that parental supervision and controls made little impact.

He also highlighted internal Google documents that likened some company products to a casino,

and internal communication between Meta employees in which one person said Instagram is "like a drug" and they are "basically pushers."

At the core of the Los Angeles case is a 20-year-old identified only by the initials "KGM," whose case could determine how thousands of other, similar lawsuits against social media companies will play out. She and two other plaintiffs have been selected for bellwether trials - essentially test cases for both sides to see how their arguments play out before a jury.

KGM made a brief appearance after a break during Lanier's statement and she will return to testify later in the trial. Lanier spent time describ-

ing KGM's childhood, focusing particularly on what her personality was like before she began using social media. She started using YouTube at age 6 and Instagram at age 9, Lanier said. Before she graduated elementary school, she had posted 284 videos on YouTube.

The outcome of the trial could have profound effects on the companies' businesses and how they will handle children using their platforms.

Lanier said the companies' lawyers will "try to blame the little girl and her parents for the trap they built," referencing the plaintiff. She was a minor when she said she became addicted to social media, which she claims had a detrimental impact on her mental health.

Lanier said that despite the public position of Meta and YouTube being that they work to protect children, their internal documents show an entirely different position, with explicit references to young children being listed as their target audiences.

The attorney also drew comparisons between the social media companies and tobacco firms, citing internal communication between Meta employees who were concerned about the company's lack of proactive action about the potential harm their platforms can have on children and teens.

"For a teenager, social validation is survival," Lanier said. The defendants "engineered a feature that caters to a minor's craving for

social validation," he added, speaking about "like" buttons and similar features.

In his opening statement representing Meta, Schmidt said the core question in the case is whether the platforms were a substantial factor in KGM's mental health struggles. He spent much of his time going through the plaintiff's health records, emphasizing that she had experienced many difficult circumstances in her childhood, including emotional abuse, body image issues and bullying.

Schmidt presented a clip from a video deposition from one of KGM's mental health providers, Dr. Thomas Suberman, who said social media was "not the through-line of what I recall being her main issues," adding that her struggles seemed to largely stem from interpersonal conflicts and relationships. He painted a picture - with KGM's own text messages and testimony pointing to a volatile home life - of a particularly troubled relationship with her mother.

Schmidt acknowledged that many mental health professionals do believe social media addiction can exist, but said three of KGM's providers - all of whom believe in the form of addiction - have never diagnosed her with it, or treated her for it.

Schmidt emphasized to the jurors that the case is not about whether social media is a good thing or whether teens spend too much time on their phones or whether the jurors like or dislike Meta, but whether social

media was a substantial factor in KGM's mental health struggles.

A slew of trials beginning this year seek to hold social media companies responsible for harming children's mental well-being. Executives, including Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, are expected to testify at the Los Angeles trial, which will last six to eight weeks. Experts have drawn similarities to the Big Tobacco trials that led to a 1998 settlement requiring cigarette companies to pay billions in health care costs and restrict marketing targeting minors.

A separate trial in New Mexico, meanwhile, also kicked off with opening statements on Monday. In that trial, Meta is accused of failing to protect young users from sexual exploitation, following an undercover online investigation. Attorney General Raúl Torrez in late 2023 sued Meta and Zuckerberg, who was later dropped from the suit.

A federal bellwether trial beginning in June in Oakland, California, will be the first to represent school districts that have sued social media platforms over harms to children.

In addition, more than 40 state attorneys general have filed lawsuits against Meta, claiming it is harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by deliberately designing features on Instagram and Facebook that addict children to its platforms. The majority of cases filed their lawsuits in federal court, but some sued in their respective states.

Heritage



In this photo provided by the Saudi Media Ministry, Prince William of Wales, speaks to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during his visit to UNESCO World Heritage Site, At-Turaif in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Monday, Feb. 9. (AP)

Milan Cortina opening ceremony gaffes

Who's Mariah Carey? Italian journalists to strike after commentator's blunders

MILAN, Feb 10, (AP): Misidentifying Mariah Carey. Mistaking the Olympics' top boss for the Italian president's daughter. Confusing the location of the opening ceremony. These gaffes at the Milan Cortina Winter Games by a top Italian broadcaster's commentator so thoroughly embarrassed its staff that they're going on strike.

Journalists from RaiSport announced on Monday that they were adopting protest measures - including strikes after the Games end - following RaiSport director Paolo Petrecca's blunder-strewn commentary on Friday.

The channel is part of Rai, the Italian state-owned network that is broadcasting free-to-air coverage of its home Games.

A spokesperson for the broadcaster told The Associated Press that Petrecca has been removed from the commentary team for the Feb. 22 closing ceremony after a meeting on Monday afternoon with Rai CEO Giampaolo Rossi.

First among Petrecca's many mistakes, he welcomed viewers to the "Stadio Olimpico" (In English, "Olympic Stadium"), the name of a massive arena in Rome. In fact, he was standing inside the iconic San Siro, known across Italy as the home to legendary soccer clubs Inter Milan and AC Milan.

"The show continues with Mariah Carey," he said as the camera locked onto Italian actress Matilda De Angelis, who is known throughout the



Singer Mariah Carey performs during the Olympic opening ceremony at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Milan, Italy, Friday, Feb. 6. (AP)

country. Carey is more than 25 years older than her, and a global superstar. (De Angelis has since posted photos of the ceremony to Instagram with the caption: "Please, call me Mariah.")

And when Italian President Sergio Mattarella walked into the stadium with International Olympic Committee President Kirsty Coventry, Petrecca announced "Mattarella ... and his daughter."

The channel's Comitato di Redazione - the internal union body

that represents its journalists - issued a statement on Monday that all reporters and commentators would withhold their bylines until the end of the Winter Olympics, and that there would be three days of strikes after the Games.

"We have all been embarrassed, no one excluded, and through no fault of our own," read the statement. "It is time to make our voices heard because we are facing the worst-ever figure of RaiSport in one of the most eagerly awaited events ever."

Petrecca wasn't supposed to commentate on the opening ceremony, but decided to replace Auro Bulbarelli, who removed himself from the team after spoiling what was meant to be the surprise arrival of Mattarella aboard one of the city's classic orange trams, driven by former motorcycle racer Valentino Rossi.

Among his other errors during Friday's commentary was evidently failing to recognize Italy's male and female volleyball teams. Both are world champions, and the women are also the reigning Olympic champions. Representatives from both carried the Olympic flame toward the end of the ceremony.

Petrecca named only one of the women, while referring to the remaining five champions as "other torchbearers."

"Thanks to the commentators," men's captain Simone Giannelli commented on a post on Instagram, followed by three laughing-crying emojis.

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"Thanks to the commentators," men's captain Simone Giannelli commented on a post on Instagram, followed by three laughing-crying emojis.

She interrupted an answer to say, "Hi, babe!" and leaned in for a hug as Paul put his hands on her shoulders.

AP: You filmed it quite a while ago. When you look back at it, what is it you remember from it the most?

Hodge: It's mostly the people. We have a fantastic cast, our crew is amazing. I actually enjoy spending time with my cast. And we have our own little pockets, you know what I'm saying, like I got a little book club going with my boys on there, you know what I mean? Then some of us, we get out, we go and do the training, or we go have some dinners. But we really just enjoy one another. We all support each other too.

AP: There's an excellent running scene. Do you have to

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Formula 1 team Cadillac is confident it can resolve a dispute with filmmaker Michael Bay, who is suing for \$1.5 million for his ideas being used without permission in a Super Bowl commercial.

