



Kuwait Crown Prince meets UNWTO Secretary-General Page 2



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## KUWAIT DECLARES FEB 25-26 PUBLIC HOLIDAY

# Cabinet seals fiscal blueprint, amends domestic violence law

PM thanks outgoing ministers, welcomes new appointees

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA):** The Cabinet, in its customary meeting on Tuesday, endorsed draft-decrees on the budgets of ministries, government agencies and independent bodies for the FY 2026/20027 and a decree-law amending the domestic violence law.

In a statement following the meeting, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and held at Bayan Palace, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji pointed out

that the Cabinet referred the state institutions budgets draft decrees to His Highness the Amir for the final approval.

The Cabinet commended the Ministry of Finance's great efforts for preparing the budgets of the state bodies.

It added that the new budgets, after His Highness the Amir's approval, would be effective as of April 1, 2026. The Cabinet also approved a decree-law amending the current domestic violence law No. of 2020 and referred to His Highness the Amir.

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### HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

## Judge Zahran discovered his neighbor's lie through a handful of dust

The kind man lent the mean man a thousand dirhams, and the neighbor denied that he took it.

He lived for years unaware that his neighbor was deceitful and cunning.

When the neighbor told him he was in dire straits, the kind man responded to his request.

Three months later, the kind man went to collect his money.

He placed the palm tree as a marker for his meeting with the ungrateful man.

He told himself that there is no problem to grant his neighbor a good loan.

We have reached a time when good is responded with evil, and kindness with wickedness.

I never imagined my neighbor would deny me my rights.

The judge said to the defendant: Your neighbor is very late.

The place my neighbor went to is too far away.

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Non-oil revenues up 19.6%

## Kuwait forecasts KD 9.8 bln budget deficit amid oil drop

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA):** Minister of Finance, Dr. Yaqoub Al-Refaei unveiled Tuesday the draft state budget for the fiscal year (2026-2027), projecting a fiscal deficit of KD 9.8 billion (approx. USD 31.9 billion), a sharp 54.7 percent rise over the current fiscal year's deficit.

In a press statement, Al-Refaei estimated that the total expected revenues at KD 16.3 billion (about USD 53.1 billion), representing a 10.5 percent year-on-year decline.

The Minister disclosed that oil revenues were budgeted at KD 12.8 billion (approx. USD 41.7 billion), a 16.3 percent contraction compared to the current budget ending March 31, 2026.

In a positive trend for fiscal diversification, non-oil revenues are expected to rise by 19.6 percent to KD 3.5 billion (USD 11.4 billion), he added.

He noted that the total expenditure is expected to hit KD 26.1 billion (approx. USD 85 billion): with salaries and subsidies comprising 76 percent, capital expenditures 11.8 percent, and other expenditures 12.2 percent.

Al-Refaei clarified that FY 2026-2027 budget is based on a conservative oil price assumption of USD 57 per barrel. The Minister, however, noted that Kuwait fiscal break-even price -- the valuation required to balance the budget -- is significantly higher at USD 90.5 per barrel.



HH the PM arrives in Munich, Germany on Wednesday, leading Kuwait's delegation participating in the 62nd Munich Security Conference.

## Kuwait PM in Germany for Munich Security Conference

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, arrived in Munich, Germany on Wednesday, leading Kuwait's delegation participating in the 62nd Munich Security Conference.

Upon his arrival, His Highness was received by

the Ambassador of Kuwait to Germany Reem Al-Khaled, the Consul General of Kuwait in Frankfurt, Adel Al-Ghenaiman, and members of the embassy.

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## Friendship, cooperation reaffirmed

# Bilateral ties deepen as Kuwait celebrates Iran's National Day

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11:** Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Jawhar Hayat said the relationship of Kuwait with Iran, a large Muslim neighbor, is founded on mutual respect and appreciation, describing the ties as long-standing and historical.

Hayat made the statement when he attended the celebration organized by the Iranian Embassy on the occasion of the 47th National Day of Iran.

He conveyed the greetings of the top political leadership of Kuwait to the Iranian ambassador, as well as to the leadership, government and friendly people of Iran.

He confirmed that relations between the two countries continue to strengthen over time in various fields, with a shared desire to further develop these relations during the current and upcoming phases, while hinting on the possibility of high-level visits taking place this year.

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Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

From right to left: Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji, Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Sameeh Jawhar Hayat, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the State of Kuwait Dr. Zubayzoda Zubaydullo, during the ceremonial cutting of cake.

## Kuwait steers regional efforts to modernize tourism with AI

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA):** Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, said Wednesday that the conference on advancing tourism through Artificial Intelligence, represents a practical extension of dialogue on the future of the tourism sector and its development tools.

The conference is held on the sidelines of the 52nd meeting of the UN Tourism Regional Commission for the Middle East.

In his opening remarks, Al-Omar said the conference comes at a time of rapid transformations in tourism, requiring enhanced planning tools, updated operational models and more efficient policies in line with global changes and national aspirations.

He noted that artificial intelligence has emerged as a key enabler in reshaping tourism, not merely as a technical tool but as a strategic instrument to improve decision-making, enhance performance and strengthen forecasting and respon-



KUNA photo  
Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar

siveness across varying conditions. He stressed that digital transformation in tourism requires adopting advanced technologies, investing in human capital and fostering regional and international cooperation to ensure efficient and responsible utilization of AI.

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## Day by Day

**AMERICAN** billionaire Elon Musk, whose fortune is getting closer to hitting one trillion dollars, says, "Whoever said money buys happiness is wrong."

Musk is the cousin of Croesus, if not his son, in terms of wealth.

Livelihood is divided by Allah Almighty among people, but the crux of Musk's statement is that happiness, health, a constant smile, and emotions are the real wealth.

Musk's life is divided between endless and non-stop work, 20 women, and plenty of children born out of wedlock.

Allah Almighty has His own way of dealing with His creatures.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



**Al-Jarallah:**  
2 Media key partner in strong Kuwait, India ties



**NBK Wealth wins Global Finance's Best Private Banking Services for the Next Generation in the World 2026'**  
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**10 Markaz records total revenue of KD 28.59 mln for 2025**

## Kuwait achieves 40 percent increase in cancer recovery

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11:** Kuwait has recorded a remarkable increase in cancer recovery rates over the past decade, increasing by 40 percent -- a proof of growing public awareness on the importance of early cancer detection.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) Campaign Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh underscored this achievement during the closing ceremony of the 11th Joint Gulf Cancer Awareness Week, with the theme, "United in Our Excellence."

Al-Saleh explained that in the past, many patients sought medical attention only during the advanced stages of the disease. He pointed out that intensified awareness efforts helped raise the recovery rates to 85 percent, confirming the effectiveness of public aware-



KUNA photo  
Dr. Khaled Al-Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cancer Aware Nation (CAN) Campaign

ness initiatives carried out by charitable organizations and health ministries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

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## News watch

**CAIRO:** Kuwait, represented by Permanent Representative to the Arab League Ambassador **Talal Al-Mutair**, participated Wednesday in emergency meeting at the level of permanent representatives to address recent Israeli occupation decisions to expand settlements in the **West Bank**.

UAE Ambassador to Cairo and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, chair of the session **Hamad Al-Zaabi** condemned the occupation's

measures aimed at imposing unlawful sovereignty and expanding settlements in the occupied territories.

He warned of their serious repercussions on regional stability and prospects for peace. Al-Zaabi stressed rejection of any infringement on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

He called for an immediate halt to settlement activities and urged the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council to assume their responsibilities. (KUNA)

## Hospitals, clinics adjust schedules for Ramadan

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11:** The Ministry of Health issued an administrative circular on the official working hours during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Ramadan working hours for the headquarters of the ministry and non-clinical departments are from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm, which apply to all departments that are not directly involved in delivering health and medical services.

For hospitals, specialized centers and primary healthcare

centers -- the direct providers of healthcare services, the working hours will be from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm.

Technical departments and primary healthcare centers with special operational requirements, including those requiring early preparedness or continuous 24-hour service, are excluded from the standard Ramadan working hours.

Their schedule will be arranged in accordance with the approved fingerprint system, in a manner that accommodates the specific nature and specialization of each department's work.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:11 Asr ..... 15:11  
 Sunrise .. 06:31 Maghrib .. 17:34  
 Zohr ..... 12:02 Isha ..... 18:52

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Warm and cloudy to partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas south-easterly wind, with speeds of 10-40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain and a chance for fog forming at night.

## Weather

**By Night:** Rather cold and partly cloudy with light to moderate south-easterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 06-26 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain and a chance for fog forming over some areas.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	32	19

Abdaly	31	18
Bubyan	26	16
Jahra	33	18
Faialaka Island	26	16
Salmiyah	26	19
Ahmadi	24	14
Jal Aliyah	30	17
Nuwaisib	31	18
Wafra	32	17



Crown Prince Diwan photo  
 His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Secretary-General of UN Tourism (UNWTO) Shaikha Al-Nowais.

## Kuwait Crown Prince meets UNWTO Secretary-General

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Wednesday at Bayan Palace the Secretary-General of UN Tourism (UNWTO) Shaikha Al-Nowais, on the convention of 52nd meeting of the Regional Committee for the Middle East of UNWTO in Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Affairs and Acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar, and senior officials.

## KISR holds Open Day marking Nat'l Days, 59 years research

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) on Wednesday held an open day to mark the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day, under the patronage and attendance of KISR Director General Dr. Faisal Salman Al-Humaidan.



Dr. Al-Humaidan

In a speech at the ceremony, Al-Humaidan extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

He said the national occasion recalls key

milestones in Kuwait's history, shaped by the founding leaders and carried forward by successive generations, as the country continues its development and active engagement regionally and internationally.

Al-Humaidan noted February holds special significance for KISR this year as it concludes a year of scientific contribution and prepares to enter a new one, approaching the completion of its sixth decade since the institute's establishment in February 1967.

He said KISR has built nearly 59 years of scientific and technical research, serving as one of the region's oldest scientific institutions and a national research partner supporting development plans, decision-making and future foresight.

He also recalled the sacrifices of KISR staff during the Iraqi invasion, noting that some became martyrs while the institute continued its role in reconstruction and development after liberation.

## Kuwait's embassies worldwide mark National, Liberation Days

DUBAI, Feb 11, (KUNA): The Consulate General of the State of Kuwait in Dubai and the Northern Emirates held a celebration marking the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day, attended by Emirati officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and representatives of the Kuwaiti community in the UAE.

Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, Khaled Abdulrahim Al-Zaabi, in his address congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the government and Kuwaiti people.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Zaabi said that this dear anniversary represents a renewed national milestone and affirms Kuwait's solid developmental achievements across various fields.

He noted that the national occasion is not only a celebration but also an opportunity to recall the sacrifices of forefathers who founded the nation and gave much for its sake, stressing Kuwait will continue its journey in supporting stability, development, and enhancing its regional and international role.

Al-Zaabi further explained that the Consulate General is keen to participate in commemorating these national occasions in ways that reflect the spirit and national identity of Kuwait.

## Cairo

The Embassy of the State of Kuwait in Egypt and its Mission to the Arab League held a reception to mark the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day of Kuwait, attended by Egyptian ministers, senior officials, and Arab and foreign ambassadors.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, Ghanim Al-Ghanim, said that celebrating the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day reflects the ongoing journey of the Kuwaiti nation.

Al-Ghanim noted that the presence of the attendees at the event reflects the depth of

relations and strong bonds of brotherhood between the two friendly countries, underscored that Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations are historical and distinguished.

Recent high-level reciprocal visits have demonstrated both leaderships' keenness to strengthen bilateral relations and advance them towards broader horizons, he added.

Al-Ghanim reaffirmed Kuwait's firm position supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and praised Egypt's role in facilitating the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.

Al-Ghanim extended his thanks and appreciation to the attendees and wished continued security, stability and prosperity for Kuwait and Egypt under their wise leaderships.

Speaking on behalf of Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Mostafa Madbouly, Minister of Supply and Internal Trade Dr. Sherif Farouk extended Egypt's congratulations to the State of Kuwait - leadership, government, and people - on the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day.

## Philippines

Also, Kuwait's embassies in the Philippines, Slovakia, Germany and Kazakhstan on Tuesday held galas marking the 65th National Day and the 35th anniversary of Liberation Day, both of which were attended by senior officials and international diplomats.

In the Philippine capital Manila, Kuwait's ambassador to the Southeast Asian archipelago Meshary Al-Naibari conveyed his warmest greetings 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.

In Berlin, the Kuwaiti Embassy organized a celebration to mark the country's national celebrations, with Ambassador Reem Al-Khaled and embassy staff attending.

Speaking to KUNA on this occasion, the ambassador conveyed her greetings and congratulations to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and the government and people of Kuwait on the National Day and Liberation Day.

# Strict check on price rise as Ramadan approaches

No excuse from co-ops will be entertained: Dr Issa

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs Sector in the Ministry of Social Affairs has intensified its efforts to closely monitor the cooperative societies, as the holy month of Ramadan is fast approaching.**

This move aims to ensure compliance with the laws and ministerial decrees regulating cooperative work, particularly on budget preparation, disbursement mechanisms, and planning for seasonal expenditures.

In a press statement, acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs Sector and Director General of the Planning and Administrative Development General Directorate at the ministry Dr. Sayed Issa has

warned against the practice of some cooperative societies that requested exemptions to disburse funds from their upcoming budgets for distributing purchase balances before being approved by the General Assembly. He stressed that this approach is unacceptable, inconsistent with the laws and ministerial decrees regulating cooperative work, and cannot be considered a substitute for good planning.

He said the ministry is operating in a phase that demands firmness and total discipline in applying the law. He asserted that the era of relying on exceptions or pledges is over, and that the current phase necessitates a radical change in the way cooperative societies are managed. He pointed out that it has been repeatedly emphasized to all boards of directors, whether elected or appointed, that cooperatives must fully abide by the legal and regulatory frameworks.

He added that the month of Ramadan is not an emergency or a sudden event, but rather a well-known and predetermined season. "Therefore, it is unacceptable that some cooperatives treat it as a sudden obligation, only to return at the last minute

requesting exceptions or making pledges in order to distribute the Ramadan purchase balance to their shareholders in an attempt to compensate for the delay and improve their image with the shareholders," he stated.

He pointed out that resorting to what he described as "social pressure" on the ministry is a flawed and unacceptable approach.

He said the negligence or miscalculation of the boards of directors in financial planning does not obligate the ministry to cover up or rectify this oversight by granting exceptions. He stressed that regulatory bodies cannot be held responsible for the administrative errors that could have been avoided through proper planning.

He reiterated that the ministry can neither reward administrative negligence by granting exceptions, nor overlook regulatory violations under any social pretext. He affirmed that the law is applied without discrimination, in accordance with the principles of corporate governance, to solidify the concept of professional work within the cooperative sector.

## Al-Jarallah: Media key partner in strong Kuwait, India ties



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah receives the visiting Ambassador-designate of the Republic of India to the State of Kuwait Mrs. Paramita Tripathi.



Photos by Rizk Taufiq  
 Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah in talks with the Indian Ambassador-designate Mrs. Paramita Tripathi. Also present at the meeting were Managing Editor of the Arab Times Marlon Aquino Malinao, Online Media Manager John Fernandes and colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Dean of Kuwaiti Journalism and Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers Ahmed Al-Jarallah hosted Her Excellency Mrs. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador-designate of the Republic of India to the State of Kuwait, at his office on Wednesday. They deliberated on ways to strengthen media cooperation in order to solidify the friendly relations between the two countries in various sectors.

They engaged in a dialogue emphasizing the vital role of media in building cultural understanding between

their peoples. Both parties underscored the need for balanced and professional reporting to accurately depict the deep historical and growing economic, cultural and educational cooperation between Kuwait and India.

Tripathi acknowledged the significant role of the Kuwaiti press, specifically Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers, in covering the activities of the Indian Embassy and the Indian community in Kuwait. She commended the high level of professionalism exhibited by the two newspapers in their coverage of issues of mutual concern. In response, Al-

Jarallah affirmed the position of the media as a key partner in supporting diplomatic relations and reinforcing the historical friendship between the two nations.

He confirmed the readiness of his newspapers to draw attention to the initiatives and events that showcase the depth of these ties and support bilateral cooperation efforts. Also present at the meeting were Managing Editor of the Arab Times Marlon Aquino Malinao, Online Media Manager John Fernandes and colleague Mohammad Al-Farhan.

## Other Voices

### The mysteries of Freemasonry

By Ahmad alsarraf

There is hatred, bordering on hostility, among several parties towards what is called the 'Freemasonry' movement.

Upon examining the identities of these parties, we find that they are no less reprehensible than Freemasonry, assuming that Freemasonry is inherently evil. This is what we will attempt to explore here.

Freemasonry is a global fraternal organization whose roots trace back to the guilds of builders, or 'master builders', in medieval Europe. It evolved in the 17th century into a philosophical and ethical movement with members from diverse backgrounds, known for its secret rituals and hierarchical structure.

In the mid-20th century, there were prominent figures in the Arab world who were members of Freemasonry, and perhaps some still are. In my view, Freemasonry is not very different from any professional, cultural or commercial association, but it follows specific, and somewhat peculiar, 'rituals' for those who wish to become members. Its members are often wealthy, renowned professionals, or from the highly educated and cultured class.

Freemasonry is criticized for its favoritism towards its members and the mutual support they provide. This is a practice also observed in many segments of society for religious, sectarian, ethnic or tribal reasons.

Freemasonry describes itself as a moral system based on three fundamental principles: liberty, equality and fraternity.

Most of its leaders, such as Mirabeau and Robespierre, were Freemasons. These principles have earned Freemasons the enmity of the Church and the clergy in general. However, in recent decades, Freemasons have increasingly focused their activities on self-improvement through symbolic lessons derived from construction tools (such as the ruler and compass), and on promoting charitable work and interfaith tolerance.

To learn more about Freemasonry, American researcher Timothy Boot explored the six secrets of Freemasonry,

noting that its official history dates back to 1717 and that Freemasons have a long history of being viewed with suspicion due to their secretive practices.

Although they openly acknowledge their presence online and offer tours of their lodges, they keep their rituals secret and maintain many practices shrouded in mystery.

As a result, they have been accused of all sorts of dubious activities, including assassination attempts and Satanism. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain the truth or exaggerate the reality of an organization that so tightly controls its activities.

Enough details have leaked out over the years to allow non-Masons a glimpse into what goes on behind the scenes of this secret society.