In a 19-page lawsuit filed on Friday in Los Angeles Superior Court of California, Bay accused Dan Towriss, the principal owner and CEO of the Cadillac F1 team, of using his ideas for the commercial before he "abruptly decided to go in a different direction."

Cadillac said in a statement to The Associated Press on Monday that it met with Bay a couple of times and "it became clear he couldn't meet our timeline, and there ultimately wasn't a path forward."

"It's unclear why he's bringing this claim since the concept and creative were already developed and we were only exploring him as a director," Cadillac said. "We're confident this will be resolved appropriately. Even so, we still admire Michael Bay's creative brilliance and would welcome the opportunity to work together in the future." (AP)

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A moment later, Paul headed for an arena exit with multiple bodyguards and someone filming his every move for a documentary. Paul wore a scarf with the orange color of the Dutch team as he

watched from a second-row seat while Leerdam finished first in the women's 1,000 meters for her first Olympic gold.

"Man, words can't even describe it. It's the greatest feeling (of) anything I've ever witnessed, to be honest," Paul told The Associated Press. "Just the amount of hard work that goes into it. Like 99.9% of people will never understand. And she pulled it off, under the most amount of pressure ever." (AP)

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have revealed an action plan to promote the inheritance and development of theatrical arts over the next three years, starting from 2026.

According to the plan, efforts will be made to invigorate innovation and creativity in theater, significantly improve the quality of productions, and produce a new batch of outstanding theatrical works.

The plan aims to expand the ranks of theater professionals, with a steady emergence of leading young talent.

It also emphasizes the establishment of a sound mechanism to support, guide and coordinate theatrical creation, along with a marked improvement in the industry ecosystem. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

Complex, chronic care program offers holistic support for children and families

Kuwait's rare pediatric specialty sets new standard in healthcare

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10, (KUNA): Caring for children with complex and chronic conditions is considered one of the rare, modern medical specialties.

It focuses on children with severe disabilities and complex, long-term medical conditions, providing comprehensive and coordinated care that contributes to improving quality of life of children and their families through an integrated approach that takes into account health, psychological and social aspects, placing needs of the child and family at core of care.

This specialty is based on empowering and supporting families to understand the nature of their children's conditions and to deal with them in a scientific and safe manner through health education and continuous training.

This helps families better comprehend their children's health conditions, reduces the psychological and physical burdens associated with daily care and supports their ability to make appropriate medical decisions.

The concept of complex and chronic pediatric care relies on the concept of sustainable care that accompanies the child through different stages of life by coordinating efforts among various medical specialties and providing integrated therapeutic and rehabilitation services inside and outside the hospital, ensuring continuity of care and improving the quality of life for children and their families.

Dr. Ahmad Al-Jaafar, a specialist in complex and chronic pediatric care and pediatric palliative care at Ministry of Health, told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) this specialty is considered one of the rarest medical specialties worldwide due to its delicate humanitarian nature and its direct connection to the quality of life of children and their families.

Official recognition of the specialty dates back to 2007, and the number of specialists remains limited globally.

Dr. Al-Jaafar, the only specialist in this field in Kuwait and head of the Complex and Chronic Pediatric Care Program at

Jahra Hospital, explained that the specialty focuses on children suffering from severe disabilities or complex and chronic medical conditions, such as physical and motor disabilities and conditions requiring permanent medical devices like ventilators and feeding tubes.

He said the primary goal was to improve the child's health and quality of life, while also supporting and assisting families medically, psychologically and socially.

He highlighted the importance of establishing a comprehensive national program based on international recommendations in this field to serve this group of children.

He noted that the program, the first of its kind in Kuwait, was established at Jahra Hospital following a comprehensive study of the needs of different areas, which revealed that the governorate includes a large number of such cases.

Services

Dr. Al-Jaafar stated that the program provides integrated services, including care for hospitalized children, outpatient clinics, home care, as well as continuous follow-ups over the phone and digital health monitoring for families, contributing to reassurance and rapid intervention when needed.

He explained that the program relies on a multi-disciplinary medical team that includes pediatricians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and swallowing therapists and nutrition specialists, in addition to physicians from other specialties such as pulmonology and neurology.

This integration helps reduce families' suffering and spares them the burden of moving between different clinics by providing services in one location.

He added that home care was one of the program's most key components, with medical services provided inside homes for children who are unable to visit the hospital. These services include medical follow-up, sample collection, treatment

provision and vaccinations, which helped ease the burden on families and improve children's quality of life.

Dr. Al-Jaafar also noted that the program works on early discharge planning to avoid unnecessarily long hospital stays, in addition to organizing a smooth transition of care to adult services when patients reach the appropriate age, ensuring continuity of treatment and uninterrupted services.

He explained that the program currently serves more than 85 children, with new cases enrolled weekly according to specific medical criteria, including medical fragility, chronic illness, or involvement of more than one vital organ system.

The ages of beneficiaries range from birth to 14 years, and may extend to 18 years under certain medical conditions.

Dr. Al-Jaafar said the program's outcomes have positively impacted children and their families.

Periodic surveys have shown parental satisfaction and noticeable improvement in the level of care and ease of access to services. Several parental suggestions have been implemented, including the establishment of a specialized training room to prepare families before their children are discharged from hospital.

Conditions

He expressed hope the program will be set up in all hospitals nationwide and that a comprehensive national system for caring for children with complex and chronic conditions will be established, enhancing equity in healthcare delivery and embodying the humanitarian dimension of Kuwait's healthcare system.

For her part, pediatric and pediatric intensive care specialist and Head of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Jahra Hospital, Dr. Eman Al-Hasemi, told KUNA the relationship between the pediatric intensive care team and the program represents an advanced model of integrated healthcare based on effective

partnership and close coordination from the moment a child is admitted to intensive care.

This collaboration supports shared medical decision-making among multi-disciplinary teams and families, and enhances quality of care provided to children with complex conditions.

Dr. Al-Hasemi stated that this cooperation has led to tangible results, including improved patient outcomes, faster medical stabilization, reduced length of stay in intensive care, and alleviation of psychological burden on families by involving them as partners in treatment plans, and ensuring a safe and organized transition to home care or outpatient follow-up.

She added that this relationship was moving toward deeper and more structured integration within a continuous care system, extending role of pediatric intensive care team beyond hospital discharge to include early and organized follow-up of children after the critical phase, as well as monitoring and treating physical, neurological, psychological and developmental effects associated with post-intensive care syndrome.

Al-Hasemi emphasized the importance of regular participation of the intensive care team in multi-disciplinary outpatient clinic meetings, particularly for children recently discharged from intensive care, to ensure continuity of care, unified treatment decisions and reduced unplanned readmissions.

She stressed this integrated approach represents a qualitative shift in the care model for children with complex conditions, and establishes a sustainable care pathway linking critical phase with post-critical care.

This protects children from the long-term effects of intensive care, enhances their quality of life and that of their families, and reinforces the role of pediatric intensive care as a key driver for improving health outcomes across the healthcare system, she said.

Mongolia's measles cases top 14,000

Mexico state ramps up health screening in schools as measles cases grow across US

MEXICO CITY, Feb 10, (Agencies): Mexico's most populous state said Monday it was stepping up health screening at schools and recommended the use of face masks for students and staff as the country confronts a growing measles outbreak.

The decision by Mexico state followed similar measures announced last week in the western state of Jalisco, site of the country's largest outbreak, where masks are now required in the schools of its capital Guadalajara, Mexico's second-largest city.

Through Feb. 6, there were 2,143 confirmed measles cases nationwide and nearly 6,000 suspected cases. Jalisco was home to more than half of Mexico's confirmed cases, but there are confirmed cases from Mexico's northern border to its southern border.

The health department of Mexico state, which hugs Mexico City on three sides, said students' temperatures will be taken at school entrances and the state will push a vaccination campaign.

Measles cases began surging last year in the northern border state of Chihuahua. Officials traced that



Students arrive to school wearing face masks due to a measles outbreak in Guadalajara, Mexico, Feb. 6. (AP)

outbreak that began in March 2025 to an 8-year-old unvaccinated Mennonite boy who visited relatives in Seminole, Texas - at the center of the U.S. outbreak.

The Chihuahua outbreak has since been controlled, but there are confirmed measles cases now in all of Mexico's 32 states.

Mexico state Health Secretary Macarena Montoya Olvera said Monday that the outbreak in the state is under control and that the cases have so far been light. The federal government has confirmed 40 cases there.

Neighboring Mexico City has launched an aggressive vaccination campaign. As of last Friday, there were 166 confirmed cases.

The Pan American Health Organization issued an epidemiological alert last week following a surge of measles cases across the Americas.

Also:

ULAN BATOR: The total number of measles cases in Mongolia has increased to 14,123, the country's National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD) said Monday.

The majority of new measles infections were among school-age children who had had only one shot of the measles vaccine, the NCCD said in a statement.

In view of this, the NCCD advised parents to protect their children from a potentially severe disease by getting them two doses of the measles vaccine.

Floods, heat and habitat loss hit local bees

India's migratory beekeepers battle climate change to keep honey flowing

BINNABARI, India, Feb 10, (AP): The beekeepers rise early. They've come a long way to spend the winter months in the electric yellow mustard fields of Assam, and they have to make the trip worth it.

At dawn, they eat a simple breakfast and won't eat again until dusk. They'll spend all day checking the hives, smoking them to disperse the bees so they can collect thick golden honeycombs to be sold overseas.

It's a demanding job. Stings are a fact of life. At night, the workers settle in under blue tarpaulins and think of the families they've left behind, sometimes for months at a time, to move their wooden bee boxes to this place. But the harvest is a way to make ends meet.

"I earn an income, that's why I do business," said Karan Raj, a beekeeper from Bihar.

Migratory beekeepers have moved their colonies of bees from field to field for decades in India, following the bloom of flowers to help farmers with pollination and collecting the honey.

The practice is relatively new but growing in Assam, where local and migratory beekeepers alike are turning to the farms in the region to support what they say is a growing demand for honey. But climate change threatens all that. Beekeepers are persisting in the face of floods, more powerful monsoons and extreme heat, as well as development that changes the landscapes bees rely on.

"If the weather is fine, the production will be fine. If the weather spoils, then there is no production. Weather has an effect. The weather needs to be good," said Ranjeet Kumar, another beekeeper.

Aassam, nestled east of Bangladesh and south of the Himalayas, is a region where the extremes of climate change have already unleashed catastrophe as human-caused warming makes rainfall more intense and erratic. Flooding and landslides in 2024 killed over 100 people, and many farmers have seen their crops destroyed and had to evacuate re-



A migratory beekeeper holds a piece of a beehive in the Binnabari village in Baksa district of Assam, India, Friday, Jan. 16, 2026. (AP)

nectar available. When it's too hot or too rainy, the bees stay in their hives.

Assam is now seeing over 20 more heat-wave days than it did 10 years ago, and both average maximum temperatures and nighttime low temperatures have increased by about 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), according to 2025 research from Madhya Kamrup College in Assam.

"Nowadays most of the farmers are getting less honey," Deka said.

Migratory beekeepers usually use Western honeybees, a departure from the practice of many traditional growers who keep local species of bees.

Those local species, however, are in some cases under greater threat due to extreme weather and human development of projects like highways that plow through their habitats.

"The bees that are in the trees, the ones that are in the forest, those bees have reduced drastically," Raj said. For the Western ones, "we feed them sugar and raise them, and this is why they survive, as long as we care for them."

As more migratory beekeepers turn to Assam and bring commercial honeybees with them, that could create competition with small farmers who are increasingly turning to beekeeping for money.

"If we try to rear the Western honeybee in more numbers, there will be a problem to our indigenous species," Deka said.

But some programs still encourage farmers to rear local bees and it's especially critical for small farmers living below the poverty line. Besides selling honey, the pollination helps their crops, said Sujana Krishnamoorthy, executive director of the Under the Mango Tree Society, a nonprofit that teaches beekeeping to small farmers.

"We're also having to train farmers on how to better manage climate events," Krishnamoorthy said. But beekeeping still helps. They become a little more resilient to climate change because they get extra income from honey products as well as improved pollination that increases crop yields. She added that many of the traditional crops grown by small farmers, like hedgerow or medicinal plants, are still fairly climate-resilient.

Despite climate change, experts think beekeeping will persist. In some cases, the government is subsidizing beekeeping equipment, said Deka of Assam Agricultural University.

"There may be ups and downs, but ultimately beekeeping will be sustained here," Deka said.

"The pattern of rain is changing," said Mukul Kumar Deka, who studies honeybees and other pollinators at Assam Agricultural University. When it's too dry for too long, there's less

nectar available. When it's too hot or too rainy, the bees stay in their hives.

VERNON, France, Feb 10, (AP): In a tightly controlled manufacturing hangar west of Paris, workers put the finishing touches on an enormous silver-colored engine. In just a few days, a similar machine will help propel the most powerful version of Europe's Ariane 6 rocket yet, flying for the first time with four boosters.

On Thursday, the Ariane 64 rocket - named after its four boosters - is scheduled to make its maiden launch from the European spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, aiming to deploy 32 satellites for Amazon Leo's broadband constellation.

The flagship of Europe's rocket industry is racing in a highly competitive environment against heavy weight players across the world, including the global market leader, Elon Musk's SpaceX.

At ArianeGroup's plant in Vernon, engineers design, integrate and test engines for the European heavy-lift launcher. At another site west of Paris, in Les Mureaux, the rocket's main stage components are being carefully built and assembled.

Associated Press journalists were provided rare access to facilities placed under strict security and confidentiality rules where teams of highly-specialized workers make from space conquest a daily reality.

"It's a special launch - something new for us on Ariane 6," ArianeGroup Chief Technical Officer Hervé Gilibert said. This flight marks the debut of the four-booster configuration, making the rocket roughly twice as powerful as the version flown since 2024, he said.

"Don't be surprised if you see it accelerate much more than Ariane 62, the

version we have already launched five times," Gilibert said. "It delivers significantly more power, allowing much heavier payloads to be sent into space."

The launcher, its engines and avionics are built across Europe as 13 nations, members of the European Space Agency, agreed to cooperate and finance the Ariane 6 program.

"We are working with more than 600 subcontractors," Gilibert said. "Everything comes together at two main sites - Bremen in Germany for the upper stage, and Les Mureaux in France for the lower, or main stage of the launcher."

Components

Ahead of Thursday's launch, all components have crossed the Atlantic to French Guiana for final assembly. The rocket stands about 62 meters (203 feet) tall, roughly the height of a 20-story building.

"We check everything until the very last minute, and then we fly," Gilibert said.

Once airborne, the mission will last about one hour and 50 minutes - nearly a full orbit around Earth - before the satellites are deployed in pairs from the top of the rocket. Amazon Leo's constellation is intended to compete with SpaceX's thousands of Starlink satellites.

The Vulcan 2.1 engine built at Vernon ignites first at liftoff.

"For a few seconds, we verify that it is functioning properly," said Emmanuel Viallon, director of the Vernon site. "Once we are fully confident it will operate correctly for the eight minutes that follow, we ignite the solid boosters and the rocket lifts off."