Those interested in the hidden aspects of Freemasonry are rarely disappointed when they learn about the initiation rituals for new members.

According to the book "Secrets of Freemasonry" by Pat Morgan, which includes extensive details about how members recognize one another, they have gestures and passwords as part of their rituals, most of which are derived from the Old Testament.

Despite the steadily declining number of Freemasons worldwide (currently estimated at around six million members), it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the most powerful and influential figures on Earth have participated in the rituals of this complex fraternity.

However, their identities are largely unknown. Among them are rumored to be American presidents such as Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Gerald Ford, King Edward VII, King Edward VIII and King George VI, writers Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling, actors Clark Gable and John Wayne, cowboy singers Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, jazz giants Louis Armstrong and Doc Ellington, explorer Buffalo Bill, magician Harry Houdini, and the extraordinary composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

In conclusion, I believe that most of what is rumored about Freemasonry's infiltration of decision-making centers, its global financial and military power, and that it is behind all conspiracies, is nothing more than a kind of exaggeration, which the Freemasons may have been pleased with, and which they have never tried to deny.

□ □ □

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KUNA photo  
 Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jallal at the celebrations to mark National and Liberation Days.

## Education role vital in building up patriotism

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jallal underscored vital role of academic institutions in strengthening national identity and instilling loyalty and belonging among students.

His remarks came in a press statement following his attendance of celebrations of the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day organized by Abdullah Al-Salem University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), with participation from government higher education institutions.

Al-Jallal extended his congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, 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 the Kuwaiti people.

He said the participation of higher education institutions reflects academic unity and the strong bond between the wise political leadership and the Kuwaiti people.

Celebrating national occasions on campus, he noted, underscores the State's commitment to preparing qualified national cadres capable of contributing to sustainable development in line with strategic plans to enhance higher education quality and align it with national priorities.

For their part, Abdullah Al-Salem University Director Dr. Muna Al-Ahmad and PAAET Deputy Director General for Academic Affairs, Development and Innovation Dr. Mishal Al-Mansouri also extended congratulations to the leadership and people of Kuwait, praying for continued security and prosperity.

The ceremony featured student performances, folklore shows, a musical presentation by the Ministry of Interior band and a national-themed exhibition.



KUNA photo  
 Kuwait Embassy staff and guests in Manila during the cake-cutting ceremony.

## HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



## Judge Zahran discovered his neighbor's lie through a handful of dust

ONCE upon a time, there was a judge named Zahran, renowned for his intelligence, shrewdness, and wisdom in restoring rights to their owners and redressing injustice.

It is said that two men lived next door to each other, one kind and the other cunning.

However, the kind neighbor lived beside his neighbor, unaware of the latter's deceit and treachery.

One day, the wicked neighbor fell into such financial hardship that he had nothing to eat. He went to his neighbor's house to ask for something to eat, but he did not find him, only his wife. She told him that her husband had gone to work that morning and had not returned yet.

So the man decided to go to his neighbor's workplace. On his way, he saw his neighbor returning from work. He stopped him and told him he was in financial difficulty, asking if he could borrow a thousand dirhams.

The kind neighbor did not hesitate and thought to himself, "It is alright to give my neighbor a good loan."

There was a date palm tree nearby, so the kind man told his neighbor, "God willing, tomorrow I will find the thousand dirhams for you, and I will wait for you by this palm tree to give you the money."

The next day, the stingy neighbor went to meet his neighbor and collect the thousand dirhams. When he arrived, he found his neighbor waiting by the palm tree.

The kind neighbor handed over the thousand dirhams to his neighbor as promised.

The stingy man said, "I will repay you this money in three months." The kind man agreed, without taking any written document from his neighbor to prove his claim.

Three months later, the kind man went to his neighbor to collect the thousand dirhams, but the stingy man denied ever having borrowed money from him.

The man was saddened by what he heard from the mean fellow and thought to himself, "We have reached a time when good is repaid with evil, and kindness with wickedness."

The kind neighbor had heard about Judge Zahran and his wisdom and shrewdness in

• The kind man lent the mean man a thousand dirhams, and the neighbor denied that he took it.

• He lived for years unaware that his neighbor was deceitful and cunning.

• When the neighbor told him he was in dire straits, the kind man responded to his request.

• Three months later, the kind man went to collect his money.

• He placed the palm tree as a marker for his meeting with the ungrateful man.

• He told himself that there is no problem to grant his neighbor a good loan.

• We have reached a time when good is responded with evil, and kindness with wickedness.

• I never imagined my neighbor would deny me my rights.

• The judge said to the defendant: Your neighbor is very late.

• The place my neighbor went to is too far away.

preventing injustice and restoring rights to their rightful owners.

Indeed, he went to the judge to complain about his neighbor.

The judge asked one of the guards to bring the accused man in. When he arrived, the judge looked at him and said, "Your neighbor claims that he lent you a thousand dirhams. Is

his claim true?"

The man denied what he had heard from the judge and said, "Your Honor, I have not taken any money from my neighbor, nor have I ever borrowed from him. What he claims is a lie and a fabrication."

Then, the judge looked at the neighbor and asked him, "Do you have a witness that your neighbor took a thousand dirhams from you, or any document to prove it?"

The kind man said, "No, Your Honor, but when I lent him the money, I trusted him. It never occurred to me that my neighbor would deny my rights."

The judge sensed the man's sincerity. He thought for a moment, then looked at him and said, "If you are telling the truth, and you did indeed lend your neighbor a thousand dirhams, then go and bring me a handful of soil from the place where you gave the money to your neighbor."

The good man was surprised by the judge's request, but he did as he was told and hurried off to take a handful of soil from that spot.

Time passed, and the good neighbor did not return. The judge began to look at the wicked neighbor and suddenly asked him, "Your neighbor is very late. Do you know why he has not returned yet?"

Without thinking, the wicked man quickly replied, "The place my neighbor went to is too far from here."

At that moment, the judge laughed and said, "Now I am certain that what your neighbor claimed is true, and that he did indeed lend you a thousand dirhams."

The wicked neighbor was terrified and said, "How is that possible, Your Honor?"

Judge Zahran said, "If your neighbor were lying and had not lent you anything, as you claim, you would not know where he went to get that handful of dust. That place is the very same place where you took the money from your neighbor."

Thus, the judge was able to prove the honest neighbor's right and ordered the dishonest neighbor imprisoned until he returned the money he had taken.

Charlie Chaplin told a joke, and the audience laughed. He told it again, and some laughed. The third time, no one laughed.

At this point, Chaplin said, "Since you did not laugh at the same joke more than once, why do you cry repeatedly for the same reasons and the same worries?"

Chaplin added, "Nothing in life is permanent; even our problems do not last."

Chaplin said he loved the rain because no one could see his tears. He also said that the most day you waste in your life is the day you spend with no laughter.



Our Prime Minister said, "The future does not wait for the hesitant." This is a beautiful statement. How many hesitant governments have there been over the past 40 years? We know what is right, yet we don't do it.



Silence is the knockout blow, not excessive talk.

Let them see in you the secret of secrets. Keep silent and let them suffer the confusion of interpretation.



More important than making people happy is not to harm them. Refraining from harming those around you is, in itself, a source of happiness for them.



Most politicians are skilled at lying to people, even to their own nations. They use sweet talk to deceive others. Most people believe in lies until the damage reaches them.



The drill in progress.

KUNA photo

### Readiness boost

## Senior security officials attend as drill wraps up

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): The Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Waheeb, and Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lieutenant General Hamad Al-Barjas attended on Wednesday the conclusion of the joint exercise "Raiyat Watan."

It was held with the participation of the Kuwaiti Army, Ministry of Interior, and the National Guard.

The Ministry of Defense said in a press statement that the exercise aims to enhance joint operational capabilities and raise readiness levels among military and security institutions. It focused on strengthening command and control concepts, improving coordination and integration, and ensuring effective decision-making through realistic scenarios simulating operational challenges.

The ministry added that the exercise included several field and command drills using live ammunition, emphasizing unified command procedures, faster information exchange, and enhanced coordination among participating units.

During the closing ceremony, senior officials reviewed the implementation stages, overall evaluation results, and performance levels demonstrated by participating forces, reflecting the effectiveness of joint security operations.

Exercise Director Brigadier General Barak Al-Farhan delivered a comprehensive briefing on the exercise phases, objectives, command mechanisms, key lessons learned, and evaluation outcomes.

## Gulf states discuss ways to boost customs bonds

RIYADH, Feb 11, (KUNA): Members of the Executive Council of the GCC Customs Union Authority held their 16th meeting Tuesday in Riyadh, attended by Director General of Kuwait's General Administration of Customs Yousef Al-Nuwaif, to discuss union implementation progress.

The meeting reviewed executive steps required to implement the Supreme Council decision at its 46th session on completing requirements of the GCC Customs Union and enhancing joint Gulf customs cooperation across member states effectively further.

Members were briefed on updates from technical committees studying solutions to challenges facing the Customs Union, and reviewed progress in the customs data exchange platform project and related technical initiatives and ongoing operational activities overall.

The council also reviewed the Authority participation in the 2026 WCO Technology Conference and Exhibition hosted by Abu Dhabi from January 28 to 30, aimed at expanding partnerships and supporting completion of the Customs Union.

## How to tackle hi-tech terror?

### Kuwait in Cairo meeting

**CAIRO, Feb 11, (KUNA): The 38th meeting of the Arab Experts Group on Counterterrorism began Tuesday, with the participation of Kuwait, to discuss ways to confront the use of modern technologies by terrorist organizations.**

In her opening remarks, the Director of the Legal Affairs Department at the Arab League, Minister Plenipotentiary Dr. Maha Bakhit, said that the battle against terrorism is facing serious challenges due to the significant development and widespread use of modern technological means, in a manner that poses a threat to the family, society, and the Arab nation.

She added that these challenges require greater efforts from all parties, each from their respective position, to address these transformations through studying them and confronting them from security, intellectual, and ethical perspectives.

Bakhit affirmed that the Arab League, within the framework of joint Arab action, is working to address various emerging phenomena, including terrorism, through a comprehensive approach to confront and

combat it.

She stressed that the Arab League was a pioneer in issuing an Arab Convention on Combating Terrorism and actively participated in international discussions aimed at issuing an international convention on combating terrorism, while adhering to Arab, religious, and ethical principles and values, and rejecting the linking of terrorism or violence to religion, belief, or ethnic differences.

Over the course of two days, the meeting will discuss a number of agenda items, including following up on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the 37th meeting and enhancing cooperation with the United Nations, its bodies and committees concerned with counter-terrorism, as well as relevant international and regional organizations.

The meeting will also examine the capabilities of terrorist organizations in the field of modern technologies, including the technology used particularly drones and modern digital applications in carrying out terrorist operations, in addition to the use of cryptocurrencies to finance these operations, and ways to confront these challenges.

Kuwait is participating in the meeting with a joint delegation representing the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior.

## Court acquits man in drugs case; for own use, admits defendant

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Criminal Court acquitted an individual of drug trafficking and refrained from imposing a sentence for the use of Lyrica, hashish and cocaine.

The decision of the court on the drug usage charges was based on the confession of the defendant during investigation.

Case files indicate that the Public Prosecution issued a warrant to arrest the defendant and search his apartment. Security forces executed the warrant and searched the bedroom of the defendant, leading to the discovery of seven capsules (red and white) that were inside a drawer, along with a small transparent bag containing a white substance suspected to be narcotics.

When asked about the confiscated items, the defendant admitted they were his and intended

for personal consumption. However, the investigating officer's subsequent inquiries suggested the defendant possessed the substances for personal use and trafficking. The defendant later denied all charges in court.

Attorney Bashar Al-Nassar, lawyer for the defendant, presented an oral defense, arguing for his client's acquittal. He contended that there was insufficient evidence of intent to traffic, that the initial confession of his client was invalid, and that the arrest and search procedures, as well as the underlying warrant, were invalid because they relied on inconclusive investigations and the absence of a valid warrant from the prosecution.

The defense also requested the summoning of the arresting officer for questioning and the inclusion of the telephone records of the defendant and the police logbook in the case file to support the claims of the defense and highlight weaknesses in the evidence presented by the prosecution.

## Two jailed 7 years in money fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Fahad Bu Salib, has affirmed a previous court ruling against a Kuwaiti citizen and an Asian, who were sentenced to seven years in prison with hard labor for serious charges including money laundering, harming national interest, and involvement in unauthorized banking activities.

The defendants, along with three compa-

nies, were jointly fined KD8,367,360.

The ruling also prohibits the three companies from engaging in any commercial activities for a period of five years. The Asian will be deported after serving his prison term.



**2 years in libel suit:** The Appeals Court, presided over by Judge Hassan Al-Shammari, with Adel Al-Khaldi as secretary, sentenced an artist to two years in prison for insulting former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Ahmad Al-Shuhoumi, reports Al-Rai daily.

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# Revised nursery rules approved

## Construction specs defined

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Chairperson of the Technical Committee at the Municipal Council Munira Al-Amir announced that the committee approved the proposed amendment to Schedule No. Eight, stating the requirements and specifications for nursery buildings in various parts of the country, confirming that each nursery must include only one office for its administration and annexes.**

Al-Amir emphasized the "prevention of using nursery plots for any purpose other than that for which they were designated, in order to preserve their agricultural character and prevent their conversion into use for unauthorized commercial activities."

She explained that Schedule Eight differentiates between State-owned nurseries under the supervision of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and privately owned nurseries with areas starting from 2,000 square meters, setting clear

requirements appropriate to the nature of each category.

She clarified that the requirements stipulate that the basement construction must not exceed 100 percent of the plot area, allowing multiple basements to be used entirely for nursery operations, including storage or parking.

Additional basements must be designated solely for parking. The ground floor construction must not exceed 50 percent of the plot area, so the remaining space could be covered with lightweight, removable, light-transmitting materials suitable for agricultural activities.

The mezzanine construction must not exceed 30 percent of the plot area, allowing the use of a portion of it as an office. The remaining mezzanine is allocated to the nursery's operations without requiring separate commercial licenses.

The amendment clearly regulates commercial licensing, specifying building heights and construction regulations within the plot boundaries, while fully adhering to fire safety and other public safety requirements. It also prohibits the construction of any additional extensions.

To support the economic viability of privately owned nurseries, the amendment allows the use of up to five percent of the plot area for supplementary activities such as cafés or restaurants, subject to regulations that ensure these do not overshadow the primary agricultural activity.

## Officials praise deep-rooted relations and expanding cooperation

# Kuwait Embassies in Bahrain, Lebanon and Spain celebrate 65th National Day, 35th Liberation Day

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA):** The Embassy of Kuwait in Bahrain held a ceremony on Tuesday marking the 65th National Day and the 35th anniversary of Liberation Day, attended by senior officials and diplomats.

Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa attended on behalf of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, alongside Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al-Zayani, senior officials and heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Bahrain.

Charge d'Affaires at the Kuwaiti Embassy Counselor Yousef Al-Banwan extended congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people.

Kuwait Embassies in Lebanon and Spain commemorated the 65th National Day and the 35th Liberation Day with official receptions attended by prominent political, diplomatic, economic and social figures.

In Beirut, Charge d'Affaires of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon, Minister Plenipotentiary Abdulaziz Al-Dalh, congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh



Charge d'Affaires at the Kuwaiti Embassy, Counselor Yousef Al-Banwan, joins Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Khaled bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al-Zayani, and heads of diplomatic missions in a cake-cutting ceremony.

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

Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the government and Kuwaiti people.

Al-Dalh prayed for Kuwait's continued security and prosperity, underscoring the deep-rooted and brotherly ties between Kuwait and Lebanon, built on mutual respect and strengthened through successive supportive stances over the years. In turn, Director of Casa Arabe and former Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait Miguel Moro Aguilar conveyed his best wishes to the Kuwaiti leadership and people, expressing hope for enhanced cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Spanish Senator Luis Rogelio Rodriguez, a member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee representing the conservative party, praised the stable and distinguished relations between the two countries and the fraternal ties between the two ruling families, wishing the Kuwaiti people continued prosperity and stability.

Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and Secretary of the Defense Committee in the Congress of Deputies, Senator Teresa Ruiz-Sillero, also congratulated Kuwait on its national days, wishing good health to His Highness the Amir and expressing hope for deeper diplomatic relations.



Ambassadors of the GCC countries in Lebanon at the Kuwaiti Embassy's celebration of the national holidays.



The Kuwaiti Embassy in Madrid celebrates national holidays.

KUNA photos

# Doha water project referred to SAB for review

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11:** The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy forwarded the Doha Water Complex tender to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for study and review prior to finalizing the contract.

It is worth noting that the ministry recently received majority approval from the Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) to award the KD97.188 million tender to the lowest bidder that met all the technical specifications and requirements.

This is one of the development projects included in the plan of the ministry to modernize

the water network.

The project is aimed at increasing water storage capacity by 130 million imperial gallons and pumping capacity by 220 million imperial gallons per day, ensuring consistent water supply for residential areas, particularly during the summer months when water consumption is high.

## Code of Conduct awareness rises

# PAAET advances 'Aada' project

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11:** Assistant Deputy Director General for Institutional Support and Head of the 'Aada' (Performance) Project Team at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Ghadir Abdul affirmed that this is a leading national project that reinforces the values of integrity and transparency, and establishes the principles of professional conduct in the government work environment.

In a statement to the newspaper, Abdul pointed out that the project serves as the executive arm of the Code of Professional Conduct in accordance with the directive of His Highness the Amir of Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the principles of corporate governance.

She said one of the important indicators of the success of the project is reflected in the results of the annual survey conducted by Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), in coordination with the government entities. She explained that the level of awareness was measured in the first year and then compared with subsequent years to identify gaps and areas for development. She added that behavioral changes in the work environment were monitored through the observations and evaluations conducted by the administrative leaders.

She revealed that the project yielded the desired results, as awareness of the Code of Conduct increased from 37.6 percent in 2024 to 78.9 percent in 2025, more than doubling within a short period among Nazaha employees.

She stated that, according to project reports at the national level, 28 government entities participated in the initiative, and employee awareness increased by approximately 29 percent within a single year.

She also said that about 280 activities, meetings, surveys and awareness campaigns were carried out, benefiting about 66,000 employees in various government entities.

She disclosed that 'Aada' is a national initiative launched by Nazaha in implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, aiming to activate the Code of Conduct within government entities. She indicated that the project extends over four years, having begun in 2022, and progresses through four successive stages: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. She added that advancement between these stages requires meeting a set of criteria and requirements, which reflect the participating entity's level of commitment to apply the Code of Conduct.

She stressed that the project is not just a theoretical framework, as it also provides practical clarification of the provisions of the Code of Conduct, the positive behaviors that should be promoted in the workplace, and the negative behaviors that should be avoided due to the legal and administrative consequences.

Regarding the mechanism for implementing the project in PAAET, Abdul said the Authority joined the project in coordination with Nazaha, which provided a detailed implementation plan, along with a clear timetable for execution.

She praised the senior leadership of PAAET for their support and proactive role in forming an integrated team that included specialists from the administrative, legal and training sectors, particularly in view of the legal nature of

the Code of Professional Conduct.

She said the project was implemented through two main tracks. The first focused on awareness and communication by launching awareness campaigns and disseminating guidance messages through social media platforms and official email channels.

The second track focused on training, through the organization of workshops and training programs designed to enable employees to practically apply sound professional practices in the workplace.

She stressed that the project plays a direct role in strengthening adherence to professional values and positive behaviors, explaining that many corruption-related crimes often begin with unprofessional conduct.

She revealed that the project highlights the need to refrain from certain practices, such as wasting public funds, accepting gifts, engaging in bribery or practicing favoritism.

She commended PAAET's support for the project, confirming that the Authority passed the Bronze level and is currently operating at the Silver level. She also affirmed that Nazaha honored PAAET at the annual conference last year.

She disclosed that the achievements of the project include the preparation of certified trainers, a remarkable increase in employee awareness, and rise in departmental requests for Code of Conduct programs. She further pointed out that PAAET's successful experience has been shared with other government entities.

She stated that PAAET organized several awareness workshops for supervisors and newly appointed employees to guarantee compliance with the Code of Conduct.

She said nine workshops and training programs on the Code of Conduct and organizational loyalty were implemented, with the participation of 814 employees and supervisors from various sectors of the Authority.

She added that, in support of the integrity system, an internal mechanism was established to report violations of the Code of Conduct and was published on PAAET's official website. "This mechanism enables employees to report violations within a clear institutional framework that ensures confidentiality and promotes good governance," she asserted.

She indicated that a declaration and undertaking form has been introduced, requiring new and recently appointed employees to commit to adhering to the rules and instructions of the Code of Conduct, thereby, reinforcing the principle of professional responsibility from the outset.

She cited the issuance of a circular mandating all Authority employees to adhere to the official dress code during working hours, in accordance with Article Five (Employee Duties Toward Work) of the Code of Conduct.

She also referred to a circular concerning the mechanism and controls for approving conflict-of-interest disclosure forms — a measure aimed at enhancing transparency and limiting practices that could undermine institutional integrity.

With regard to digital transformation and administrative innovation, she confirmed that PAAET launched the interactive 'Chat - Administrative' application, which relies on artificial intelligence technologies to provide immediate and accurate responses to employees' inquiries on a wide range of administrative matters.



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**Strong ties sought****FM tapped by UNHCR**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA):



Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Tuesday a Sheikh Jarrah phone call from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Barham Salih, who congratulated Sheikh Jarrah on his new post. During the phone conversation, Salih wished Sheikh Jarrah success and best of luck, hoping that they would work together to promote Kuwaiti-UNHCR cooperation.

**Ministers stress Arab unity and tech adaptation****Kuwait, Bahrain strengthen media co-op**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar received on Tuesday Bahraini Minister of Information Dr. Ramzan Al-Nuaimi upon his arrival in Kuwait.

Dr. Al-Nuaimi is visiting to participate in the Executive Bureau meeting of the Council of Arab Information Ministers, which Kuwait will host on Wednesday.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Omar, also serves as Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology, emphasized the depth and strength of the fraternal relations between Kuwait and Bahrain.

He commended the high-level of bilateral cooperation in various fields, particularly in media and culture, which reflects the historical ties between the two nations.

He underscored the importance of developing mechanisms for joint Arab media work and enhancing coordination among Arab media institutions to serve Arab causes. Minister Al-Omar also stressed the need to keep pace with the rapid changes in the media sector and deliver professional and responsible news coverage.

He noted Kuwait's keenness to support all efforts that would strengthen joint Arab media cooperation and intensify coordination among Arab ministries of information.

He stressed the importance of unifying efforts to confront current challenges and present a balanced Arab media discourse that reflects shared values, preserves Arab



KUNA photo  
Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, during his meeting with Bahraini Minister of Information, Dr. Ramzan Al-Nuaimi.

identity, and adapts to rapid technological developments in the media sector.

**Crown Prince, PM extend greetings****Kuwait HH Amir congratulates Iranian President on Nat'l Day**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Wednesday to the Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished good health to the president and further progress and prosperity for his country and the people.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Wednesday to the Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, on his country's national day.

In the cable, His Highness the Crown Prince wished good health to the president and further progress and prosperity for his country and the people.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable on Wednesday to the Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, on his country's national day.

**Exploratory mission marks key milestone****OHCHR wraps up Kuwait review**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concluded an exploratory visit to Kuwait held from February 8 to 10, organized in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement Wednesday that the visit came at Kuwait's invitation within its strategic partnership with the UN and in implementation of international human rights commitments undertaken during its 2024-2026 Human Rights Council membership.

It added that the visit included meetings and field tours with government bodies and national institutions, as well as civil society organizations, including the ministries of justice, interior, defense, social affairs and information, the Public Prosecution and specialized institutes.

The ministry noted the visit aimed to brief OHCHR representatives on Kuwait's human rights framework, legislation and policies, contributing to assessing existing efforts, identifying development areas and strengthening



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo  
Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Ambassador Sheikhha Jawaher Al-Sabah, during her meeting with a delegation from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

technical cooperation to advance compliance with international standards.

**KSClub, Rospatent boost IP collaboration**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): Chairman of the Kuwait Science Club (KSClub) and the Higher Committee of the International Invention Fair in the Middle East (IIFME)'s Chairman Talal Al-Kharafi met with a delegation from the Russian Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent) to discuss enhancing cooperation and exchanging expertise in intellectual property (IP).

In a press statement, the KSClub said the meeting was held on the sidelines of the third day of the 16th IIFME, currently being held under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Al-Kharafi highlighted the Russian participation in this year's edition, noting the visit by Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi to the Russian pavilion and his praise for the innovations showcased.

He added that the Club is ready to serve as an effective

link to facilitate cooperation between participating entities and relevant bodies in Kuwait, in support of the scientific ecosystem.

For its part, the Russian delegation reviewed Rospatent's role in the digital transformation of IP systems, and its work as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

The delegation also highlighted the Federal Institute of Industrial Property (FIPS), including patent analytics capabilities, noting its cooperation with international partners in technical examination and research.

At the end of the meeting, the delegation extended an invitation to KSClub to participate in the 8th International Rospatent Conference "ERA IP," scheduled to be held in Moscow on April 21, focusing on digital transformation and developing IP ecosystems.



KSClub photo  
Delegates from Kuwait Science Club and the Russian Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent) pose for a group photo during their meeting at the 16th International Invention Fair.

**MoE rolls out AI tools program with Google****Preparing teachers for a digital future**

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11, (KUNA): The Ministry of Education launched on Wednesday a project to implement artificial intelligence tools from Google for Education, in cooperation with Google and with broad participation with educational leaders and teachers.

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Hamad Al-Hamad affirmed, in a statement issued by the ministry, that the project is a major national initiative to enable about 40,000 secondary school teachers and department heads to use artificial intelligence in education safely and ethically.

This will enhance their digital skills and improve teaching practices in line with international standards, the statement added.

Al-Hamad explained that the project began in early 2026 and will continue



MoE photo  
Part of the 'AI Tools in Education Project' event, organized in collaboration with Google.

through the end of the year, aiming to unify digital proficiency standards, improve learning outcomes, and foster innovation in teaching methods across all educational districts.

Al-Hamad added that the project aligns with Kuwait's future vision

to strengthen its leadership in digital education, highlighting the key role of educational leaders and the importance of joint efforts in building an innovative, sustainable learning environment capable of preparing globally competitive generations.

**Qatar welcomes Kuwait cooperation results**

DOHA, Feb 11, (KUNA): The Qatari Cabinet welcomed the results of the seventh session of the Joint Higher Committee for Cooperation between the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait.

This came during the regular meeting of the Qatari Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman, held at the Council's headquarters at the Amiri Diwan.

The Cabinet said that it welcomed the results of the seventh session of the Joint Higher Committee for Cooperation between the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait, which was held in Kuwait last Sunday.

The session constituted a further step toward strengthening cooperation and integration between the two brotherly countries.



KUNA photo  
During the regular meeting of the Qatari Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman, held at the Council's headquarters.

**Cabinet seals**

The new law provides comprehensive protection for all family members against all forms of domestic violence, the Cabinet indicated.

The Cabinet agreed on a decree-law on the dissolution of ministerial portfolios, authorization of a minister to cover the portfolio of another as well as reshuffling of ministerial committees.

Furthermore, the Cabinet ratified numerous agreements and memoranda of understanding for cooperation with several sisterly and friendly countries in a variety of domains and referred them to His Highness the Amir.

The Cabinet announced a public holiday on Wednesday, February 25 and Thursday, February 26 on occasion of independence and liberation days.

Work resumes in state bodies as normal on Sunday, March 1, it added, noting that institutions of special nature can decide their holiday while taking public interest into consideration.

At the advent of the meeting, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah welcomed the ministers who joined the Cabinet and wished them success in their mission.

He also thanked the ministers, who left in the recent reshuffle, on their sincere efforts to serve the country interests.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet lauded the national operetta "Deerat Al-Khair", which was held earlier today at Bayan Palace Theater, under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other sheikhs and senior state officials, as part of the country's celebrations of its

national holidays.

The Cabinet expressed its sincere thanks and great appreciation to the Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Omar Al-Omar, the Minister of Education, Sayed Al-Tabtabai, and the President of the Voluntary Work Center, Member of the Permanent Committee for the Celebration of National Holidays and Occasions, Sheikhha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and all those in charge of this national operetta.

His Highness the Premier informed the Cabinet of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences building on Monday on occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment.

The Cabinet reviewed the official visit of Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa to Kuwait last week and the outcome of his meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The Cabinet was briefed on the results of the recently held Kuwait Oil and Gas Exhibition and Conference.

His Highness the Premier informed the Cabinet about the results of his participation in the World Government Summit, which was held in Dubai last Wednesday.

The Cabinet was informed about the planned official visit of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Khalifa to Kuwait to participate in the 62nd Munich Security Conference.

It was briefed on the outcome of the official visit of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the sisterly State of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and his ac-

companying delegation to the State of Kuwait on Sunday.

It was also apprised off the official visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the sisterly United Arab Emirates Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on January 29.

The Cabinet deliberated other issues on its agenda and approved some of them and referred some others for ministerial committees for more study.

Finally, the Cabinet approved the minutes of the Supreme Committee for the Investigation of Kuwaiti Citizenship, which included cases of loss, withdrawal and revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship from some individuals, in accordance with the provisions of Decree Law No. (15) of 1959 and its amendments regarding the Kuwaiti nationality.

**Kuwait steers**

For her part, UN Tourism Secretary-General Sheikhha Al-Nowais said AI would unify data, improve decision quality and direct investments toward high-impact areas, underscoring the responsibility accompanying its growing role. She revealed that 80 percent of Middle East members have national AI strategies, while 90 percent plan to increase AI funding in tourism over the next five years.

UN Tourism Executive Director Natalia Bayona highlighted AI's impact on the sector and progress on the Riyadh Declaration outcomes.

The conference featured sessions on smart travel, private sector perspectives and AI-driven innovation, and witnessed the launch of a joint UN Tourism-Amadeus workshop to support public sector adoption of AI in line with sustainable and competitive tourism development goals.

**Kuwait PM**

In a press statement, His Highness emphasized the importance of the conference in discussing the most prominent current global security challenges and providing a platform for constructive dialogue that contributes to establishing common ground, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting efforts to resolve disputes and crises regionally and internationally.

The Prime Minister noted that the rapidly evolving challenges facing the world today necessitate the development of a consensus-based roadmap to enhance global security and unify efforts to consolidate stability and strengthen international cooperation, thereby contributing to building a secure and prosperous future.

His Highness reiterated Kuwait's commitment to its open approach in international relations and its support for resolving conflicts through dialogue and peaceful means, as well as promoting international peace and security. (KUNA)

**Bilateral ties**

He reiterated the call of Kuwait for regional peace, constructive dialogue, and giving diplomacy enough space to shield the region from the specter of war. He stressed the importance of collective dialogue linking regional countries with Iran and other nations.

He disclosed that joint committees addressing technical, economic, trade, consular and coast guard matters remain active, and convene alternately in Kuwait and Tehran, achieving positive outcomes that serve the interests of both countries and their peoples.

He also affirmed that consultations

continue through diplomatic channels, indicating the results will be announced once finalized. Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji asserted that the Iranian-Kuwaiti relations are considered a model built on mutual respect and good neighborliness.

He warmly welcomed the attendees, noting that the occasion marks a new stage of cooperation with the State of Kuwait. He wished Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad success, following the trust placed in him and expressed his hope for further prosperity and development in bilateral relations in the next phase.

He said the Iranian-Kuwaiti ties are deep-rooted, based not only on geography but also on the long history of civilizational and human interaction, as well as shared cultural and social values.

He pointed out that the relationship dates back centuries, marked by trade and social interaction throughout the Gulf, which created an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding.

At the official level, he revealed that Iran was among the first countries to recognize the independence of Kuwait in 1961, while Kuwait was among the first to recognize the Islamic Republic of Iran following its establishment -- a step that reflected the depth of the relationship and mutual respect between the two countries. He stated that the exchange of visits and ongoing meetings between officials helped solidify political dialogue and expand cooperation in different fields.

He emphasized that Tehran highly appreciates the balanced and prudent role of Kuwait at the regional and international levels. He added that the two countries have significant opportunities to enhance economic, trade and investment cooperation, as well as collaboration in the fields of energy, maritime transport, and cultural and scientific exchange.

He underscored the importance of activating joint committees and broadening the scope of partnership.

He also affirmed the commitment of his country to reinforce regional security and stability through cooperation with other nations, away from tensions.

He stressed that dialogue and mutual understanding are the most effective means of addressing any outstanding issues, showing the positive spirit that characterizes the relationship.

He added that Iran looks forward to a new phase of constructive cooperation with Kuwait based on mutual respect and shared interests, which will promote stability and prosperity in the region.

**Kuwait achieves**

He revealed that CAN has played a significant role in raising community health awareness since its establishment. He said these efforts resulted in the 30 percent increase in cancer awareness among the Kuwaiti public, along with a decline in the fear and anxiety commonly associated with cancer, which has long been perceived as a fatal and chronic illness.

In her speech at the event, Dr. Hessa Al-Shaheen, Head of the Executive Committee for the 11th Joint Gulf Cancer Awareness Week, stated that the activities therein coincided with the Regional Oncology Conference.

She said the program this year included 45 initiatives and activities, such as seminars, workshops, exhibitions and lectures, paving the way for continuous efforts in the future.

She commended the organizers for their ongoing commitment to expand awareness programs and activities, while affirming their vital role in raising community awareness and improving national recovery rates.

## ICE chief grilled by lawmakers on mass deportation operations

## Federal immigration crackdown in Minnesota could end within days: Gov Walz

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb 11, (Agencies): Gov Tim Walz said Tuesday that he expects the federal immigration crackdown in Minnesota will end in "days, not weeks and months," based on his recent conversations with top Trump administration officials.

The Democratic governor said at a news conference that he spoke Monday with border czar Tom Homan and with White House chief of staff Susie Wiles on Tuesday morning. Homan took over the Minnesota operation in late January after the second fatal shooting by federal officers and amid growing political backlash and questions about how the operation was being run.

"We're very much in a trust but verify mode," Walz said. He added that he expected to hear more from the administration "in the next day or so" about the future of what he said has been an "occupation" and a "retribution campaign" against the state.

While Walz said he's hopeful at the moment because "every indication I have is that this thing is winding up," he added that things could change.

"It would be my hope that Mr. Homan goes out before Friday and announces that this thing is done, and they're bringing her down and they're bringing her down in days," Walz said. "That would be my expectation."

Officials with the Department of

Homeland Security did not immediately reply to a request for comment on the governor's remarks.

Walz said he has no reason not to believe Homan's statement last week that 700 federal officers would leave Minnesota immediately, but the governor added that still left 2,300 on Minnesota's streets. Homan at the time cited an "increase in unprecedented collaboration" resulting in the need for fewer federal officers in Minnesota, including help from jails that hold inmates who could be deported.

The governor also indicated that he expects the state will get "cooperation on joint investigations" into the shooting deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti by federal officers, but gave no details. That's been a point of friction between federal authorities and state investigators, who complain that they have been frozen out of those cases so far with no access to evidence.

Walz called the news conference primarily to denounce the economic impact of the enforcement surge. He spoke at The Market at Malcolm Yards, a food hall where owner Patty Wall said the entire restaurant sector of the local economy has become "collateral damage" from the surge.

Matt Varilek, the governor's employment and economic development commissioner, said Malcolm Yards would normally be bustling, but is now



From left: Rodney Scott, Commissioner, US Customs and Border Protection, (CBP) Joseph Edlow, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Todd Lyons, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) testify during a House Committee on Homeland Security oversight hearing of the Department of Homeland Security: ICE CBP and USCIS, on Capitol Hill on Feb 10, in Washington. (AP)

struggling because employees and customers are afraid to come due to the crackdown.

"So it is great news, of course, that the posture seems to have changed at the federal level toward their activities here in Minnesota," Varilek said. "But,

as the governor said, it's a trust-but-verify situation. And frankly, the fear that has been sown, I haven't really noticed any reduction in that."

Even as Walz was expressing optimism that the crackdown would end soon, federal officers made a highly visible arrest inside the lobby of the

main county building in downtown Minneapolis.

After a short foot chase, ICE officers grabbed a man who had arrived for a court appearance on charges of possessing over 50 pounds of methamphetamine.

The county's top prosecutor, Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty, protested that the arrest was "disruptive and disturbing to many" and left staffers in the building afraid to leave their offices for fear of being racially profiled. The man could go unpunished on the state drug charges if he's deported first.

**Also:**

**WASHINGTON:** Todd Lyons, acting head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and other immigration officials on Tuesday were questioned by lawmakers on mass deportation operations at a US House of Representatives hearing, with Republican and Democratic lawmakers expressing divided views.