The four boosters help propel the

Aging population strains medical workforce

South Korea will boost medical school admissions to tackle physician shortage

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 10, (AP): South Korea plans to increase medical school admissions by more than 3,340 students from 2027 to 2031 to address concerns about physician shortages in one of the fastest-aging countries in the world, the government said Tuesday.

The decision was announced months after officials defused a prolonged doctors' strike by backing away from a more ambitious increase pursued by Seoul's former conservative government. Even the scaled-down plan drew criticism from the country's doctors' lobby, which said the move was "devoid of rational judgment."

Kwak Soon-hun, a senior Health Ministry official, said that the president of the Korean Medical Association attended the health care policy

meeting but left early to boycott the vote confirming the size of the admission increases.

The KMA president, Kim Taek-woo, later said the increases would overwhelm medical schools when combined with students returning from strikes or mandatory military service, and warned that the government would be "fully responsible for all confusion that emerges in the medical sector going forward." The group didn't immediately signal plans for further walkouts.

Health Minister Jeong Eun Kyung said the annual medical school admissions cap will increase from the current 3,058 to 3,548 in 2027, with further hikes planned in subsequent years to reach 3,871 by 2031. This represents

an average increase of 668 students per year over the five-year period, far smaller than the 2,000-per-year hike initially proposed by the government of former President Yoon Suk Yeol, which sparked the monthslong strike by thousands of doctors.

Jeong said all of the additional students will be trained through regional physician programs, which aim to increase the number of doctors in small towns and rural areas that have been hit hardest by demographic pressures. The specific admissions quota for each medical school will be finalized in April.

"We all remember the difficulties experienced by both the public and medical workers because of conflicts over the scale of physician training," Jeong said.

Chaos and ejections as Pistons snap Hornets' winning run

Warriors edge Grizzlies in thriller

CHARLOTTE, Feb 10, (AP): Cade Cunningham had 33 points and nine rebounds, and the Detroit Pistons hung on to beat Charlotte 110-104 on Monday night, snapping the Hornets' nine-game winning streak in a wild game that included a fight and four player ejections.

Charlotte coach Charles Lee was also ejected after having to be restrained from going after an official while arguing a no-call in the fourth quarter.

Duncan Robinson scored 18 points for the Pistons and Jalen Duren added 15 before being ejected when he ignited the brawl by hitting Moussa Diabate with an open right hand in the third quarter.

Branden Miller scored 24 points for the Hornets, while LaMelo Ball and Kon Kneppel each had 20.

Midway through the third quarter Duren was driving toward the basket when he was fouled by Diabate. Duren got face-to-face with Diabate and the two appeared to butt heads. Duren then hit Diabate in the face with his open right hand, igniting a confrontation that lasted more than 30 seconds.

While Pistons forward Tobias Harris was holding Diabate back, Diabate threw a punch at Duren. Duren walked away and Bridges charged at him, throwing a left-handed punch. Duren retaliated with a punch. Diabate attempted to charge again at Duren and had to be held back. Isaiah Stewart left the bench to confront Bridges, who responded with a punch, and the players tussled.

Thunder 119, Lakers 110

In Los Angeles, Jalen Williams scored 15 of his 23 points in the sec-



Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball (1) shoots against Detroit Pistons forward Paul Reed, right, during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)

ond half of his return from a 10-game injury absence, and Oklahoma City snapped their two-game skid with a victory over Los Angeles.

Reigning league MVP Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and current NBA scoring leader Luka Doncic both sat out due to injuries, leaving their supporting casts to play a Thunder-style physical game featuring 52 combined free throws.

LeBron James scored 14 of his 22 points in the second half for the Lakers, whose three-game winning streak ended with another ineffective defensive performance.

Warriors 114, Grizzlies 113

In San Francisco, Gui Santos made a go-ahead layup with 19 seconds left and Al Horford stole the ball from Cam Spencer moments later after he rebounded a Memphis miss, and Golden

State rallied late to beat the Grizzlies. Pat Spencer had 17 points and seven assists, leading seven players in double figures for a Warriors team missing Stephen Curry for the fourth straight game because of a lingering right knee injury that coach Steve Kerr said would keep him out of the All-Star Game next week.

De'Anthony Melton's layup with 2:46 left pulled the Warriors within 113-110 and Moses Moody made it a one-point game with 2 minutes remaining. Brandin Podziemski, Santos and Horford each scored 16 points, and Moody 15.

Nets 123, Bulls 115

In New York, Nic Claxton scored 28 points and had 10 rebounds to lead Brooklyn to a win over Chicago.

Noah Clowney added 20 points for Brooklyn, which won its second in a row. Drake Powell had 14 points off the bench, rookies Danny Wolf and Nolan Traore each had 13 and Zaire Williams added 11.

The Nets won three of the four meetings between the Eastern Conference teams that are rebuilding.

Jazz 113, Heat 111

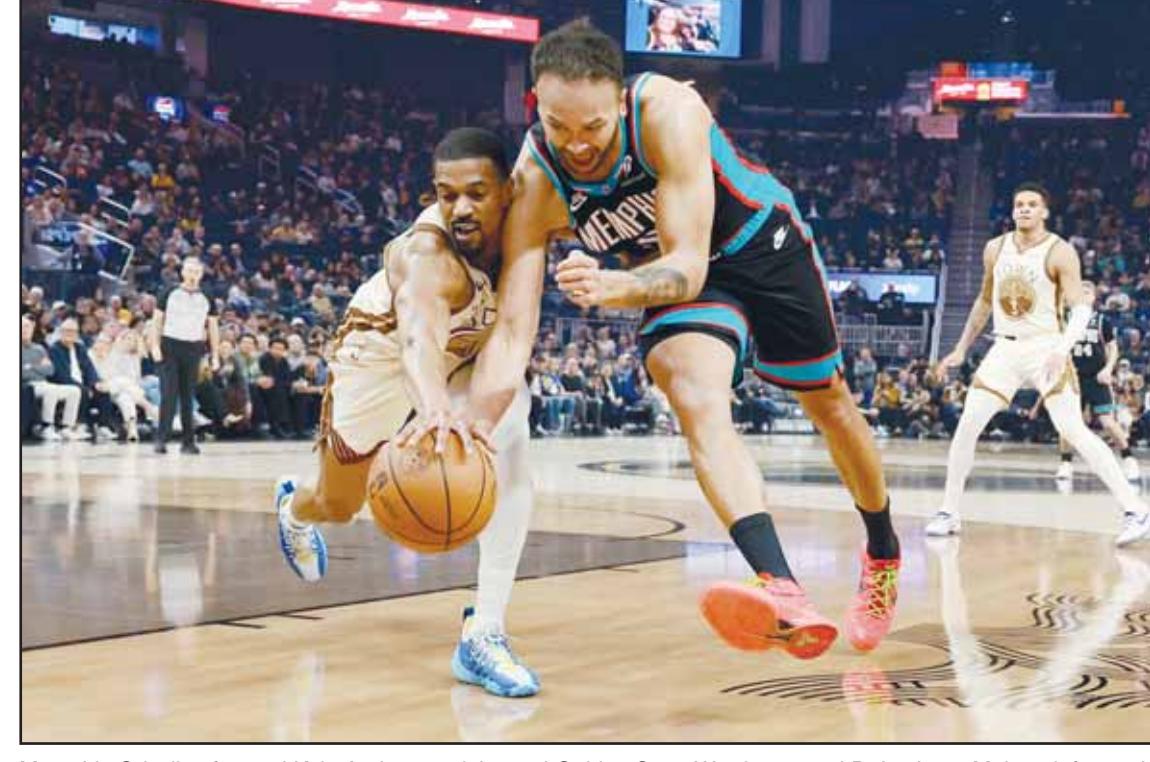
In Miami, Brice Sensabaugh made a go-ahead 3-pointer with 47 seconds remaining to lift Utah to a victory over Miami.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 22 points, Lauri Markkanen added 17, Kyle Filipowski had 16 points and 11 rebounds, and Ace Bailey also scored 16 for the Jazz, who won for only the fifth time in their last 23 games.