Lyons testified at a hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee, along with **Rodney Scott**, commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, and Joseph Edlow, director of Citizenship and Immigration Services. All three agencies operate under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The ICE chief and other immigration officials, who defended the Trump administration's mass deportation operations, largely received praise and support from Republican lawmakers and drew criticism from Democrats, reflecting a polarized political environment.

Democrats pressed the officials on a lack of due process, poorly-regulated practices, the two fatal shootings of U.S. citizens by federal agents, and whether Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem -- who has faced mounting pressure in recent days following her comments describing the victims as having committed "an act of domestic terrorism" -- should resign.

Republicans, meanwhile, touted U.S. President **Donald Trump's** mass deportation policies and highlighted the risk and danger faced by federal immigration agents.

New York Democratic Representative Timothy Kennedy is among the lawmakers who lashed out at ICE for wearing masks during immigration raids. "In America, we shouldn't have secret police. We shouldn't have masked government agents executing citizens in the streets," he said.

When asked whether the secretary of homeland security should resign, Lyons dodged the question, saying that "I'm not going to comment on an ongoing investigation."

## Tragedy devastates PM Carney

## 10 dead in Canada school shooting

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Feb 11, (AP): A shooting at a school in British Columbia left seven people dead, while two more were found dead at a nearby home, Canadian authorities said Tuesday. A woman who police believe to be the shooter also was killed.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said more than 25 people are injured, including two who were airlifted to hospital with life-threatening injuries, after the shooting at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School.

School shootings are rare in Canada. The town of Tumbler Ridge in the Canadian Rockies is more than 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) north of Vancouver, near the border with Alberta. The provincial government website lists Tumbler Ridge Secondary School as having 175 students from Grades 7 to 12.

British Columbia Premier David Eby told reporters that police officers reached the school within two minutes. A video showed students walking out of the school with their hands raised as police vehicles surrounded the building and a helicopter circled overhead.

Police found six people dead, a statement said. A suspect appeared to have died of a "self-inflicted injury." An eighth person died while being transported to a hospital,



This grab from video shows students exiting the Tumbler Ridge school after deadly shootings, in British Columbia, Canada on Feb 10. (AP)

and two more were found dead at a home the authorities believe was connected to the attack.

RCMP Superintendent Ken Floyd told reporters that investigators had identified a female suspect but would not release a name, and that the shooter's motive remained unclear. He added that police are still investigating how the victims are connected to the shooter.

Tumbler Ridge Mayor Darryl Krakowka said the whole community is grieving. "I broke down," he said, saying it was "devastating" to learn how many had died in the community of 2,700, which he called a "big family."

"I have lived here for 18 years," Krakowka said. "I probably know every one of the victims."

The Rev. George Rowe of the Tumbler Ridge Fellowship Baptist Church went to the recreation center where the victims' families were awaiting more information.

Rowe once taught at the high school and his three children graduated from there.

"To walk through the corridors of that school will never be the same again," he said.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a social media post that he was devastated by the shooting in Tumbler Ridge.

## Crowded Democratic field in Calif gov's race might provide rare opening for GOP

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP): How many Democrats are too many?

In the race for California governor, so many Democratic candidates have crowded into the contest that party insiders have become fearful of a historic calamity in the making. It's become mathematically possible that Democrats divide their vote so much that two Republicans advance from the June primary to the general election.

"It's the parlor game in Sacramento right now - could this happen?" Democratic consultant Paul Mitchell said.

The uncertainty in the outcome stems from the state's unpredictable "top two" primary system. All candidates appear on a single ballot but only the two top finishers advance to the November general election, regardless of party. It's the first time since voters approved that system more than a decade ago that there's been a governor's race with no clear frontrunner, helping feed a "Why not me?" mentality among the large number of Democrats flooding into the contest.

"There's a very real chance there could be only Republicans on November's ballot," the campaign of former U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, a Democratic gubernatorial candidate, warned in a recent fundraising pitch.

Though it remains a distant longshot, it's hard to understate the political shock that would come with two Republicans perched atop California's



US Rep Katie Porter waves at supporters at an election party on March 5, 2024, in Long Beach, Calif. (AP)

midterm ballot. The state is known as a Democratic fortress, and a GOP candidate hasn't won a statewide election in two decades. It would also have implications for races down the ballot, including congressional battlegrounds that could determine control of the U.S. House.

Why so many candidates? The governor's chair in California has always had magnetic allure - it's one of the most powerful political platforms in the nation. The state - by itself - is ranked as the world's fourth-largest economy. It's the nation's top agricul-

tural producer and is home to Silicon Valley and Hollywood. The state budget tallies nearly \$350 billion in annual spending, an amount roughly equal to the market value of Netflix.

With Democratic Gov Gavin Newsom barred by law from seeking a third term, it's the most wide-open contest for governor in a generation.

Dozens of people have filed paperwork to run, from a college student to a billionaire. Among them are at least nine Democrats with the name recognition and fundraising machinery to seriously compete.



Far-right leader Marine Le Pen, (center), arrives for her appeal trial, in Paris, France on Feb 11. (AP)

## Le Pen's appeal trial ends, presidential bid at stake

PARIS, Feb 11, (AP): Marine Le Pen's appeal trial over alleged misuse of European Parliament funds is ending Wednesday with one question looming above all others: will the French far-right leader be able to run for president next year? Le Pen, 57, is challenging a March 2025 verdict that found her and over 20 other members of her National Rally party guilty of misusing European Parliament funds in the hiring of aides from 2004 to 2016 and banned her from holding elected office for five years.

She denies accusations she was at the center of a fraudulent system meant to siphon off European Union funds.

The outcome of the appeals trial will be announced at a later date, likely before summer.

Le Pen was widely seen as a top contender to succeed centrist President Emmanuel Macron in the 2027 election until a Paris court banned her from holding office over charges of misusing public money. She was twice a contender in the run-off against Macron in 2017 and 2022 and her National Rally party has been coming out on top in opinion polls in recent years.

## Europe

**Rubio to visit Germany, Slovakia:** US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will travel to Germany next week to participate in the 62nd Munich Security Conference, the State Department has announced.

Secretary Rubio will travel then to Slovakia and Hungary to strengthen US relations with the two countries.

Deputy Principal Spokesperson for the US Department of State Tommy Pigott said in a press statement late Monday that Rubio will visit Germany from February 13 to 15 to attend the 62nd Munich Security Conference and then travel to the Slovak capital, Bratislava, and the Hungarian capital, Budapest, from February 15 to 16.

Pigott added that Rubio will meet senior Slovak government officials in Bratislava to advance shared regional security interests, strengthen bilateral cooperation in nuclear energy, diversify energy sources, support modernization of the Slovak armed forces, and reinforce Slovakia's commitments to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

He explained that the US Secretary of State will also hold meetings in Budapest with senior Hungarian officials to discuss ways to enhance bilateral relations, address regional issues, and advance US-Hungarian energy partnership. (KUNA)

**Belarus to boost defense capabilities:** Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Tuesday called for a boost in the country's defense capabilities amid heightened military activity near its borders.

At a meeting on military-industrial development, Lukashenko demanded the establishment of domestic production of common ammunition types -- artillery shells and rockets for Grad multiple-launch rocket systems -- by the end of 2026.

He emphasized that despite the growing role of high-tech weapons, conventional artillery remains decisive in combat engagements. The president tasked the government with securing funding for the projects and assigned oversight to the State Secretariat and the State Control Committee, warning officials against any delays in meeting the deadlines. (Xinhua)

## Greek, Turkish leaders to hold talks in Ankara

ANKARA, Turkey, Feb 11, (AP): Greek Prime Minister **Kyriakos Mitsotakis** is visiting Turkey on Wednesday as part of an effort to sustain dialogue at a time when tensions between the two long-time rivals are rising.

Mitsotakis, who is expected to be accompanied by a delegation of senior ministers, will meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the so-called High-Level Cooperation Council - a fence-mending initiative that was launched to improve ties between the two NATO allies.

Greece and Turkey remain at odds over a series of issues, including maritime boundaries, Cyprus, and drilling rights in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean seas. Turkey has also voiced unease over a growing defense and energy cooperation between Greece, Israel, and Cyprus that sidelines Ankara and which some view as an effort to counter Turkey's influence in the region.

Greece and Turkey have come to the brink of war several times over the last half-century. A dispute over energy exploration rights in 2020 led to the two countries' warships facing off in the Mediterranean.

In recent weeks, Greek officials have reaffirmed Greece's right to extend its territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 nautical miles (22.2 kilometers) from the current six. Turkey - whose parliament in 1995 declared such a move as a "cause of war" - has criticized the comments as unacceptable and argues that the extension of the territorial waters would violate its rights, severely restricting its maritime access.

The high-level talks in Ankara are expected to concentrate on a "positive agenda" - cooperation in trade, energy, education, and cultural ties - and no progress is expected on any of the contentious matters.



Mitsotakis



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire at a private house following a Russian air attack in Bohodukhiv, Kharkiv region, Ukraine on Feb 11. (AP)

## EU drafts list of concessions Russia needs to make to secure real peace in Ukraine

BRUSSELS, Feb 11, (AP): Top European Union diplomat Kaja Kallas said Tuesday that she is drafting a list of concessions that she believes Russia must make to secure any long-term peace in Ukraine as U.S.-run talks to end four years of war show little sign of progress.

Russian forces used cluster munitions in an attack on a market in Ukraine killing seven as envoys from Moscow and Kyiv met in Abu Dhabi last week for another round of U.S.-brokered talks. No breakthrough was made, although a new prisoner swap was agreed.

After saying in 2024 that he could end the war in a day, then 100 days, US President Donald Trump has now given Ukraine and Russia until June to come to an agreement.

The EU is convinced that Russia is not negotiating seriously and it doubts that European and Ukrainian interests are being represented by the Trump administration, so work has begun on "a sustainable peace plan" that might force Moscow's hand.

"We have just seen increased bombing by Russians during these talks," EU foreign policy chief Kallas said, including the targeting of Ukraine's electricity grid during what has been the coldest winter of the war.

Kallas said that the 27-nation bloc is "very grateful" for U.S. diplomatic efforts so far, but "to have sustainable peace also, everybody around the table including the Russians and the Americans need to understand that you need Europeans to agree."

"We also have conditions," Kallas told reporters in Brussels. "And we should put the conditions not on Ukrainians that have already been pressured a lot, but on the Russians."

Kallas said these conditions could include demands that Russia return possibly thousands of children abducted from Ukraine and limits on the size of the Russian armed forces

once the war is over. Russia insists on a cap for Ukraine's forces.

A draft list of conditions is likely to be shared among EU member countries in coming days for a possible discussion when the bloc's foreign ministers meet on Feb 23.

Kallas said that Ukraine is reliant on the United States for support and that this dependency has seen it forced to make almost all the concessions.

**Also:**

**KYIV, Ukraine:** A Russian drone smashed into a home in Ukraine's northeastern **Kharkiv** region overnight, killing a father and his three small children and seriously wounding their mother who is 35 weeks pregnant, officials said Wednesday.

The strike completely destroyed the brick house and set it on fire, with the family trapped under the rubble, according to the Kharkiv regional prosecutor's office.

The 34-year-old father and his three children - twin boys aged 2 and their 1-year-old sister - were killed, while rescue workers pulled the mother alive from the rubble, prosecutors said. She sustained blast injuries, a traumatic brain injury, burns and hearing loss, they said.

During the almost four years since **Russia** invaded its neighbor, and despite a new push over the past year in U.S.-led peace efforts, Ukrainian civilians have endured constant aerial attacks.

Last year was the deadliest for civilians in Ukraine since 2022 as Russia intensified its aerial barrages behind the front line, according to the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in the country.

The war killed 2,514 civilians and injured 12,142 in Ukraine in 2025 - 31% higher than in 2024, it said.

## INTERNATIONAL

## Asia

**Japan's main opp'n to choose new leader on Friday:** Japan's main opposition Centrist Reform Alliance (CRA) said Wednesday it will choose new leadership this Friday following the recent defeat in the House of Representatives election.

The CRA held a general meeting on the day of its lawmakers following its crushing defeat in Sunday's lower house election, while the party's co-leaders, Yoshihiko Noda and Tetsuo Saito, reiterated their resignations to take responsibility for the loss.

Junya Ogawa, former secretary of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), and Takeshi Shina, the CDPJ's former acting policy chief, expressed their intentions to run in Friday's contest to lead the new party. (Xinhua)

**Australian shadow cabinet minister Taylor resigns:** Leading member of the Australian Liberal Party's conservative faction Angus Taylor resigned from opposition leader Sussan Ley's shadow cabinet on Wednesday night.

Taylor, who is also the party's defense spokesman, announced his resignation from Ley's frontbench, following mounting speculation that he was preparing to challenge for her leadership.

Speaking outside Parliament House in Canberra, Taylor said that the Liberal Party is in its worst position since it was formed in 1944. "I don't believe Sussan Ley is in a position to be able to lead the party, as it needs to be led from here," he said. (Xinhua)

**Emergency warning issued over grassfire in Melbourne:** An emergency warning was issued on Wednesday afternoon for an out-of-control grassfire burning in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Authorities in the state of Victoria said that residents in eight suburbs and towns around 30 km north of central Melbourne should shelter indoors immediately. According to the VicEmergency service, there were 68 firefighting vehicles responding to the fire.

The emergency warning said that a wind change forecast to occur on Wednesday evening will cause the fire to change directions and that conditions could become very dangerous and unpredictable. Residents have been advised to shelter in a room that has two exits, including one directly to the outside, and to close all exterior doors, windows and vents. (Xinhua)



Yoshihiko Noda (left) and Tetsuo Saito, co-leaders of Japan's main opposition party Centrist Reform Alliance, attend a press conference in Tokyo, Japan on Feb 9. Noda and Saito, co-leaders of Japan's main opposition party Centrist Reform Alliance, announced on Monday that they would resign from their posts to take responsibility for the party's defeat in the House of Representatives election. (Xinhua)

**3 killed, 1 missing after boat capsizes in Indonesia:** Three people were killed and one remains missing after a longboat capsized in the waters off Indonesia's Maluku province, a local search and rescue official said on Wednesday.

The vessel, carrying 10 people, went down on Tuesday afternoon in the Watnasa waters of Tanimbar Islands Regency after being struck by huge waves and strong winds, said Muhammad Arafah, head of the provincial Search and Rescue Office. The boat had been sailing from Larat Harbor to Karat village in the regency.

"Three people died, six others survived, and one person is still missing," Arafah told Xinhua by phone.

He said a search and rescue operation was launched immediately after the incident, but efforts have been hampered by adverse weather conditions.

According to him, all survivors have been evacuated to Karat village in Tanimbar Utara sub-district. (Xinhua)

**2 pilots killed in shooting at airstrip in Indonesia:** Two pilots were killed after a small aircraft was shot at upon landing at Karawai Airstrip in Boven Digoel Regency, South Papua province, local media reported on Wednesday.

The aircraft, operated by Smart Air with registration number PK-SNR, departed from Tanah Merah in Boven Digoel and was fired upon at around 11:00 a.m. local time after arriving at the airstrip, according to Antara news agency.

Faizal Rahmadani, head of operations of the Damai Cartenz Task Force, said the pilot and co-pilot were killed in the incident.

"From the reports received, it was revealed that the pilot and co-pilot died in the incident, while the condition of the 13 passengers is still uncertain," said Rahmadani. (Xinhua)

**Chinese FM to visit Hungary:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Hungary on Feb. 11 and travel to Germany to attend the 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC), a foreign ministry spokesperson announced on Tuesday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, will deliver a speech at the China session of the 62nd MSC. Wang's visit is at the invitation of Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto and MSC Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger, the spokesperson added. (Xinhua)

**China gold mine accident kills 7:** A gold mine accident in east China's Shandong Province claimed seven lives on Saturday, local authorities said on Monday.

According to the emergency management department of Zhaoyuan City, a cage-fall accident occurred in a shaft at Canzhuang gold mine at 8:50 a.m. Saturday, resulting in the deaths of seven people.

Investigations into the cause of the accident and the suspected concealment of the accident have been launched. (Xinhua)

**Fire breaks out after S.Korea tank blast:** A fire broke out on Tuesday morning after an oil tank explosion in southeastern South Korea, according to Yonhap news agency.

The fire occurred at about 8 a.m. local time at the outdoor tank storage facility in Gyeongsan, about 250 km southeast of Seoul.

The flames began with the explosion on top of the oil storage cover but have since subsided, with smoke currently being reported. (Xinhua)

Govt offers rental grants to help homeowners pay for short-term homes

## Hong Kong fire victims long for home as Lunar New Year stirs painful memories

HONG KONG, Feb 11, (AP) - When Hong Kong was hit by its deadliest fire in decades last November, it left thousands of residents without some of their friends, family or the place they called home.

Months later, the former occupants of the Wang Fuk Court - now a largely burnt-out apartment complex in the suburban district of Tai Po - are waiting not just for answers about what happened, but also a new place to live.

They are in temporary housing and authorities have yet to unveil plans for long-term resettlement after carrying out a survey of their preferences. Also, the government has offered rental grants to help homeowners pay for the short-term homes.

The upcoming Lunar New Year on Feb. 17, is stirring memories of celebrating the festival in happier times.

The massive blaze engulfed seven apartment buildings and killed 168 people on Nov. 26, 2025, shattering a close-knit community. Authorities blamed substandard scaffold netting and foam boards used in a maintenance project for rapidly spreading the fire. Although some arrests were made, an independent committee is still investigating the cause.

The Associated Press talked to four families who lived in the complex or lost loved ones there. Here's what they said:

When flames devoured the towers of the Wang Fuk Court complex, Pearl Chow, 87, fled her apartment with essential documents like her title deed. Her grandson, Dorz Cheung, 33, rushed from his office to find her safe nearby while the fire was still raging.

That night, Chow went to a friend's home and didn't sleep, while Cheung watched the flames for hours, crying while clutching a friend. They both miss old photos lost in the fire.

Now they are separated into two temporary housing units on separate floors, each around 100 square feet (9.2 square meters). Chow says she's satisfied, but Cheung says it's not a home.

"Only a permanent residence can be a home," he said.

Chow still regularly returns to Tai Po for church and grocery shopping, despite the hourlong journey. They want to be resettled in Tai Po, where they lived for decades, in a unit about the same size as their old apartment.

"I am an elderly person. When they finish building, I may have gone to my heavenly home," she said with a laugh.

Data from the 2021 population census showed over one-third of the complex's approximately 4,600 residents were aged 65 or above.

Cheung said he lost his sense of security with the authorities after the blaze. The government proposed mea-



A pedestrian walks past the fire-ravaged residential towers of the Wang Fuk Court apartment complex, in the Tai Po district of Hong Kong on Feb 6. (AP)

sures to combat bid-rigging in building maintenance and enhance fire safety in January, but Cheung says it still hasn't addressed resettlement.

"We can only wait, being tossed around like a ball," he said.

Kit Chan, 74, lived with her husband in a 460-square-foot (43-square-meter) apartment for over 40 years, raising their family in a community where

neighbors helped look after each other's children.

Chan planned to spend the rest of her life there, but the blaze forced the couple into a studio unit at a youth hostel half the size of their apartment. Weeks ago, they heard that other fire victims were being asked to move out of the hostel.

She hasn't been asked to leave, but

is worried about what comes next. "It's like being unable to get by in my final years," she said.

Chan initially wanted to be resettled in a new home built on the fire site, but the government estimates that rebuilding will take about a decade. Now she says she could accept a similar-sized apartment in another district with good transport.

Her husband, Keung Mak, 78, hopes they can return to their old home just to have a look.

"Many people hope they can at least see how badly it was burned," he said.

During past Lunar New Year celebrations, Isaac Tam's family used to visit neighbors on their floor with gifts. Now, the familiar faces he has known for years are scattered across the city.

The loss of their two apartments in the fire was heartbreaking. His parents cried, and his 92-year-old grandfather grew thinner. But Tam, 23, said at least all his family members were alive.

Last weekend, they were preparing to move into temporary homes, smaller than their old apartments and farther from the city center. They shelled out money to renovate them.

While he says the government's handling is not as bad as some say, he worries about how his grandfather will adjust to temporary housing in a new district. Back in Tai Po, the grandfather

used to have a morning dim sum routine with his friends.

While awaiting the government's resettlement plans, they are mulling apartments in another district that could be ready sooner than units in Tai Po, which he prefers because he grew up there.

Time is their priority, given his grandfather's age, Tam said.

"I fear he can't wait until we secure an apartment of about 400 square feet (about 37 square meters)," he said, regardless of the district.

Phyllis Lo's mother called her after seeing thick smoke outside her door when the blaze started. On the call, knowing she might not survive, her 74-year-old mother asked Lo, 48, and her brother to live well.

Lo immediately rushed to her childhood home and called again minutes later. No one answered. The next morning, police told her they had found her mother's body.

After learning that a mix of issues including substandard materials were used in the building maintenance project and failed fire alarms, Lo wondered if the tragedy could have been avoided if government departments had done a better job. While she doesn't know who should bear responsibility, she blames herself for not looking into the building maintenance for her mother more closely.

## Political deadlock escalates violence

### S.Sudan on 'dangerous precipice': UN

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 11, (AP) - Political deadlock in South Sudan is sharply escalating violence, putting the world's newest nation on a "dangerous precipice," the United Nations' peacekeeping chief warned Tuesday.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix urged the UN Security Council and the broader international community to ensure that South Sudan's government and opposition return to dialogue and agree on a way forward.

At the moment, he warned, "Both sides claim to be acting in self-defense, while at the same time preparing for the possibility of large-scale hostilities."

There were high hopes when oil-rich South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a long conflict. But the country slid into a civil war in December 2013 largely based on ethnic divisions, when forces loyal to Salva Kiir, an ethnic Dinka, battled those loyal to Riek Machar, an ethnic Nuer.

More than 400,000 people were killed in the war, which ended with a 2018 peace agreement that brought the opponents together in a government of national unity with Kiir as president and Machar as vice president. But implementation has been slow, and a



South Sudanese women line up for food rations at a World Food Programme (WFP) distribution point organized by Catholic Relief Services in Jonglei state, South Sudan on Nov 13, 2024. (AP)

long-delayed presidential election is now scheduled for December.

In a major escalation of tensions in March 2025, a Nuer militia seized an army garrison. Kiir's government responded, charging Machar and seven other opposition figures with treason, murder, terrorism and other crimes, and suspended the vice president. The treason trial has been going on since

late 2025.

Lacroix, the UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping, singled out the escalation of fighting in recent weeks in Jonglei state, northeast of the capital, Juba, pointing to reports of bombings, inflammatory rhetoric, severe restrictions on humanitarian access, and over 280,000 people displaced by the violence, "as per government sources."

## Bangladeshis seek to chart democratic future in first vote since 2024 uprising

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Feb 11, (AP) - When Tarique Rahman, the son of a former prime minister of Bangladesh, returned to the country in December after 17 years of self-imposed exile, he declared to his supporters: "I have a plan."

Rahman returned at a time of upheaval. Bangladesh was seemingly adrift under an interim administration as it inched closer to a nationwide poll. Many Bangladeshis felt his return offered the country a new chance. His fiercest rival, the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, would be absent from the election after being toppled by a violent student-led revolt in 2024.

Barely two months later, Rahman is widely seen as the front-runner in Thursday's election. He restated his ambitions at a campaign rally in Dhaka on Monday, arriving at the podium under heavy security as supporters spilled into a public park, dancing and cheering.

"The main goal and objective of this plan is to change the fate of the people and of this country," he told the crowd.

That task will not be easy for whoever wins.

The election in Bangladesh follows a tumultuous period that has been marked by mob violence, rising religious intolerance, attacks on the press, the rise of Islamists and the fraying of



Army soldiers inspect the luggage of motorists during random security checks as a part of heightened security measures leading up to Thursday's parliamentary national election, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Feb 11, 2026. (AP)

the rule of law. A fair election will be a major challenge. Governing in its aftermath may prove an even sterner test for democratic institutions weakened by more than a decade of disputed polls and shrinking political space.

"An election with relatively little violence in which people are able to vote freely and all sides accept the outcome would be a significant step forward," said Thomas Kean of the International Crisis Group, a think tank devoted to

resolving conflicts. Yet he cautioned that the restoration of democracy, after facing severe strains under Hasina's rule, would be a long-term challenge.

That process, Kean said, has "only just started."

Rahman - the 60-year-old son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia - has been promising job creation, greater freedom of speech, law and order, and an end to corruption. His campaign seeks to portray him as a bulwark of democracy in a political landscape long dominated by entrenched parties, military coups and vote rigging.

Though Rahman never held office in his mother's governments, many Bangladeshis saw him as wielding considerable influence within her Bangladesh Nationalist Party until her death in December.

BNP's main opponent is an 11-party coalition led by Jamaat-e-Islami, the country's foremost Islamist party, still shadowed by its collaboration with Pakistan during the 1971 war of independence.

On Monday, its chief Shafiqur Rahman told supporters at a rally that the alliance has come together "with the dream of building a new Bangladesh."

With Hasina's Awami League party absent from the poll and calling on its supporters to stay away, Jamaat-e-Islami is seeking to expand its reach.

### Lat/Am

**3 killed in Mexico pipeline explosion:** An explosion at a pipeline of state-owned company Petroleos Mexicanos in Oaxaca, southern Mexico, has killed at least three people and injured six others, governor Salomon Jara said Tuesday.

In a social media post, Jara said that the injured have been transported for medical attention, adding that the explosion occurred in the locality of Loma Larga, in El Barrio de la Soledad municipality. (Xinhua)

**Brazil landslides kill 6, injure 5:** At least six people have been killed and five others injured in landslides caused by heavy rains in southeastern Brazil, local authorities said Tuesday.

The tragedies were reported in Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro states. Children were among the victims, according to the authorities. (Xinhua)

**US military strikes boat in Pacific, killing 2:** The US military struck one more alleged drug-trafficking vessel in the eastern Pacific on Monday, killing two people aboard, according to the US Southern Command.

"Two narco-terrorists were killed and one survived the strike," the command said in a post on X, adding that the vessel was operated by Designated Terrorist Organizations and engaged in narco-trafficking operations. (Xinhua)

### Africa

**Cyclone Gezani hits Madagascar, 9 dead:** At least nine people died in the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar after Tropical Cyclone Gezani made landfall, unleashing winds in excess of 195 kph (121 mph), authorities said Wednesday.

Madagascar's weather service issued red alerts for several regions, warning of possible floods and landslides as Gezani moves across the largely poor country of 31 million people.

The National Office for Risk and Disaster Management said at least nine people have died due to building collapses and at least 19 have been injured. (AP)

**161 Rwandan refugees repatriated from DRC:** At least 161 Rwandan refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) returned home Tuesday in a process facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), an official announced.

The returnees were repatriated through the Rwanda-DRC border post in Rubavu District, where they were welcomed by local leaders.

Prosper Mulindwa, the district's mayor, told reporters that the returnees, the majority of whom are women and children, were transported to Kijote Transit Centre in Nyabihu District, where they will be sheltered pending resettlement procedures. (Xinhua)



شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية  
National Investments Company

## National Investments Company Reports Exceptional Performance in 2025, Achieves Distributable Profits of KWD 24 million (30 Fils per Share), and other comprehensive income amounted to KWD 36 million for the year 2025 Recommends Cash Dividends of 25 Fils per Share

The Board of Directors of National Investments Company approved the Company's consolidated financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2025, during which the Company continued to reinforce its strong financial and operational performance, recording exceptional growth across various areas. This reflects the resilience of its business model, driven by a clear strategic vision, robust asset quality, and well-planned diversification of its investment portfolios, enabling the Company to achieve sustainable returns and maximize value for shareholders.

Accordingly, the Company recorded net profits of KWD 24 million, equivalent to 30 fils per share, compared to net profits of KWD 12 million, equivalent to 15.2 fils per share, in 2024, representing an increase of 98%. This reflects the efficiency of its business model and the effectiveness of its investment approach, despite the continuation of global economic challenges and the varying performance of certain financial markets.

### Performance Indicators

In this context, the Chairman of National Investments Company, Mr. Khaled Waleed AlFalah, highlighted the Company's key financial indicators for 2025, noting that total assets grew by 26% to reach KWD 357 million by year-end, compared to KWD 284 million at the end of 2024. In addition, total shareholders' equity of the parent company increased by 21% to KWD 240 million, compared to KWD 197 million in 2024. This reflects the strength of the Company's financial position and its continued ability to support its investment and operational activities within a balanced and sustainable framework.

AlFalah further stated that other comprehensive income recorded growth during 2025, reaching KWD 36 million, representing an increase of 50%, compared to KWD 24 million in the corresponding period of 2024. The Company's revenues also reached KWD 47 million, marking an increase of 50% compared to the same period in 2024, when revenues amounted to KWD 31 million. In addition, total assets under management grew to KWD 1.3 billion, representing an increase of 20%, compared to total assets under management of KWD 1.1 billion in 2024.

AlFalah noted that despite the continued uncertainty in the global economic environment, along with ongoing geopolitical developments and volatility in global monetary policies, the Company succeeded in maintaining a positive growth trajectory and achieving advanced performance across key financial indicators. He pointed to the recording of positive rates in profitability indicators and returns on both average assets and average shareholders' equity, in addition to improvements in asset quality indicators and success in efficiently balancing cost and revenue levels.

With respect to dividend distributions, AlFalah indicated that the Board of Directors of National Investments Company recommended the distribution of cash dividends at a rate of 25% of the nominal value per share, equivalent to 25 fils per share, for the financial year ended 31 December 2025. This reflects the strength of the Company's financial position and its ability to achieve a



**Khaled Waleed AlFalah**

- The 2025 results reflect the Company's successful transition from managing challenges to creating opportunities, driven by a flexible business model, strong asset quality, and effective investment diversification.
- The strong performance of Boursa Kuwait and high market liquidity contributed to enhancing portfolio efficiency and delivering sustainable value for shareholders and clients.
- We remain focused on establishing long-term growth driven by disciplined investment innovation, strong governance, and enhanced institutional readiness for the next phase of expansion.
- The 2025 and previous years, dividend distribution reflects the strength of the Company's financial position and the balanced approach between supporting growth and meeting shareholders' expectations.



**Fahad Abdulrahman Al Mukhaizim**

- National Investments Company led the most successful initial public offering (IPO) in Kuwait in 2025, valued at USD 180 million, with demand surpassing USD 900 million
- We strengthened our regional presence through the establishment of the Company's first regional office at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), with subsequent regional and international offices
- The investment portfolios achieved attractive annual returns for clients, ranging between 23% and 35%

sustainable balance between supporting future growth and meeting shareholders' expectations, subject to the approval of the Ordinary General Assembly of shareholders registered in the Company's records as of the date of its convening.

### Sustainable Profitability and Growth

On the other hand, AlFalah emphasized that the 2025 results reflect tangible progress in performance efficiency and the depth of investment decisions, embodying the Company's ability to transition from managing challenges to creating value-added investment opportunities. He noted that the focus during the year was not limited to achieving positive financial results, but was primarily directed toward establishing more sustainable and flexible foundations for growth, thereby enhancing the Company's ability to respond effectively to market fluctuations and economic changes.

AlFalah explained that the Company adopted a proactive approach to analyzing economic and financial developments, based on investment vision, strengthening decision quality, and carefully selecting value-added opportunities. This enabled the Company to achieve a well-considered balance between maximizing returns and managing risks, enhance its competitive position across its various investment and operational activities, reinforce the strength of its financial position, and maintain performance stability over the long term, despite the volatility and challenges experienced in the global economic environment.

He added that during 2025, National Investments Company continued to strengthen its financial position and reinforce the efficiency of its business model through balanced management

of resources and activities, and the flexible deployment of investment and advisory tools in line with the nature of the economic cycle. He noted that the Company relied during the year on diversifying its income channels and activating its roles in initial public offerings, capital markets, restructuring, and specialized advisory services. This contributed to supporting operational stability and achieving positive results, despite volatility in local and regional capital markets. This approach succeeded in safeguarding the interests of the Company's clients, strengthening their confidence, and reinforcing its position as an investment institution capable of adapting to changes and delivering sustainable value within strong frameworks of governance and professional discipline.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Khaled Waleed AlFalah emphasized that the achievements realized by National Investments Company in 2025 reflect the maturity of the Company's institutional journey and its ability to translate strategic vision into measurable results within a changing investment environment. He affirmed that the next phase will focus on deepening this approach and enhancing institutional readiness to continue capturing high-quality opportunities. He further noted that the Company's commitment, clarity of priorities, and a unified team spirit represents key factors in supporting sustainable performance and strengthening trust with all stakeholders. He also expressed his appreciation for all efforts that contributed to reinforcing the Company's position and achieving these results, reaffirming the Company's determination to move forward steadily toward achieving its long-term strategic objectives.

### Diversified Investment Solutions

In this regard, Board Member and Chief Executive Officer of National Investments Company, Mr. Fahad Abdulrahman Al Mukhaizim, affirmed that the Wealth Management sector continued in 2025 to consolidate its position as one of the main drivers of the Company's growth. This was supported by an integrated expansion strategy focused on expanding the individual and corporate client base and attracting new investor segments through the provision of diverse and innovative investment solutions and opportunities. This approach contributed to achieving tangible growth in assets under management by 16%, supported by increased confidence among existing investors and success in attracting new clients. This was reflected in the opening of hundreds of new investment portfolios during the year, clearly demonstrating the efficiency of investment management and the depth of expertise in designing solutions that balance return generation and risk management within disciplined institutional frameworks, as well as the growing confidence of investors in the Company's advisory and execution capabilities.

### Exceptional Performance and Results

Al Mukhaizim stated that the Asset Management sector continued its outstanding performance during 2025 as one of the strategic pillars supporting financial inflows and the diversification of income sources. This performance was based on flexible and well-considered investment strategies built on portfolio diversification and the careful selection of high-yielding assets. This enabled the Company to maximize added value and achieve sustainable returns for shareholders and clients, within a balanced approach that

takes risk management into account under clear institutional frameworks.

This positive performance was achieved despite challenges facing regional and local financial markets, including geopolitical tensions, oil price volatility, and increased market fluctuations, alongside the supportive role of legislative and regulatory reforms in the Kuwaiti market, particularly the enactment of the Public Debt Law, which contributed to improved investor confidence and market performance.

### Market Leadership in Investment Performance

At the level of investment results, Al Mukhaizim explained that the Company's investment funds achieved strong returns, and Wataniya Investment Fund, one of the largest investment funds, achieved remarkable results during 2025, supported by disciplined investment strategies and an effective approach, reflecting the efficiency of asset management policies and their ability to deliver superior and sustainable performance, even in volatile market conditions and changing economic environments.

He noted that this performance reflects the resilience of investment portfolios and sound asset allocation, strengthening investor confidence in the Company's ability to create long-term added value. Local investment portfolios achieved attractive annual returns for clients ranging between 23% and 35%, as a result of the portfolio management team's efficiency and ability to seize promising investment opportunities within carefully assessed risk levels.

In parallel, the Company strengthened its presence in market-making activities during 2025 by registering as a market maker for six newly listed companies, bringing the total number of companies for which the Company acts as a market maker to 16. This reflects its pivotal role in enhancing liquidity, improving trading efficiency, deepening the market, and reinforcing its position as one of the most prominent active investment institutions on Boursa Kuwait.

### Driving Growth Through Strategic Opportunities

Al Mukhaizim confirmed that in 2025, National Investments Company continued to consolidate its position as a leading investment institution with a strong presence in alternative investments and investment banking advisory services. The Company played a pivotal and exceptional role in one of the most prominent capital market transactions in Kuwait, acting as the lead coordinator for the successful initial public offering and listing of Action Energy Company K.S.C.C. (the Issuer). This offering represented the only IPO of its kind executed in the Kuwaiti market during 2025.

He stated that the offering witnessed strong investor demand, with subscription levels reaching nearly five times the number of shares offered. National Investments Company played a comprehensive and integrated role as joint lead coordinator, joint bookrunner, subscription agent, and exclusive listing advisor, assuming full responsibility for executing the offering across all stages, from preparation through to listing.

The Company led all phases of the transaction with high efficiency and execution discipline, including structuring, obtaining regulatory approvals, investor communication, book building, allocation, and listing. It adopted a practical and systematic approach to project management and served as the central coordination point among all stakeholders, including financial, legal, and media advisors.