The Jazz erased a 108-103 deficit with 3:32 left and got within one at 111-110 on Isaiah Collier's jumper with 1:23 remaining. Sensabaugh, who finished with 14 points, then connected with his shot from behind the arc.

Magic 118, Bucks 99

In Orlando, Anthony Black scored 26 points, Desmond Bane added 25 and Orlando beat Milwaukee to snap the Bucks' season-long three-game



Memphis Grizzlies forward Kyle Anderson, right, and Golden State Warriors guard De'Anthony Melton, left, reach for a loose ball during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

Pelicans 120, Kings 94

In New Orleans, Trey Murphy III made five 3-pointers and finished with 21 points. Jeremiah Fears scored 14 of his 20 in the second half and New Orleans sent Sacramento to their 13th straight loss.

The Kings have their most consecutive losses since the franchise moved from Kansas City to Sacramento ahead of the 1985-86 season.

Cavaliers 119, Nuggets 117

In Denver, Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points, including two free throws with 0.9 seconds left after James Harden's tying 3-pointer, and Cleveland rallied to beat Denver.

Harden finished with 22 points and 10 rebounds in his second game with Cleveland. Harden, acquired from the Los Angeles Clippers on Feb. 4,

scored 23 points in his Cavaliers debut three nights later.

Nikola Jokic had 22 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists but missed a potential winning 3-point shot at the buzzer. Two nights after Jokic passed Oscar Robertson for second place in career triple-doubles, he notched his 183rd.

Trail Blazers 135, 76ers 118

In Portland, Toumani Camara scored a career-high 30 points and shot 8 of 10 from 3-point range. Deni Avdija had 26 points and 10 rebounds and Portland used a huge third quarter to cruise to a victory Philadelphia.

Jerami Grant and Donovan Clinigan each added 15 points for the Trail Blazers, who trailed 65-64 at halftime before outscoring the 76ers 49-22 in the third to take control.

Keselowski cleared to race in Daytona 500 after breaking leg

NASCAR emerges from federal antitrust lawsuit bruised but ready for 78th season



Kyle Busch (8) and Ty Gibbs (54) avoid Kyle Larson (5) spinning out during NASCAR's The Clash preseason auto race in Winston-Salem, N.C. (AP)

cash.

"I felt bad for all of them," said Brian France, the grandson of founder Bill France Sr. who spent 15 years as chairman before stepping down in 2018. "A lot of what happened is the nature of lawsuits; lawsuits are never pretty. But for 75-plus years, somebody has had to balance what is good for everybody, all of the stakeholders and certainly the fans. Our record in doing that although not perfect, is that we've actually done an amazing job."

The negative image of the France family presented at trial contrasts sharply with the personal experiences of many in the motorsports industry, including Michael Shank, who launched a race-winning program by mortgaging his house to start in the France-owned IMSA sports car series.

Shank told AP that Jim France personally backed his loan, helping Meyer Shank Racing off the ground.

"These are good people who care about the industry and built it on their backs, and it pissed me off to see how it was twisted," said Shank, who now fields cars in multiple series and won the Indianapolis 500 in 2021.

Hendrick found the entire dispute avoidable and said he believes the case never would have made it to court under Bill France Jr. or Brian France. Be-

fore the settlement, he was set to testify on behalf of NASCAR, though he told AP he was prepared to note how often NASCAR's winningest team has been punished by the series.

"I made a decision when I started to be a private business and to stay private because I didn't want the pressure of a board or stockholders telling me how to run my business," Hendrick said. "And I say that because the Frances' sacrificed. They built it, and they made a whole lot of drivers very rich."

"They built a heck of a business. They gave a lot of people opportunities to be racers and to make a living doing it. They're good people and what was portrayed - the greed - I just feel like they got railroaded."

Meanwhile, Brad Keselowski has been cleared to race in the Daytona 500, nearly two months after breaking his right leg.

Keselowski, who suffered the injury when he slipped on ice during a family ski vacation, passed a driving test Monday at Charlotte Motor Speedway and was officially given the green light to get behind the wheel in the No. 6 Ford for RFK Racing.

"So much work to get here!" Keselowski wrote in a post on X. "Special thanks to my family, the 6 crew, all the medical professionals and my fans for all your help and support."

Keselowski had surgery in mid-December and always believed he would be ready for the season-opening Daytona 500. Corey LaJoie filled in during the exhibition Clash last week at Bowman Gray Stadium in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Laporta steps down as Barcelona president to run for re-election

Villarreal inflicts heaviest defeat of Espanyol in La Liga this season

VILLARREAL, Spain, Feb 10, (AP): Villarreal scored twice in each half to hammer Espanyol 4-1 in La Liga and hand the Catalan club its heaviest defeat of the season.

The result ended a poor run which had seen Villarreal take one point from its previous three games. The win lifted it to equal on points with third-placed Atletico Madrid and seven ahead of Real Betis, although Villarreal has a game in hand on both.

Georges Mikautadze gave Villarreal the lead 10 minutes before halftime when he met Tajon Buchanan's perfectly cushioned header and fired home a spectacular scissor kick.

Jose Salinas' own goal six minutes later doubled Villarreal's lead. Nicolas Pepe added the third five minutes into the second half when he rifled a low shot from outside the box after some skilful foot-work.

Alberto Moleiro made it 4-0 five minutes later when he finished off an incisive counterattack.

Leandro Cabrera's glancing header from a Cyril Ngonge corner with two minutes remaining was Espanyol's only response.

Barcelona-based Espanyol has not won since before Christmas and has gone six matches without a win in the league. Monday's result marked the first time this season it conceded four goals in a game. It remained in sixth place.

□ □ □

Joan Laporta stepped down as **Barcelona** president as planned in order to be eligible for re-election on March 15.

Laporta and some board members resigned so

they can be candidates again. The resignation was formalized at the ordinary meeting of the board of directors.

The current board of directors, including new club president **Rafael Yuste**, will be in place until June 30, which is when the current term ends.

Five voting locations will be available for club members in March, one in each of the four Catalan provinces - Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona - and another in the principality of Andorra.

It will be the 15th presidential election in the club's history since the first in 1953.

Laporta was the team president from 2003-2010 and since 2021. He will face opposition at the next election.

Athletic Bilbao faces Real Sociedad in the first leg of their Basque derby Copa del Rey semifinal at San Mames Stadium.

A full house and a strong atmosphere are expected for the clash between the local rivals, who have already met twice in La Liga this season.

Real Sociedad won the first meeting 3-2 at Anoeta Stadium, while the sides drew 1-1 at San Mames a week and a half ago, with Inigo Ruiz de Galarreta's late strike canceling out Goncalo Guedes' impressive opener for the team from San Sebastian.

Real Sociedad has improved sharply since Pellegrino Matarazzo replaced Sergio Francisco as first-team coach, with his side making the most of its attacking options. Players such as Guedes, Carlos Soler, Ander Barrenetxea and Mikel Oyarzabal have all impressed.

Winger Takefusa Kubo misses Wednesday's game with a muscle injury, while Luka Sucic is also out after suffering an injury shortly after opening the scoring in his side's 3-1 home win over Elche on Saturday.