The offering amounted to approximately USD 180 million, with total demand exceeding USD 900 million, attracting thousands of subscribers to the initial offering by the issuing company. The shares were successfully listed on the Premier Market of Boursa Kuwait, achieving a balanced allocation between institutional and individual investors, reflecting the quality of the offering structure and the fairness of the adopted allocation mechanisms. Subscribers achieved a return of approximately 11% on the subscription price during the ten trading sessions until the end of the year.

Building on this success, National Investments Company is entering the next phase with a clear strategic vision and promising future prospects, supported by diversified portfolio of capital market mandates. The Company is currently providing advisory services for an IPO in the consumer goods and retail sector, which has reached an advanced execution stage, with listing expected by the end of the first quarter of 2026 and an estimated offering size of USD 500 million on the Premier Market of Boursa Kuwait.

In parallel, the Company is providing advisory services for another IPO in the basic education sector, targeting listing by the end of 2026. This initiative will contribute to expanding the base of listed companies in the local market and is expected to broaden investor access to defensive assets with long-term growth potential.

Al Mukhaizim confirmed that the Real Estate Investment sector achieved strong operational performance in 2025, reflecting the efficiency of the adopted strategy and management's flexibility in responding to market developments. The sector continued to implement a qualitative and well-considered expansion of its portfolio by attracting new portfolios with high operational quality, while maintaining high occupancy rates across owned and managed properties, with some assets reaching full occupancy.

This contributed to enhancing operational stability, supporting revenue sustainability, and generating stable cash flows. The sector also participated in preparing technical and financial studies and analyses to compete for selected government tenders, within a clear strategy aimed at expanding the real estate asset base, supporting portfolio growth, and strengthening the Company's presence in the medium and long term.

### Strategic Transformation Plan

On another front, Al Mukhaizim stated that the Strategy and Corporate Development sector continued to play a pivotal role in leading the Company's institutional transformation journey, achieving tangible progress in implementing the approved five-year transformation plan, developed in cooperation with

### Continued Excellence

In reaffirmation of the Company's position among leading regional investment firms, and as part of its continued track record of achievements, National Investments Company further strengthened its leadership presence in Kuwait and across the region. For the third consecutive year, the Company received the "Best for Succession Planning in Kuwait 2025" award and the "Best Investment Bank for Equity Capital Markets in Kuwait 2025" award from the globally renowned Euromoney institution, as part of its 2025 Excellence Awards. These awards are among the most prominent in the regional financial sector and represent a qualitative achievement that reflects the Company's leadership, enhances its credibility and institutional presence, and confirms its success in delivering long-term investment solutions that extend across generations. In a related context, the Company's efforts in innovation and digital transformation were recognized through the award for "Most Innovative Digital Transformation Initiatives - Kuwait 2025" under the Global Business Outlook (GBO) Awards. This recognition reflects appreciation for the advanced technological initiatives implemented by the Company and its role in leveraging innovative digital solutions to develop its technological infrastructure, enhance operational efficiency, and improve customer experience. It also underscores the Company's commitment to positioning digital transformation as a strategic pillar supporting operational sustainability and strengthening its competitive position at both the local and regional levels.

one of the world's leading global management consulting firms. This aligns with sustainable growth objectives, enhanced operational efficiency, and improved business model readiness.

The first phase of the three-stage strategic roadmap, focused on optimizing and maximizing the efficiency of core business activities, has reached advanced levels of completion. This reflects high execution discipline, clarity of priorities, and effective governance and oversight, paving the way for the smooth launch of the second phase, with a clear focus on deepening operational efficiency, diversifying the product portfolio, and strengthening strategic partnerships.

In line with its expansion vision and strategy to enhance its presence in global financial centers, the Company established its first regional office in the United Arab Emirates, specifically at the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), reflecting its regional growth ambitions and expansion of business scope.

### Building a High-Performance Organizational Culture

Al Mukhaizim noted that human capital continued to play a strategic role in creating institutional value and supporting transformation and sustainable growth. The Company focused on attracting high-caliber talent, enhancing performance efficiency, building organizational resilience, and investing strategically in human resource development.

The year witnessed a significant progress in job stability indicators, reflecting the effectiveness of talent retention policies and high levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. The Company continued its participation in strategic initiatives such as the "Watheethi" Exhibition, alongside the launch of the "Nilo" Health and Wellness Platform, the establishment of the internal NIC Community, and the launch of the Human Capital Lab, as well as the formation of the Sustainability Champions Network. These initiatives enhanced employee experience, reinforced institutional identity, and supported the

integration of sustainability practices into daily operations.

### Sustainability and Social Responsibility

During 2025, National Investments Company continued to strengthen sustainability and social responsibility as core institutional pillars supporting its comprehensive strategy. Through an integrated approach balancing economic performance and positive social impact, the Company demonstrated its commitment to its national and humanitarian role.

Its initiatives focused on supporting human development and empowering Kuwaiti youth through participation in national employment platforms and supporting awareness and media initiatives aimed at skills development and professional readiness, in line with the objectives of "New Kuwait 2035." In parallel, the Company strengthened sustainability culture in the workplace through health, humanitarian, and environmental initiatives, including blood donation campaigns and charitable support during the month of Ramadan.

In concluding his remarks, Mr. Fahad Abdulrahman Al Mukhaizim emphasized that National Investments Company continues to move steadily in implementing its strategic vision, supported by a balanced business model and advanced operational capabilities. He stressed the Company's commitment to further developing its business ecosystem and enhancing competitiveness in line with future requirements, in order to achieve sustainable added value.

He expressed his appreciation for the support of the Board of Directors and the collaboration of teams across all sectors, commending the professional efforts that contributed to these achievements. He also thanked the Company's clients and shareholders for their continued trust, reaffirming the Company's commitment to strengthening partnerships and achieving high-quality, sustainable growth that serves the interests of all stakeholders and supports economic development.



شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية  
National Investments Company

## FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING ON 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2025

### NET PROFIT



### TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY



### ASSETS UNDER MANAGEMENT



### TOTAL ASSETS



As part of Global Finance's Best Private Banking Services Annual Awards

# NBK Wealth wins Global Finance's 'Best Private Banking Services for the Next Generation in the World 2026'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: In a new global achievement reflecting its leading position in the field of wealth management, NBK Wealth, a subsidiary of the National Bank of Kuwait, has won a prestigious award as part of the Global Finance magazine's annual Best Banks in Private Banking Services 2026 awards, held in London, where the group won the Best in Private Banking Services for the Next Generation in 2026 in the World.

This award reflects NBK Wealth's excellence in spreading awareness of the value of investment among future generations and equipping them with the skills they need to manage their wealth in the future with extreme professionalism, through its exclusive educational program "Generation W", which targets the sons and daughters of the group's senior private banking clients.

## Building Leaders, Not Just Investors

The program is a comprehensive educational experience carefully designed by NBK Wealth Group to provide participants with a deep and thorough understanding of the world of wealth management, through expert-led sessions, real-world case studies, and interactive workshops based on the latest data and research, along with cultural activities and nature adventures that aim to build long relationships and enhance critical thinking, as well as widen both the personal and professional horizons of the participants.

## A Global Experience in the Heart of Europe

Last year, the sixth edition of "Generation W" hosted 22 participants from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the luxurious La Réserve Hotel in Geneva, enabling them to have a unique and unforgettable experience that combined a deep understanding of the fundamentals of financial management and investment, cultural exchange, and inspiring adventures in the heart of the Swiss Alps.

NBK Wealth provided participants with the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of its global strategic partners through specialized sessions in the world of finance, investment, and asset allocation, presented by experts from JP Morgan Asset Management and Investext. These sessions were characterized by a rich dialogue style that allowed direct communication with experts, asking questions, and engaging in in-depth discussions about the latest global trends in wealth management, which plays a key role in enhancing their ability to make informed financial decisions in the future.

## Beyond Wealth: A long-term vision

NBK Wealth's winning of the award of "Best Private Banking Services for the Next Generation 2026" from Global Finance Magazine confirms



Alia Abou El Fath, Head of Corporate Communications at NBK Wealth, accepts the award on behalf of the group.

- Generation W Program receives global acknowledgement and achieves confirmation of NBK Wealth's success in building a strategic relationship with the next generation of high-net-worth clients.
- The program equips participants with the skills they need to manage their future wealth with extreme professionalism, not just to manage capital, but to lead with purpose
- The Group strives to be the number one choice in the field of wealth management and build long-living legacies for its clients.

the Group's success in building a strategic relationship with the new generation of high-net-worth individuals, through providing a deep understanding of their aspirations and giving them a comprehensive experience that aligns with their values in entrepreneurship and impactful investing, as part of its strategic vision that focuses on preparing a new generation of finance and investment leaders.



The "Generation W" program, which was first launched in 2017, is more than just an educational experience; it is an integrated journey aimed at building a leadership mindset in the next generation of NBK Wealth Group clients, by empowering them with the knowledge and vision that qualifies them to confidently build their future. The program also embodies the Group's philosophy of what is known as "Beyond Wealth", which places clients at the heart of each experience and equips them with the tools

needed to make a real personal and social difference.

This program comes as part of NBK Wealth's endeavor to go beyond enhancing the wealth of its clients and become the number one trusted choice in the field of wealth management, while striving to build a legacy for clients that lasts for successive generations.

## About NBK Wealth

NBK Wealth, a leading local and one of the largest wealth management institutions regionally, is a key pillar of NBK Group, one of the largest financial institutions in the Middle East. This gives it a strong foundation and extensive experience in local, regional, and global markets, as well as a broad geographical footprint spanning 9 cities in 5 different countries through which comprehensive experi-



Global Finance Awards

ences are provided.

The NBK Wealth Group follows an approach focused on finding customized solutions that suit the individual needs of each client, meeting the unique financial goals of high-net-worth individuals and institutions, as well as offering a comprehensive range of private banking and wealth management services, including wealth financial planning, investment portfolio management, specialized consulting services in areas such as family offices, real estate, cash and credit management, offshore financial trust entities, and wills.

It is worth noting that NBK Wealth is distinguished by its focus on understanding each client's unique financial goals and designing customized strategies that seek to achieve the highest possible return while effectively managing risks.

It is also worth noting that NBK Wealth Group is a registered trademark of the National Bank of Kuwait K.S.C.P. ("National Bank of Kuwait"), one of the world's largest and oldest financial institutions in the region. It specializes in managing the assets of various companies within the group, including Watani Investment Company K.S.C.C. - the leading investment company - and its subsidiaries around the world, in addition to private banking at NBK.

For more information about Global Finance Magazine's Annual Best Banks in Private Banking Awards 2026, please visit the website:

PRESS RELEASE: Global Finance Names The World's Best Private Banks 2026 | Global Finance Magazine



Gulf Bank donates food to a citizen in Alzahra Cooperative Society.



Gulf Bank congratulates a citizen on the arrival of the holy month and presents her with a Ramadan gift basket.

'Our traditions bring us together'

## Gulf Bank launches Ramadan initiative at Lulu, Alzahra Co-op

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: In celebration of the holy month of Ramadan, Gulf Bank has launched a special initiative as part of its Ramadan program, "Our Traditions Always Bring Us Together." Over two days, the Bank generously gifted "Machlat Ramadan" grocery to shoppers at Lulu Hypermarket and Alzahra Co-op, reflecting its commitment to supporting the community and enhancing customer experiences.

Gulf Bank treated select shoppers at Lulu Hypermarket to complimentary groceries using the Gulf Bank Lulu Hypermarket Prepaid Card - the first of its kind in Kuwait. Exclusively designed for Lulu Hypermarket customers, the card provides up to 5% cashback on purchases made at Lulu Hypermarket branches across the country.

With its exclusive benefits, the Lulu Hypermarket Prepaid Mastercard has become a preferred choice for customers, offering convenience, security, and special discounts. It enables shoppers to take advantage of exclusive Ramadan offers and make seamless payments both in-store and online at Lulu Hypermarket.

Additionally, at Shamiya Co-op. Additionally, at Alzahra Co-op, Gulf Bank provided complimentary groceries to numerous shoppers using its "MOUJ" prepaid card. Offering up to 5% cashback on local and international purchases - up to KD 600 annually - this flexible and secure payment solution ensures a seamless and rewarding shopping experience.

Shoppers at Lulu Hypermarket and Alzahra Co-op expressed their appreciation to Gulf Bank for this meaningful initiative, which supports community sustainability and provides added value to individuals. By offering exclusive benefits, the initiative also enhanced the security of financial transactions.

Gulf Bank remains committed to providing an exceptional banking experience for all segments of society, particularly during Ramadan. This initiative reflects the Bank's dedication to offering tailored financial solutions that cater to customers' needs, helping them manage their expenses efficiently and securely.

## Zain holds 'AI in Action: Smarter Network Operations' workshop to maintain technology market leadership

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Zain Group, a leading digital lifestyle provider in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, recently held an innovative workshop at the company's HQ in Kuwait under the theme, 'AI in Action: Smarter Network Operations.' Zain Group Chief Technology Officer, Mohammed Al Murshed and other ICT management from across operations, were present at the event, where Zain's artificial intelligence (AI)-related plans and ambitions were showcased through presentations and live demonstrations.

A key aspect of Zain's '4WARD-Progress with Purpose' corporate strategy to further accelerate the company into a leading technology conglomerate (TechCo), Zain has been an early adopter of AI innovation in its operations, and the workshop highlighted the progress that has been achieved in AI for network and digital transformation. The company continues to demonstrate how it is turning AI insights into real business impact, improving customer experience and increasing commercial efficiency. Building on these successes, Zain intends to utilize AI to scale Idea-to-Cash capabilities across the Group, reinforcing its commitment to practical, value-driven innovation.

Mohammed Al Murshed, Zain Group CTO, commented, "Machine learning, deep learning, and large language models are increasingly driving transformation across the telecommunications industry. The three foundational pillars of AI - infrastructure, algorithms, and data - are now widely accepted and systematically embedded across key business functions. Zain Group's technical leadership, in close coordination with teams across operating companies, is accelerating the adoption of AI insights to have real business impact by driving efficiencies and improving customer experience."

Al Murshed added, "We have already defined a clear commercialization roadmap for AI and will spare no efforts in expanding the AI agenda even further in 2026 accelerating business outcomes. As part of the journey to achieve Autonomous Network Level 4 (AN L4), Kuwait has launched a comprehensive level assessment to identify the required solutions and close capability gaps. The assessment covers critical do-



AI-Murshed with the workshop participants.

- "Zain accelerating the adoption of AI insights to have real business impact by driving efficiencies and improving customer experience"
- Launches Autonomous Network (AN L4) level assessment, initiated in Kuwait and spanning critical domains including wireless, core network, and IP

mains, including wireless, core, and IP networks."

As part of Zain's long-term strategic vision, the company has introduced an ambitious goal to achieve Autonomous Network Level 4 (AN L4) through a structured, two-phase transformation spanning 2025 - 2030. Guided by TM Forum and industry-recommended high-value use cases, this progressive roadmap is designed to deliver predictive, self-managing, energy-aware, and highly efficient network operations, further strengthening Zain's position among the world's leading telecom innovators.

During 'AI in Action: Smarter Network Operations,' Zain took the opportunity to demonstrate practical, real-world outcomes that showcase how AI-driven innovations can deliver measurable value across both network operations and customer-facing processes. The impact of deployment includes improved operational efficiency, optimized resource and cost planning/scheduling, and enhanced customer experience through faster issue resolution and higher service reliability.

Several compelling AI-driven use cases were showcased at the workshop including:

**Kuwait:** Intelligent Agents for Wireless Operations & Maintenance (O&M) - An initiative in which Zain Kuwait and Huawei have introduced intelligent agents in wireless O&M for the first time, to accelerate fault isolation and resolution.

This program is expected to reduce outage duration by 2,268 hours annually, strengthening network reliability and service continuity. The deployment of a RAN FME-Mate solution also reinforces Zain's commitment to adopting advanced technologies across its technical infrastructure to increase efficiency and accelerate digital transformation - an important milestone toward building a smarter, more resilient, and more reliable network.

**Zain Jordan:** Large Language Model (LLM)-Powered Intelligent Agents Transforming Network O&M - Zain Jordan has deployed CompSpirit, AssurSpirit, and FME-Mate to modernize the network O&M model by leveraging LLM capabilities. These intelligent agents analyze live network customer complaints, quantify the distribution of fault types, and classify issues into 14 sub-categories across eight main categories, enabling more accurate tracking, faster diagnosis, and more

structured resolution workflows.

**Zain Iraq:** AI-Driven Churn Prediction for Proactive Customer Retention - In Iraq, Zain has introduced AI-based customer churn prediction to proactively identify users at risk of leaving the network. By analyzing customer behavior and usage patterns, the solution enables earlier and more targeted retention actions, helping protect recurring revenue and strengthen customer relationships. In parallel, Zain Iraq is advancing an AI-driven Idea-to-Cash initiative as part of its BSS transformation. The AI-powered platform supports the full business lifecycle, from idea creation to revenue realization by using LLMs and domain-specific models to accelerate Time-to-Revenue (TTR), improve cash flow, and enhance operational efficiency.

Looking ahead, Zain Group and its operations are set to accelerate large-scale rollout of high-value Autonomous Network use cases as well as AI-driven digital and commercial innovations to further unlock the business potential of AI technologies across its regional footprint and beyond.

## BUSINESS



Khalid AlRukhayes during the panel discussion.

## KFH highlights retail investor growth at the Forbes Summit

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Finance House (KFH), participated in The Forbes Middle East Top Advisors & Investors Summit, a premier regional gathering that brought together the region's foremost advisors, financial professionals, and investors at a pivotal moment for the Middle East's investment future.

This summit provides an essential platform to exchange expertise, spotlight trends, and unlock sustainable growth strategies.

KFH's participation reflects its commitment to contributing to forward-looking conversations that advance sustainable growth, innovation, and responsible investment across the region.

As a world's leading Islamic financial institutions, KFH continues to play a central role in strengthening Kuwait's and the region's financial sectors through cutting-edge digital banking solutions, robust investment offerings, and strategic global partnerships.

Deputy General Manager-Global Markets Trading and Investments at KFH, Khalid Al-Rukhayes, participated in a panel discussion titled: "From Savers to Shareholders: Expanding Public Participation to Drive Market Growth," a discussion exploring the critical role of increasing retail investor participation in capital markets, both equities and fixed income.

During the session, AlRukhayes shed light on the rapid expansion of the retail base investing in the fixed income market, explaining that retail investors are increasingly drawn to Sukuk and other fixed-income products due to their stability, good returns, and alignment with conservative investment preferences.

He noted that advancements in digital trading platforms, broader product availability, and strengthened financial literacy initiatives have collectively empowered a larger segment of the public to participate in this asset class, transforming fixed-income investment from a niche institutional activity into a mainstream option for everyday investors.

AlRukhayes elaborated on how financial institutions and market regulators can work together to enhance accessibility, develop investor-friendly products, and strengthen financial literacy as key enablers of a more inclusive capital market ecosystem.

He also highlighted KFH's ongoing efforts to empower emerg-



Khalid AlRukhayes

**AlRukhayes:**  
■ Retail investors are increasingly drawn to Sukuk and other fixed-income products

ing investor segments through innovative digital platforms, Sharia-compliant investment solutions, and transparent market engagement strategies. He stressed that broadening participation not only expands market reach and liquidity but also creates a more resilient, sustainable, and balanced investment landscape that supports long-term national economic development.

AlRukhayes said that KFH is the largest bank and the largest listed company by market capitalisation in Kuwait, with operations across 10 countries and a network of more than 600 branches.

He added that scale, however, is not an objective in itself; what truly matters is how that scale is managed, and whether growth is earned through discipline rather than pursued for its own sake.

He added "Capital, when deployed responsibly, has the ability to shape economic outcomes." He referred to the bank's successful Sukuk issuance of a USD 850 million Additional Tier 1 Mudaraba Sukuk, the largest of its kind in Kuwait, which attracted retail investors.

The issuance saw exceptional demand, with subscription orders of over USD 1.7 billion (more than twice the issue size), and an annual yield of 6.25%.

This issuance supports KFH's strategy to strengthen its capital base and diversify funding, thereby enhancing its capacity to finance Kuwait's key developmental projects, particularly in infrastructure, energy and other vital sectors, and facilitating client expansion regionally and globally.

AlRukhayes concluded his remarks by noting that economies that thrive are those that plan with discipline, innovate with intent, and invest with responsibility.

AI and digital tools drive KOC's shale exploration plans

## KOC engages global firms to boost shale oil exploration

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: In view of the recent announcement of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) CEO Ahmed Al-Eidan regarding the ongoing talks with international companies to explore shale oil, sources close to the company revealed to the newspaper the main reasons behind the decision to invite major international firms for shale oil exploration as follows:

- Diversify production sources by including shale oil among Kuwait's crude oil resources, thus, reducing reliance on traditional onshore and offshore explorations. This is important since Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) aims to reach a production capacity of four million barrels of oil per day by 2035.

- Reduction of shale oil exploration costs to below \$30 per barrel in recent years. Previously, the cost of a barrel of shale oil ranged between \$80 and \$90, so KOC and most other international companies were not interested in shale oil due to the exorbitant costs, sometimes exceeding the price of a barrel of oil announced by OPEC+. However, the decline in the cost of extracting a barrel of shale oil has whetted the appetite

of international oil companies for shale oil and gas.

- Ability of international companies to extract shale oil. Previously, this required complex drilling rigs and sophisticated technology, but the digital transformation in the oil industry played a vital role in exploring even the most challenging reservoirs. Artificial intelligence technology, in particular, has the capacity to analyze data and address the difficulties and challenges in drilling and exploration operations for oil and gas, especially shale oil.

- The need to compensate the decline in production from fields like Burgan, which witnessed a drop in output. KOC is currently exploring all possible avenues to address the shortfall in production from conventional reservoirs, with shale oil being the main focus.

- Availability of safety and security measures and the avoidance of environmental risks. Modern shale oil exploration technologies now offer significant protection for workers, especially since handling hydraulic fracturing equipment and using multi-head drills previously posed considerable danger.

Regarding environmental risks, the digital age, including artificial intelligence, enabled

global companies to predict the hazards resulting from harmful substances emitted by shale oil, such as toxic hydrogen sulfide gas.

Furthermore, KOC's current reliance on a high-quality, high-capacity pipeline network allows future connection to shale oil production areas, thereby, reducing the need for conventional oil pipelines.

Sources revealed that several years ago, KOC, through Shell, conducted field feasibility studies on shale oil. Surface tests confirmed the presence of oil and gas in Kuwaiti shale formations. However, shale oil extraction was postponed until the need arose, particularly since conventional fields were performing at peak capacity without any decline.

Sources said around 45 countries showed interest in shale oil in recent years, indicating that the United States of America is a leader in the field of shale oil, as its daily production rate of shale oil has reached more than 13 million barrels per day.

Sources added that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia discovered the Jafurah field in 2014 -- the largest shale gas field in the Arab and Gulf region, as its reserves are estimated at 230 trillion cubic feet of gas and more than 75 billion barrels of condensates.

Assets under management of KD 1.52 bln

## Markaz records total revenue of KD 28.59 mln for 2025

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" (KSE: Markaz, Reuters: MARKZ.KW, Bloomberg: MARKAZ: KK) reported its financial results for 2025 with a Total Revenue of KD 28.59 million with an increase of 41%, as compared to KD 20.31 million in 2024.

The net profit attributable to shareholders of Markaz was KD 10.82 million, compared to KD4.46 million in the same period last year, and earnings per share was 22 Fils for the year ended 31 December 2025.

The Board of Directors has recommended a dividend of 8 Fils per share (Subject to the AGM approval).

Mr. Diraar Yusuf Alghanim, Chairman at Markaz stated: "In a year shaped by substantial change in global conditions and investment dynamics, 2025 presented both challenges and opportunities.

Kuwait's All Share Index rose 21.0%, driven by strong corporate earnings, particularly in the banking sector, alongside policy reforms and heightened foreign investor interest.

However, oil prices were under pressure and geopolitical tensions caused uncertainties in the oil market resulting in overall dampened investor sentiment.

On the macroeconomic front, GCC economies experienced moderate growth, bolstered by non-oil sector expansion, credit growth, and infrastructure investments.

The GCC equity markets showed resilience in 2025, with the MSCI GCC Countries Domestic Index posting a 5.5% increase. Global GDP grew 3.1%, supported by easing inflation in developed economies and a rebound in emerging markets, especially in Asia.

However, global growth was tempered by trade uncertainties and divergent monetary policies,



Diraar Yusuf Alghanim, Chairman



Ali Khali, CEO



Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director

which introduced volatility in markets overall.

Looking at 2026, the GCC outlook will be shaped by corporate earnings, oil price trends, and ongoing diversification efforts.

Globally, growth prospects will rely on monetary policy decisions, geopolitical developments, and the performance of emerging markets

In light of this context, Markaz will continue to build on its well-established leadership position in the financial sector, through benefiting from the growth opportunities and providing added value to all investors."

Mr. Ali H. Khalil, Markaz's CEO, stated: "Markaz's Asset Management fees for 2025 were KD 9.33 million as compared to KD 8.73 million for the previous year, an increase of 7%.

Investment Banking and Advisory fees for 2025 were KD 1.1 million, nearly the same as for 2024. We prioritize enhancing the clients' experience to reinforce our market leadership.

During the year, Markaz managed equity products that have provided investors with positive return performance across various deployment strategies.

These include momentum-

driven, actively managed equity funds alongside specialist Sharia-compliant products. We also delivered robust performance across MENA real estate driven by renewed transactional momentum, strong foreign demand and solid retail growth in residential, office, retail and industrial segments.

Markaz completed multiple exits from international industrial real estate investments in the US and Europe, demonstrating disciplined execution in development and structured credit strategies.

We remain focused on selective opportunities in the industrial and residential sectors.

The investment banking team raised KWD 35 million in the first tranche of Markaz's KWD 50 million senior unsecured bond program, underpinning its active role in Kuwait's debt capital markets.

Additionally, advisory services in M&A, restructuring, and feasibility studies have provided tailored financial solutions for corporations and family-owned businesses.

By aligning strategies with market dynamics and client needs, Markaz continues to drive long-term value and consistent growth."

Mr. Abdullatif W. Al-Nusif, Managing Director, Wealth Management and Business Development at Markaz, stated: "Markaz Assets Under Management (AUM) increased by 8% to reach KD 1.52 billion as of December 31, 2025. Markaz's responsive business strategy, coupled with a steadfast focus on client objectives, positions the firm to actively capture emerging opportunities across both asset management and investment banking.

We continue to broaden product offerings, giving investors access to global investment opportunities across public and private asset classes.

In particular, we launched the Private Real Assets Strategy for qualified investors with the aim of mitigating inflationary impact on their portfolios.

Our commitment to a customer-centric approach drives us to continuously deliver on client objectives, further strengthening Markaz's position as the trusted partner for wealth creation.

By maintaining a results-driven focus while prioritizing continuous improvement, Markaz consistently enhances operational best practices and underlying profitability."

Unemployment falls to 4.3% despite weak hiring trend

## US job growth surprises with 130,000 new jobs in Jan

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): U.S. employers added a surprisingly strong 130,000 jobs last month, but government revisions cut 2024-2025 U.S. payrolls by hundreds of thousands.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.3%, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The report included major revisions that reduced the number of jobs created last year to just 181,000, less than half the previously reported 584,000 and the weakest since the pandemic year of 2020.

The job market has been sluggish for months even though the economy is registering solid growth.

But the January numbers came in stronger than the 75,000 economists had expected. Healthcare accounted for nearly 82,000, or more than 60%, of last month's new jobs. Factories added 5,000, snapping a streak of 13 straight months of job losses. The federal government shed 34,000 jobs.

Average hourly wages rose a solid 0.4% from December to January. The unemployment rate fell from 4.4% in December as the number of employed Americans rose and the number of unemployed fell.

"The surprisingly strong job gains in January were driven mainly by health care and social assistance," Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union, wrote in a commentary. "But it is enough to stabilize the job market and send the unemployment rate slightly lower. This is still a largely frozen job market, but it is stabilizing. That's an encouraging sign to start the year, especially after the hiring recession in 2025."

Weak hiring over the past year reflects the lingering impact of high interest rates, billionaire Elon Musk's purge last year of the federal workforce and uncertainty arising from President Donald Trump's erratic trade policies, which have left businesses less willing to hire.

Dreary numbers had been coming in ahead of Wednesday's report. Employers posted just 6.5 million job openings in December, fewest in more than five years.

Payroll processor ADP reported last week that private employers added 22,000 jobs in January, far fewer than economists had forecast. And the outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas reported that companies slashed more than 108,000 jobs last month, the most since October and the worst January for job cuts since 2009.



Hiring sign is displayed at a barbershop in Chicago, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026. (AP)

Several well-known companies announced layoffs last month. UPS is cutting 30,000 jobs. Chemicals giant Dow, shifting to more automation and artificial intelligence, is cutting 4,500 jobs. And Amazon is slashing 16,000 corporate jobs, its second round of mass layoffs in three months.

The sluggish job market doesn't match the economy's performance.

From July to September, America's gross domestic product - its output of goods and services - galloped ahead at a 4.4% annual pace, fastest in two years. Consumer spending was strong, and growth got a boost from rising exports and tumbling imports. And that came on top of solid 3.8% growth from April through June.

Economists are puzzling out whether job creation will eventually accelerate to catch up to strong growth, perhaps as President Donald Trump's tax cuts translate into big tax refunds that consumers start spending this year. But there are other possibilities. GDP growth could slow and fall

into line with a weak labor market or advances in AI and automation could mean that the economy can roar ahead without creating many jobs.

The jobs report Wednesday could lead the Federal Reserve to further delay any new cuts in its key interest rate. Some Fed officials have specifically argued that last year's weak hiring is evidence that borrowing costs are too high and are weighing on growth and discouraging companies from expanding. But a pickup in hiring, if sustained, undercuts that view.

Fed officials signaled in December that they expect to reduce their key rate once more this year, while Wall Street investors expect two reductions, according to futures pricing. Yet many analysts now expect a first cut won't happen until June or later. The odds of a rate cut in April fell sharply after the jobs report, according to futures markets, from 36% on Tuesday to just below 19% Wednesday, CME Fedwatch said.

Wednesday's report included the government's annual benchmark revisions, meant to take into account the more-accurate jobs numbers that employers report to state unemployment agencies. They cut 898,000 jobs from payrolls in the year ending March 2025.

More revisions, many meant to reflect more accurate information about the number of businesses that opened and closed, trimmed the tally of jobs created from April through December last year to 120,000 (or 13,000 a month) from an originally reported 251,000 (or 28,000).

Despite recent high-profile layoffs, the unemployment rate has looked better than the hiring numbers.

That is partly because President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown has reduced the number of foreign-born people competing for work.

As a result, the number of new jobs that the economy needs to create to keep the unemployment rate from rising - the "break-even" point -- has tumbled. In 2023, when immigrants were pouring into the United States, it reached a high of 250,000, according to economist Anton Cheremukhin of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. By mid-2025, he found, it was down to 30,000. Researchers at the Brookings Institution believe it could now be as low as 20,000 and headed lower.

The combination of weak hiring but low unemployment means that most American workers are enjoying job security. But those who are looking for jobs - especially young people who can be competing at the entry level with AI and automation - often struggle to land one.

## People

Person held for questioning

### Police search Arizona site in Guthrie disappearance

RIO RICO, Ariz., Feb 11, (AP): A person was detained for questioning Tuesday in the kidnapping of Nancy Guthrie, hours after the FBI released surveillance videos of a masked person wearing a handgun holster outside Guthrie's front door the night she vanished from her Arizona home.

News outlets later interviewed a man who said he was questioned and released. Authorities have not confirmed that the person they picked up was released.

Officers detained the person during a traffic stop south of Tucson, according to the Pima County Sheriff's Department. It did not immediately provide details about the person or the location. The FBI referred questions to the sheriff's office.

A Phoenix, Arizona, television station, KNXV-TV, interviewed a delivery man who said he had been detained by police on suspicions of kidnapping Guthrie. He said he and his wife pulled the car over when they noticed that police were following them. The man, who gave only his first name and said he lived in the town of Rio Rico, said he was innocent and that police released him after several hours. His account could not be independently verified. Local and federal authorities have not confirmed that the person who they had detained was released.

The department and the FBI were conducting a court-authorized search Tuesday night at a location in Rio Rico, about an hour's drive south of Tucson, the department said in a statement. It was expected to take several hours.

Guthrie disappeared on Feb. 1 and since then the case has gripped the nation. Until Tuesday, it seemed authorities were making little headway in determining what happened to the 84-year-old mother of "Today" show host Savannah Guthrie or finding who was responsible.

Savannah Guthrie and her two siblings have released a series of video statements pleading for the return of their mother and indicating a willingness to pay a ransom. Authorities have described Nancy Guthrie as mentally sound but with limited mobility. She takes several medications and there was concern from the start that she could die without them, Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos has said repeatedly.

The community of Rio Rico - population 20,000 - is roughly an hour's drive from Guthrie's home and about 15 miles (24 kilometers) north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The videos released earlier Tuesday show a person wearing a ski mask and a backpack. At one point, they tilt their head down and away from a doorbell camera while approaching Guthrie's front door. The footage also shows the person holding a flashlight in their mouth and trying to cover the camera with a gloved hand and part of a plant ripped from the yard.

The videos - less than a combined minute in length - gave investigators and the public their first glimpse of who was outside Guthrie's home in the foothills outside Tucson. But the images did not show what happened to her or help determine whether she is still alive.

FBI Director Kash Patel said the "armed individual" appeared to "have tampered with the camera." It was not entirely clear whether there was a gun in the holster.

The videos were pulled from data on "back-end systems" after investigators spent days trying to find lost, corrupted or inaccessible images, Patel said.

#### Leads

"This will get the phone ringing for lots of potential leads," said former FBI agent Katherine Schweit. "Even when you have a person who appears to be completely covered, they're really not. You can see their girth, the shape of their face, potentially their eyes or mouth."

Tuesday afternoon, authorities were back near Guthrie's neighborhood, using vehicles to block her driveway. A few miles away, law enforcement was going door-to-door in the area where daughter Annie Guthrie lives, talking with neighbors as well as walking through a drainage area and examining the inside of a culvert with a flashlight.

Investigators have said for more than a week that they believe Nancy Guthrie was taken against her will. She was last seen at home Jan. 31 and reported missing the next day. DNA tests showed blood on her porch was hers, authorities said.

Until now, authorities have released few details, leaving it unclear if ransom notes demanding money with deadlines already passed were authentic, and whether the Guthrie family has had any contact with whoever took Guthrie.

Savannah Guthrie posted the new surveillance images on social media Tuesday, saying the family believes their mother is still alive and offering phone numbers for the FBI and county sheriff. Within minutes, the post had thousands of comments.

Investigators had hoped cameras would turn up evidence right away about how Nancy Guthrie disappeared from her home in an secluded neighborhood.

But the doorbell camera was disconnected early on Feb. 1. While software recorded movement at the home minutes later, Guthrie did not have an active subscription, so Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos had initially said none of the footage could be recovered. Officials continued working to get the footage.

Heartbreaking messages by Savannah Guthrie and her family shifted from hopeful to bleak as they made pleas for whoever took Nancy Guthrie. In a video just ahead of a purported ransom deadline Monday, Savannah Guthrie appeared alone and spoke directly to the public.

"We are at an hour of desperation," she said. "We need your help." Much of the nation is closely following the case involving the longtime anchor of NBC's morning show.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said President Donald Trump watched the new surveillance footage and was in "pure disgust," encouraging anyone with information to call the FBI.

The FBI this week began posting digital billboards about the case in major cities from Texas to California.

Connor Hagan, a spokesperson for the FBI, said Monday that the agency was not aware of ongoing communication between Guthrie's family and any suspected kidnapers. Authorities also had not identified any suspects, he said.

Three days after the search began, Savannah Guthrie and her two siblings sent their first public appeal to whoever took their mother, saying, "We want to hear from you, and we are ready to listen."

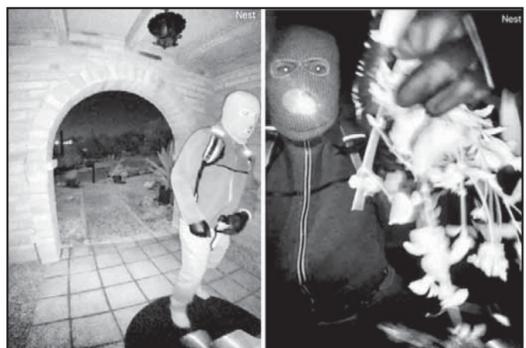
In the recorded video, Guthrie said her family was aware of media reports about a ransom letter, but they first wanted proof their mother was alive.

"Please reach out to us," they said.