Brais Mendez is available after his controversial red card in the last derby, and Benat Turrientes is likely to come into the side for Sucic. Jon Aramburu is set to return at right back, with Unai Marrero expected to start in goal despite suffering a broken cheekbone in a recent training session.

Athletic Bilbao ended a worrying run of six league games without a win on Sunday as Ernesto Valverde's side beat Levante 4-2, thanks in part to two goals from Gorka Guruzeta, who has scored seven goals so far in 2026.

Much could depend on the form of Nico and Inaki Williams, neither of whom has been at his best this season. Nico has been dealing with a niggling pelvic injury, while Inaki has had two hamstring issues.

Inaki improved considerably at the weekend, providing two assists, and his pace could be vital. Oihan Sancto could also return after two weeks out with a hamstring issue.

Valverde will have to change his defense, with Aitor Paredes suspended and Yurii Berchiche picking up an injury on Sunday. Paredes' absence could open the door for youngster Iker Monreal, who made an impressive debut in last week's 2-1 win in Valencia.

The return leg is at Anoeta on March 4, and given the intensity of Basque derbies, that match could prove decisive.

BORMIO, Italy, Feb 10, (Xinhua): It is up to individual athletes to decide whether to compete while injured, International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS) President Johan Eliasch said, following a severe crash involving American ski racer Lindsey Vonn at the Milan-Cortina Winter Games.

Vonn, 41, was airlifted from the Olimpia delle Tofane piste on Sunday after crashing 13 seconds into her downhill run. The incident has sparked debate over safety protocols, particularly given that Vonn had suffered a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in her left knee only nine days prior to the event.

Speaking after the men's team combined event in Bormio, Eliasch addressed questions over whether the governing body should intervene to prevent injured athletes from entering high-risk disciplines.

"Let me say it was tragic. I'm particularly considering all the hard work that she put in for the race for years leading up to yesterday," Eliasch said.

"But many people have asked me, is there something that FIS should do to get involved in deciding? I firmly believe that this has to be decided by the individual athlete," Eliasch, who is also a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), said skiers are best placed to judge their own physical limits.

"In her case, she certainly knows her injuries better than anybody else," he added.

IOC Sports Director Pierre Ducey echoed that viewpoint.

Best of the Rest

Gonzalez joins Independiente: Paraguay international forward Carlos Gonzalez has joined Independiente del Valle on a free transfer, the Ecuadorian club said.

The 33-year-old agreed to a deal that runs until December 2027 after Argentina's Newell's Old Boys opted not to exercise an option to extend his contract last December. (Xinhua)

Rennes splits with coach Beye: French club Rennes parted ways with coach Habib Beye following a poor run of form and amid reports of tensions within the squad.

Rennes said on X that it had "initiated proceedings" against Beye and that the team would be run by assistant coaches until a further decision is made. French media reports have linked Rennes with former Lens and Nice coach Franck Haise. Although Rennes is in sixth place in Ligue 1, the Brittany club has lost its last four games overall and conceded 12 goals. (AP)

Building a sustainable ecosystem through partnerships, tournaments, content and talent development

Zain Esports levels up Kuwait's gaming scene at The Base Festival



Bashar Abdullah, Malek Hammoud, and Waleed Al Khashti at the Zain Zone.



Engaging gameplay moments at Zain's interactive zone.



The event attracted over 15,000 passionate gamers.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Zain continues its strong presence in the gaming and esports industry as the strategic success partner of the first edition of The Base Gaming Festival in Kuwait, reflecting its strategic direction to support the digital economy, empower young talent, and strengthen the creative industries as key growth drivers in Kuwait.

The festival was attended by Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sport in Kuwait, Malek Hammoud, Chief Investment and Digital Transformation Officer at Zain Group, and Waleed Al Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait. Over the course of last weekend, it attracted more than 15,000 visitors of all ages, alongside a number of content creators and celebrities who enriched the visitor experience.

This partnership builds on Zain's vision, through its esports brand Zain Esports, to position gaming as an integral part of the digital lifestyle and a real-world ex-

pression of how connectivity and modern use cases continue to evolve. It also reaffirms the company's ongoing investment in its networks and infrastructure to deliver a premium, stable, high-speed experience with low-latency responsiveness that supports players at every level.

At the festival, the Zain Zone delivered an interactive, audience-first experience for visitors to engage in mobile gaming experiences, live competitions and challenges, and direct interaction with the Zain Esports team in an atmosphere that reflected the spirit of the gaming community and the growing passion for this sector in Kuwait.

Zain continues to develop Zain Esports as a platform that supports the gaming and esports community, aiming to build a sustainable ecosystem through tournaments, partnerships, content development, and by creating spaces that unlock real opportunities for talent.

The company's support for gaming and esports will continue through initiatives, partnerships, and interactive experiences that strengthen local ecosystem growth and provide more structured pathways to discover and develop talent, aligned with its vision to build richer, more valuable digital experiences for the community.

Zain Esports is Zain Group's flagship esports brand, operating as a regional force that supports both international and local competitions, including EA Sports FC and PUBG Mobile tournaments, through advanced training hubs such as the Zain eSports Lab in Bahrain and Jordan.

Zain Esports aims to build vibrant digital communities that bring together gaming enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels, while strengthening the digital economy by empowering youth and creators across the region. Its large-scale live and interactive activations have generated millions of views.

The Captain's Club and Al Boom Marine announce launch of boat club in Kuwait



Adel Al-Somat (center) with Zaad Al-Shouly and Mohamed Al-Somat.



Participants in action.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: The Captain's Club, the region's largest boat club, has officially announced its launch in the State of Kuwait in partnership with Al Boom Marine, and with the support of Joan Alkuwait Marine Services and Logistics Company, marking a strategic milestone in the club's regional expansion.

The launch forms part of The Captain's Club's broader growth strategy as a company owned by Easy Lease, a subsidiary of IHC, one of the region's largest investment groups – further strengthening the club's long-term vision and operational scale.

Founded in 2014 in the UAE, The Captain's Club now operates a fleet of over 250 boats across

more than 20 locations in the GCC, including the UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. The fleet includes fishing boats, speedboats, water sports boats, sailing boats, and cabin cruisers, offering diverse and premium boating experiences.

The Captain's Club introduces an innovative model that allows members to drive boats independently after completing certified training programs, eliminating the complexities of ownership while saving over 90% compared to traditional boat ownership costs.

Commenting on the launch, Zaid Shouly, CEO of The Captain's Club, said:

"Our entry into the Kuwaiti market represents a key milestone in our regional journey. Kuwait's

strong maritime culture aligns perfectly with our vision of making boating more accessible, seamless, and enjoyable."

Shukri Abdulaziz Almahrous, CEO of Joan Alkuwait Marine Services and Logistics Company, added:

"We are pleased to support the launch of The Captain's Club in Kuwait. Joan Al Kuwait offers a prime location and advanced marine infrastructure, and we look forward to contributing to an elevated boating experience in the country."

With its continued expansion and strong backing, The Captain's Club remains at the forefront of redefining boating experiences across the GCC.

Minister Al-Jalahma visits Kuwait Tennis Federation headquarters



Chairman and board members welcome the Minister.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma, Minister of State for Youth and Sports, paid a visit to the Kuwait Tennis Complex. He was welcomed by the Chairman and board members of the federation, who gave him a tour of the facilities, including the Rafa Nadal Tennis Academy Kuwait, highlighting the federation's full range of tennis infrastructure.

During the visit, the Minister praised the federation's efforts and encouraged the board to continue striving for development, emphasizing the goal of placing Kuwaiti players at a distinguished level regionally, continentally, and internationally. He noted

that this aligns with the vision of Kuwait's leadership and the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people, stressing that ambition must remain limitless in pursuit of excellence.

Chairman Abdul Redi Al-Gharib highlighted the federation's successful partnership with the private sector, represented by Tamdeem Group and Rafa Nadal Tennis Academy Kuwait, calling it model collaboration.

Al-Gharib confirmed that this partnership provides the federation with comprehensive support, particularly in technical and training aspects, helping to develop national team players across all age categories and further strengthen Kuwaiti tennis at all levels.

Best of the Rest

Roma stays in touch with Serie A pack: Donyell Malen scored in each half as

Roma beat Cagliari 2-0 and stayed in touch with the chasing pack at the top of Serie A.

Leader Inter Milan was eight points clear of city rival AC Milan and nine ahead of

reigning champion Napoli. Roma was three points further back along with Juventus.

Dutch center forward Malen had scored only once in four appearances since joining on loan from Aston Villa in January and he proved his worth on Monday with two excellent finishes.

He ran on to a clever through ball from Gianluca Mancini and his deft chip over the

goalkeeper was equal to the set-up pass.

His second was more of a poacher's effort as he got on the right side of a packed de-

fense to turn in a low cross 20 minutes after the break.

The result served as a confidence booster ahead of next weekend's crunch tie at Napoli.

Cagliari, which was seeking a fourth consecutive Serie A win for the first time in more than a decade, remained 12th. (AP)

Raedler and Huber win team combined as Shiffrin's Olympic struggles continue

Klaebo closes on Winter Games record gold tally, Sweden sweeps women's race

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy, Feb 10, (AP): Ariane Raedler and Katharina Huber of Austria won gold in the new team combined event at the Milan Cortina Olympics on Tuesday when Mikaela Shiffrin surprisingly crossed fourth after wasting a first-run lead by teammate Breezy Johnson.

Shiffrin, the most successful World Cup racer of all time with a record 108 victories - 71 of them in slalom, also a record - has now gone seven straight

Olympic races without a medal.

After taking two golds and silver from her first two Olympics, Shiffrin also didn't win a medal in any of her six races at the Beijing Games four years ago.

Kira Weidle-Winkelmann and Emma Aicher of Germany earned silver and Paula Moltzan and Jacqueline Wiles of the U.S. took bronze.

"No tricks here at all," Shiffrin was told over team radio before her run on a course set by an Austrian coach. "Actually it's nothing to report. You got it."

Bu Shiffrin lost time to the leaders at every checkpoint and crossed 0.31 seconds behind - missing a medal by finishing 0.06 behind the other American team. In the finish area, Johnson - who was coming off a gold in the individual downhill -

embraced Shiffrin, while the Austrians and other podium finishers began celebrating.

The team combined consists of one racer competing in a downhill run and another in a slalom run, with the times from the two added together to determine the results.

Shiffrin still has her individual events of giant slalom and slalom to come.

Neither Raedler, who placed second in the downhill leg, nor Huber, who had the 10th-fastest slalom leg, has ever won a World Cup race.

Aicher, one of the few all-around skiers competing in every event, also took silver in the individual downhill.

Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo blazed to his second consecutive victory at the Milan Cortina Games.

Games in the cross-country sprint to win his seventh Olympic gold medal and close in on the Winter Olympics record.

The 29-year-old Norwegian star separated from the field with a punishing late uphill run to finish in 3 minutes, 39.8 seconds, easing off in the home stretch to leave Ben Ogden of the United States 0.8 seconds behind. Another Norwegian, Oskar Opstad Vike, placed third, 6.8 seconds behind the leader.

Linn Svahn led a Swedish sweep in the women's competition, edging defending Olympic champion Jona Sundling with Maja Dahlqvist in third place in a race watched by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

Klaebo's seven gold medals are one shy of the Winter Olympics record shared by three athletes.

Six Olympics, 12 medals. Arianna Fontana still wants more at the Milan Cortina Games.

Fontana won her third gold and extended her record as the most decorated short track speedskater of all time.

Fontana and the Italy team dominated the mixed team relay final to the delight of the vocal home crowd in the first short track final of the Winter Games. Canada was second and Belgium third.

The celebrations were exuberant, Pietro Sighel spun around backward as he crossed the line before cupping a hand to his ear as the crowd roared its approval. Fontana held up her gold medal and a cardboard cutout of her own head, sticking out her tongue to match the cutout.

It was a bruising day for Corinne Stoddard and the United States as falls ended her and her team's chances in the mixed relay and women's 500 meters.

Stoddard fell in the relay quarterfinals but the U.S. was reprieved by a penalty for Japan. In the semifinals, she was fighting for the lead when she went down again and was then hit by a South Korean skater approaching fast from behind.



Austria's Katharina Huber speeds down the course during an alpine ski, slalom portion of a women's team combined race, at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. (AP)

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Gold medalist Linn Svahn, center, silver medalist Jonna Sundling, left, and bronze medalist Maja Dahlqvist, all three of Sweden, pose after the cross-country skiing women's sprint classic at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Tresero, Italy. (AP)

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Sports

Kuwait Club advances to West Asia Super League semifinals



Kuwait Club player dunks over an opponent.

Strong showing from Salwa Al-Sabah Club at Arab Women's Club Games with four medals



Salwa Al-Sabah Club players with their medals.

SHARJAH, Feb 10: Salwa Al-Sabah Club secured four medals at the 8th Arab Women's Club Games, currently underway in the Emirate of Sharjah.

The club's athletics team captured the silver medal in the 4x100m relay, as Munira Al-Ameer, Deema Ibrahim, Aisha Al-Khudr, and Al-Jazi Al-Farhan combined for a strong performance to finish second.

The Games, which run until February 12, feature wide participation from Arab clubs across a variety of sports.

Adding to the medal haul, Salwa Al-Sabah athlete Haya Al-Rifai claimed silver in the 5,000m, producing a competitive display against runners from several Arab clubs.

Meanwhile, track and field standout Al-Jazi Al-Farhan further boosted the club's tally by winning silver in the 100m hurdles, along with a bronze medal in the heptathlon.

The results underscore the continued development of Kuwaiti women's athletics and its growing impact on the Arab sporting stage.

Kazma, Al-Arabi, and Sahel win

Three-team chase for Qadsia at U-20 league summit

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: Qadsia returned to winning ways in the U-20 League after a dominant 8-1 victory over Jahra in the 10th round of the competition.

The win came after Qadsia's first setbacks of the season, having lost 2-0 to Salmiya and drawn 1-1 with Khaitan following a run of seven straight wins.

Qadsia raised its points tally to 25, while Jahra remained on 10 points in 11th place.

The league, featuring 14 clubs, is played in a single round under a centralized format before the teams are split into two groups: eight in the first division and six in the second division.

Qadsia faces close pursuit from Kazma, Al-Arabi, and Sahel.

Kazma kept the gap at two points with a 2-0 win over Shabab, leaving the latter on six points in 12th place. Al-Arabi defeated Yarmouk 4-1 to move up to 22 points in third place, while Yarmouk slipped to sixth with 18 points.

Sahel edged Khaitan 1-0 in a tight contest to draw level with Al-Arabi in third place, with Khaitan remaining on 13 points.

Kuwait Club climbed to fifth place with 19 points after a convincing 4-0 victory over



Al-Arabi star Fawaz Al-Dawood controls the ball during the U-20 league match between Al-Arabi and Jahra.

Fahheel, who stayed eighth on 13 points.

Salmiya also secured a comfortable 3-0 win over Sulaibikhat, lifting its tally to 16 points in seventh place, while Sulaibikhat remained on 10 points.

In the final match of the round, Sporty collected its first point of the season after a 3-3 draw with Al-Nasr, but remained bottom of the table, while Al-Nasr stayed 13th with three points.

Seifert and Allen set partnership record in New Zealand's 10-wicket victory over UAE

CHENNAI, India, Feb 10, (AP): New Zealand openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen shared the highest-ever partnership for any wicket at a men's T20 World Cup.

Their brutal power-hitting in an unbroken stand of 175 saw the Black Caps beat the United Arab Emirates by 10 wickets.

Seifert followed his half century in the first Group D game against Afghanistan with an unbeaten 89 off 42 balls. Allen was not far behind and smacked 84 not out off 50 balls.

New Zealand sprinted to 175-0 in 15.2 overs for its second successive win in a group that also features 2024 finalist South Africa. After winning the toss, UAE skipper Muhammad

Waseem (66 not out off 45 deliveries) and Alisan Sharafu (55 off 47) had earlier anchored their team on a good batting wicket to 173-6 in 20 overs. But the target proved too small for the aggressive New Zealand batters.

Seifert and Allen provided a rollicking start of 78-0 in the power play as UAE pace bowlers bowled too many length balls which were duly dispatched for boundaries on both sides of the wicket.

Seifert hit 12 fours and three sixes, including the winning six over the head of Muhammad Rohid, who was the most expensive UAE bowler with 0-51 in 3.2 overs. Pacer Junaid Siddique's four overs went for 47 without any

wicket while Muhammad Arfan conceded 36 runs off his three overs.

Allen matched Seifert with his innovative ramp shots and hit five fours and five sixes.

The previous record stand at a men's T20 World Cup (170 runs) was set by England batters Alex Hales and Jos Buttler against India in 2022. Earlier at New Delhi, Bas de Leede's all-round show earned the Netherlands a seven-wicket win over Namibia in Group A.

De Leede grabbed 2-20 as the Dutch used eight bowlers and Namibia scored 156-8. De Leede then smashed four sixes and five boundaries and guided his team to 159-3 in 18 overs with an unbeaten 72 off 48 balls.

Moore and Lauvergne shine in win over Muharraq

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

MANAMA, Feb 10: Kuwait Club booked its place in the West Asia Super League (WASL) semifinals after defeating Bahrain's Muharraq 78-69 in Manama, in the second leg of the qualification playoff.

The victory followed Kuwait Club's 107-101 win over Muharraq in the first leg in Kuwait, allowing Al-Abiad to secure semifinal qualification without the need for a third match.

In the semifinals, Kuwait Club will face Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad, who qualified directly from Group A. The series will be played in a best-of-three format starting on April 6, with the first team to win two games advancing to the final.

Under the tournament rules, the two Gulf region finalists will join teams from Central Asia to contest the final rounds. The other semifinal will see Saudi side Al-Ula take on the winner of the playoff between UAE's Shabab Al-Ahli and Qatar's Al-Arabi.

Kuwait Club earned the win with a disciplined and strong performance in the second game.

Despite missing star Hamad Adnan due to personal reasons, the team started aggressively and led 15-13 after the first quarter. Muharraq leveled the score 39-39 by halftime.

In the third quarter, Kuwait Club regained control thanks to the playmaking of American Charlie Moore and the inside dominance of Frenchman Geoffrey Lauvergne, taking a 58-52 lead.

The team then sealed the victory with a commanding final quarter to finish 78-69, securing its place in the semifinals.

Shaheen Al-Mughira captures Marbat Al-Sharq Cup



Talal and Omar Al-Nasif and Al-Roumi present the trophy to the winner.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 10: The horse "Shaheen Al-Mughira", owned by Rashed Al-Azmi, trained by Ayad Al-Farmawi and ridden by jockey Faisal Al-Farmawi, won the "Marbat Al-Sharq" Cup, owned by breeder Talal Khaled Al-Nasif, in the seventh mixed race for purebred Arabian horses with Egyptian bloodlines. The race covered 1,400 meters, with a finishing time of 1:45.39 minutes.

The cup was presented to the winners by Talal Khaled Al-Nasif, owner of Marbat Al-Sharq, and Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, owner of Marbat Al-Raya. Al-Nasif also received a commemorative shield from the Hunting and Equestrian Club in recognition of his support for horse racing.

In other races, the horse "Az Al-Rafiq", owned by Al-Akshan, won the Late Sheikh

Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah Cup in a mixed race over 2,600 meters.

Al-Nasif affirmed his continued support for purebred Arabian horses with Egyptian bloodlines, describing it as a tradition inherited from ancestors and a growing passion among the younger generation.

He expressed his sincere gratitude to all involved in organizing and arranging the races, including the Hunting and Equestrian Club and breeder Alaa Hamad Al-Roumi, for their efforts in promoting this beautiful sport.

Talal Al-Nasif added: "We fully support this unique initiative of a weekly cup at the Hunting and Equestrian Club for Egyptian-blooded Arabian horses. We aim to encourage and preserve this heritage, which is deeply valued by our fathers and ancestors."

Bangladesh avoids ICC penalty

Pakistan ends boycott and will face India at World Cup

ISLAMABAD, Feb 10, (AP): Pakistan reversed its decision to boycott the T20 World Cup game against India and was directed to "take the field" in Colombo next Sunday.

A weeklong impasse ended on Monday, a day after International Cricket Council director Imran Khawaja and Bangladesh Cricket Board president Aminul Islam arrived in Lahore to talk with the Pakistan Cricket Board about reinstating the biggest and richest game in cricket.

Back-channel talks reached the highest level, and the Pakistan government announced on X, "In view of the outcomes achieved in multilateral discussions, as well as the request of friendly countries, the Government of Pakistan hereby directs the Pakistan National Cricket Team to take the field on February 15, 2026, for its scheduled fixture in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Cup.

Moreover, this decision has been taken with the aim of protecting the spirit of cricket, and to support the continuity of this global sport in all participating nations."

The ICC said: "It was agreed that all members will respect their commitments as per the terms of participation for ICC events and do all that is necessary to ensure that the ongoing edition of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is a success."

After Bangladesh was booted from the World Cup two weeks ago when the ICC dismissed its security concerns about playing in India, PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi decried the ICC's "double standards" and "injustice." The Pakistan government told its cricket board to boycott the India group game in solidarity with Bangladesh.

But the consequences of no Pakistan-India game threatened current and future TV rights deals and ICC funding of the global game.

The Pakistan government noted in its statement that the PCB was formally asked by ICC members including Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates to end the boycott. On Monday, Bangladesh's Islam requested the match go ahead "for the benefit of the entire cricket ecosystem."

"We are deeply moved by Pakistan's efforts to go above and beyond in supporting Bangladesh during this period," Islam said. "Long may



Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan hits a six during the T20 World Cup cricket match between Pakistan and the United States in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

our brotherhood flourish."

The ICC eased its stance on Monday when it said it would not penalize Bangladesh for missing the T20 World Cup for the first time. The ICC added Bangladesh had the right to approach the dispute resolution committee "should it choose to do so."

Naqvi then announced a decision by Pakistan within 48 hours, but the final clincher appeared to come from a phone call on Monday evening between Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake.

World Cup co-host Sri Lanka is hosting Pakistan for all of its matches.

The Pakistan government said Dissanayake asked Sharif "to accord serious consideration to amicably resolve the current impasse."

Sharif green-lit the India matchup again and gave his best wishes to the "Men in Green," who have already started the World Cup with a win over the Netherlands.

Bangladesh will be awarded a global tournament before the men's World Cup in 2031, the ICC said.