The next day, Savannah Guthrie's brother again made a plea, saying, "Whoever is out there holding our mother, we want to hear from you. We haven't heard anything directly."

Then over the past weekend, the family posted another video - one that was more cryptic and generated even more speculation about Nancy Guthrie's fate.

"We received your message, and we understand. We beg you now to return our mother to us so that we can celebrate with her," said Savannah Guthrie, flanked by her siblings. "This is the only way we will have peace. This is very valuable to us, and we will pay."



This combo from images provided by the FBI shows surveillance footage at the home of Nancy Guthrie the night she went missing in Tucson, Ariz. (AP)



Elle Fanning (top) and Ashley Schlaifer (above) arrive at the 98th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon. (AP)



Kate Hudson arrives at the 98th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)



Marissa McMahon (top) and Rose Byrne (above) arrive at the 98th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon. (AP)



From left: Leonardo DiCaprio, Emma Stone, (left), and Yorgos Lanthimos and Timothée Chalamet arrive at the 98th Academy Awards Oscar nominees luncheon on Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

### 'Make it heartfelt,' Academy chief urges 'winners'

## Oscar hopefuls gather for luncheon, class picture

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., Feb 11, (AP): Nearly all of the 230 people up for Oscars across 24 categories gathered Tuesday for the Academy Award nominees luncheon, an event that functions as a celebration, group portrait session and orientation for next month's big ceremony.

Nominees including Jessie Buckley, Timothée Chalamet, Leonardo DiCaprio and Emma Stone sat for lunch and stood for a class photo alongside nominees for awards including best animated short and the newly created casting Oscar.

The ballroom at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, was especially full of nominees for "Sinners," the most nominated film of all time, including star Michael B. Jordan and director Ryan Coogler.

Lynette Howell Taylor, elected in July as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, made her first address to Oscar nominees, and gave them a set of instructions on how to handle their acceptance speeches if they win.

"Be prepared," she said. "Don't say you didn't expect it. You have a one in five chance of winning."

She urged winners to "make it heartfelt," not to try to thank everyone they can think of, pick one person to speak for a group of victors and hold speeches to

45 seconds.

The luncheon is a relatively egalitarian affair where big names mix with small ones and veteran nominees stand for photos with first-timers.

Craig Renaud, nominated for best documentary short for "Armed Only With a Camera: The Life and Death of Brent Renaud," got to chat with DiCaprio, up for best actor for "One Battle After Another," at the tables before the group photo.

Nearby, Mohammaddreza Eyni, co-director with Sara Khaki of documentary feature nominee "Cutting Through Rocks," talked about his film with Ethan Hawke, nominated for best actor for "Blue Moon."

The roll call where every nominee in attendance is summoned to the stage, is the centerpiece of the gathering. It feels much like the names being read off at a high school graduation. (Nominees even get a certificate on departure that looks like a diploma. "Woo-hoo!" best supporting actress nominee Elle Fanning said when handed hers on her way out, and asked for a photo with it.)

This year's roll call, read by actor and Academy Board of Governors member Lou Diamond Phillips, began with Delroy Lindo, up for best supporting actor for "Sinners," and ended with Teyana Taylor, up

for best supporting actress for its biggest competitor, "One Battle After Another."

The luncheon was a return to tradition after last year's was called off because it fell amid Southern California's destructive wildfires. A cocktail reception with the class picture just a few days before the ceremony replaced it.

There were many happy meetings among nominees as they arrived. Steven Spielberg, nominated for best picture as a producer of "Hamnet," chatted in the lobby with "One Battle" best director nominee Paul Thomas Anderson. Spielberg took a photo of Anderson leaning on an Oscar statue.

Chloé Zhao, up for her second best director Oscar for "Hamnet," hugged former academy president Janet Yang.

Jacob Elordi, who stands 6-foot-5, embraced the nearly as tall director of "Sirat," Oliver Laxe, near the entrance and attracted the attention of most of the cameras in the room. Elordi is up for best supporting actor for "Frankenstein" and "Sirat" is up for best international feature.

Academy members from 88 countries voted for the nominees. Howell said proudly during her speech, and every category had at least one international nominee.

## Film



This image released by Sony Pictures shows the character Moddo, voiced by Nick Kroll, in a scene from the animated film 'GOAT.' (AP)



This image shows the character Will, voiced by Caleb McLaughlin, in a scene from 'GOAT.' (AP)

Animated basketball film falls short despite vibrant world

## Curry's movie 'GOAT' is a disappointing air ball

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP): You'd expect an animated basketball movie with four-time NBA champion Stephen Curry in the producer's chair to be an easy lay-up. So why is "GOAT" such a brick?

Despite a wondrously textured, kinetic world and some interesting oddball characters, the movie is undone by a predictable, saccharine script. It's as easy to see the steps coming as a Curry three-pointer arching into the net.

The movie has the kind of lazy, thin writing that feels like it all could have derived from a boozily Hollywood happy hour gettogether: "Bro, bro. Wait. What if the GOAT was an actual goat?"

It centers on Will Harris, a goat with dreams of becoming a great baller, voiced by "Stranger Things" star Caleb McLaughlin. Undersized and an orphan - again with the orphans, guys? - Will is a delivery driver for a diner and late on his rent. He's a great outside shooter but a liability in the paint, unless he learns, that is.

He lives in Vineland - a hectic urban landscape with graffiti and living vines that choke the playgrounds - and is a rabid supporter of the local franchise, the Thorns. His idol is veteran Jett Fillmore, a leopard who's the league's all-time leading scorer, nicely voiced by Gabrielle Union. The Thorns are a bit of a mess, despite Jett's brilliance.

The game here is called roarball, a high-intensity, co-ed, multi-animal, full-contact sport derived from basketball with a hollow ball that has small holes. It's

a "Mad Max" sport - ultraviolent, unofficiated and the dangers lurk not just from the beefy opponents but from the arena itself. The championship award is called the Claw.

The best part of the movie may be the environments for the other arenas - lava in one, a swamp with stalagmites and stalactites in another, plus an ice-bound one and another with desert sandstorms and rocks. Homefield advantage is a big thing in this league.

There seem to be only two kinds of points scored here - blazing windmills, cutting tomahawks and spectacular alley-oop dunks or slow-mo threes from so far downtown they might as well be in a different zip code. No mid-range jumpers, bro.

This universe is divided into "biggs" and "smalls" - rhinos, bears and giraffes on one side, gerbils and capybara on the other - and Will is deemed a small. "Smalls can't ball," he is told, condescendingly.

But Will - thanks to a viral video - improbably gets signed to the Thorns by the team's owner (a cynical warthog voiced wonderfully by Jennifer Lewis). It's seen as a shameless publicity stunt that no one wants, especially Jett, who needs a winning season after being taunted by "All stats, no Claw."

Now, predictably, in Aaron Buchsbaum and Teddy Riley script, comes the bulk of the movie, giving a steady "The Karate Kid" or "Air Bud" vibe as it charts Will's steady rise to honored teammate and franchise future, despite Jett insisting she's not ready

to go: "I'm the GOAT. I'm not passing the torch."

The lessons are good - the importance of teamwork and believing in yourself - but the testosterone-fueled violence on the courts is WWE extreme. There are unnecessary plugs for Mercedes and Under Armor, and hollow slogans like "Dream big" and "Roots run deep."

Some of the most interesting characters end up on the Thorns, a fragile, somewhat broken team that includes a rhino (voiced by David Harbour), a delicate ostrich (Nicola Coughlan), a gonzo Komodo dragon (Nick Kroll) and a desultory giraffe (Curry).

The Komodo dragon, named Moddo, is the best of the bunch, an insane, unpredictable creature full of electricity. "If Moddo was any more of a snack, he'd eat himself," he declares. Could he get his own movie?

Directed by "Bob's Burgers" veteran Tyree Dilthey and Adam Rosette, "GOAT" is targeted to Gen Alpha, leveraging cellphone screens and online likes, virality and diss tracks. It's not as funny as it thinks it is and tiresome in its overly familiar redemption arc.

Another potential basketball GOAT - Michael Jordan - gave us a clunker of a live-action animated basketball movie in "Space Jam" exactly 30 years ago and "GOAT," while not as bad as that mess, is an air ball none the same.

"Goat," a Sony Pictures Animation released in theaters, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for some rude humor and brief mild language. Running time: 100 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

## Technology

## 'Tech firms addicting the brains of children'

## Google, Meta push back on addiction claims in landmark trial

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 11, (AP) — Jurors in a landmark social media case that seeks to hold tech companies responsible for harms to children got their first glimpse into what will be a lengthy trial characterized by dueling narratives from the plaintiffs and the two remaining defendants, Meta and YouTube.

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 similar lawsuits will play out. KGM and the cases of two other plaintiffs have been selected to be bellwether trials — essentially test cases for both sides to see how their arguments play out before a jury.

Comparing social media platforms to casinos and addictive drugs, lawyer Mark Lanier delivered opening statements Monday in the Los Angeles Superior Court trial that seeks to hold Instagram owner Meta and Google's YouTube responsible for addictive features and harms to children who use their products. Two other defendants, TikTok and Snap, have settled the case.

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.

Luis Li, the attorney representing YouTube and Google, delivered an opening statement on Tuesday focused on KGM's user data, saying the five-year average of her watch

time is 29 minutes per day. He said KGM's average daily time spent on YouTube Shorts, watching vertical short form videos with the "infinite scroll" feature Lanier called into question Monday, was just 1 minute and 14 seconds.

He also told jurors that all of the YouTube features Lanier challenged in his opening statement could be disabled and modified to match users' preferences. "When you strip away all of the rhetoric ... what you are left with is a simple truth. Infinite scroll is not infinite," Li said. "In some cases, in this case, before this court, before you, the jury, it's as little as a minute and 14 seconds. It's not social media addiction when it's not social media and it's not an addiction."

Lanier, the plaintiff's lawyer, delivered lively first remarks Monday, 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."

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."

Li was insistent that KGM is not addicted to YouTube, pointing to sworn testimony where she directly said she wasn't addicted to it. He also displayed three large boxes containing about 10,000 pages of medical records, saying that within all of those records, jurors would not see a "single example" of KGM being addicted to YouTube.

The sole reference to YouTube within those records is an instance where her provider noted KGM was using a YouTube video to assist with sleep at night when feeling anxious, he said.

KGM made a brief appearance on Monday during Lanier's statement and she will return to testify later in the trial. Lanier spent time describing 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 from 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.

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.

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.

## Fashion



From left: Anne Hathaway, Lana Del Rey, Lili Reinhart, Delaney Rowe and Emilia Jones attend the Ralph Lauren Fall/Winter 2026 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week on Tuesday, Feb. 10, in New York. (AP)

Fall show pairs softness with strength

## Ralph Lauren's fall 2026 collection a mix of romantic adventure with metallic flair



Models walk the runway during the Ralph Lauren Fall/Winter 2026 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week, Feb. 10, in New York. (AP)

NEW YORK, Feb. 11, (AP) — With more than 50 years in fashion, Ralph Lauren is still looking for adventure. Lauren took his celebrity guests on an adventure into the English countryside Tuesday for his fall 2026 runway show.

Set amid the beaux arts architecture of the Clock Tower building in Manhattan, Lauren delivered a stylish take on softness and strength, pairing luxurious earth-toned rich fabrics with metallic detailing for his latest collection.

Lauren's ethereal models with their hair flowing behind them strutted on opulent rugs as celebrity guests including actor Anne Hathaway, singer Lana Del Rey and actor Lili Reinhart looked on from antique style chairs; a romantic painted landscape canvas filled the walls surrounding them.

In his show notes, Lauren described his muse as a woman whose style is not defined by time.

"I love the adventure of fashion," Ralph Lauren wrote, adding his fall collection "is inspired by that kind of renegade spirit and the confidence of the woman who will wear it in her own personal way — to tell her own story."

The 86-year-old designer has never been one to follow trends but drive them. At Tuesday's show, accessories added a modern flair from leather gloves paired with a knit off-the-shoulder dress to shimmering silver detailing. Supermodel Gigi Hadid opened the show in a wool corseted top and maxi skirt accentuated with a silver waist chain. Other models walked the runway with silver belt chains and metallic brooches that stood in an edgy contrast to Lauren's romantic Victorian tops and tailored jackets. Lauren pinned metallic glimmering brooches to lush wool cloaks that were elegantly draped over models' shoulders in a show of strength.

In a modern twist on Joan of Arc, Lauren designed a chain mail top that delicately peeked out from underneath one model's tweed jacket. Lauren complemented the look with a printed scarf and leather pants. "There were several looks that had this beautiful chain mail kind of detailing," actor Ariana DeBose told The Associated Press. "What a way to give a woman beautiful armor."

Even with his contemporary additions, Lauren's collection still included his signature touches from his riding boots, exquisite tailoring and elegant high neck blouses.

Lauren's brand is an American staple that continues to prevail in an ever-changing industry. As part of his enduring legacy, Lauren was once again tapped to design the uniforms for Team USA at the Olympic Winter Games in Milan, marking his sixth time designing for the games.

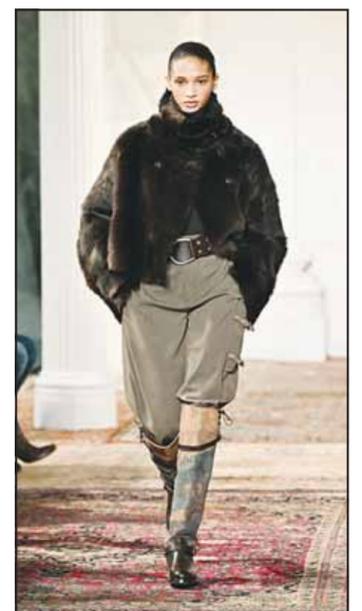
"From being in Italy with the greatest athletes in the world and then coming here to New York City to put on a fashion show that's so elegant, it's two different sides of Ralph Lauren and two different sides of what an American company can do to reach the world," David Lauren, the company's chief branding and innovation officer, said.



Model Gigi Hadid walks the runway during the Ralph Lauren Fall/Winter 2026 fashion show as part of New York Fashion Week, Tuesday, Feb. 10, in New York. (AP)



Designer Ralph Lauren takes a bow after the Ralph Lauren Fall/Winter 2026 fashion show.



Models walk the runway during the Ralph Lauren Fall/Winter 2026 fashion show. (AP)

## Conference to strengthen clinical skills in diagnosing, treating childhood disorders

## Kuwait to host conference on child psychiatry to advance mental health care

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Dr. Hussein Al-Shatti, Head of the Medical Board at Kuwait Addiction Treatment Center and President of Kuwait Psychiatric Association, announced the convening of the first Kuwaiti Conference on Child Psychiatry under the patronage of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi and with the support of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The conference will be held at the Salwa Al-Sabah Hall on Friday and Saturday.

Al-Shatti stated that the conference is being organized through the concerted efforts of the Addiction Treatment Center and Kuwait Psychi-

atric Association. He pointed out that the scientific event will feature a renowned group of local and international speakers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United States.

He confirmed the participation of about 20 health, scientific and academic institutions, along with the huge attendance of specialists and those interested in the field of child mental health, proving the growing interest in this vital field at the national and international levels.

He indicated that the conference includes a comprehensive scientific program comprising specialized scientific sessions, in addition to advanced training workshops held on the sidelines of the event. These workshops will focus on the practical and applied aspects of diagnosing and treating psychological disorders in children, thereby, contributing to the

enhancement of clinical skills and the transfer of the latest knowledge.

He added that the conference and its accompanying workshops are accredited for Continuing Medical Education (CME) hours by Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS), reflecting the scientific value of the presented content and enhancing professional development opportunities for participants.

He emphasized that the conference is in line with the commitment of Kuwait to advance the level of mental health care for children and open new avenues for scientific and professional cooperation among experts and practitioners locally and internationally, in order to strengthen its position as a leading country in supporting health and humanitarian initiatives with sustainable impact.

## 'Preservative linked to cancer in lab studies'

## US to reassess safety of BHA, common additive used in popular snack foods

NEW YORK, Feb 11, (AP): Federal health officials said Tuesday they will reassess the safety of a chemical called BHA used in foods including potato chips, cereals, frozen meals and meat products.

The US Food and Drug Administration issued a new request for information regarding butylated hydroxyanisole, a preservative. The agency's review "will consider whether BHA is safe under its current conditions of use in food and as a food contact substance," a statement said.

The move is part of a wider effort by the FDA to review chemical additives in the US food supply. In May, the agency identified BHA as a top priority for review.

"We are taking decisive action to ensure that chemicals in our food supply are not causing harm," FDA Commissioner Marty Makary said in a state-

ment.

The agency first listed BHA as "generally recognized as safe," or GRAS, in 1958 and approved it as a food additive in 1961. Since 1991, however, BHA has been classified as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen" by the National Toxicology Program.

Health advocacy groups such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest have long urged consumers to avoid products containing BHA because some studies have indicated that the chemical causes cancer in rats, mice and hamsters. BHA has been listed as a known carcinogen under California's Proposition 65 since 1990.

Package labeling data indicate that BHA use has declined in recent years, but it remains in many foods, including those marketed to children, the FDA said.

## Agency cites lack of well-controlled trial

## US FDA declines to file application for Moderna's new mRNA flu vaccine

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): The US Food and Drug Administration is refusing to consider Moderna's application for a new flu vaccine made with Nobel Prize-winning mRNA technology, the company announced Tuesday.

The news is the latest sign of the FDA's heightened scrutiny of vaccines under Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., particularly those using mRNA technology, which he has criticized before and after becoming the nation's top health official.

Moderna received what's called a "refusal-to-file" letter from the FDA that objected to how it conducted a 40,000-person clinical trial comparing its new vaccine to one of the standard flu shots used today. That trial concluded the new vaccine was somewhat more effective in adults 50 and older than that standard shot.

The letter from FDA vaccine director Dr. Vinay Prasad said the agency doesn't consider the application to contain an "adequate and well-controlled trial" because it didn't compare the new shot to "the best-available standard of care in the United States at the time of the study." Prasad's letter pointed to some advice FDA officials gave Moderna in 2024, under the Biden administration, which Moderna didn't follow.

According to Moderna, that feedback said it was acceptable to use the standard-dose flu shot the company had chosen - but that another brand specifically recommended for seniors would be preferred for anyone 65 and older in the study. Still, Moderna said, the FDA did agree to let the study proceed as originally planned.

The company said it also had shared with FDA additional data from a separate trial comparing the new vaccine against a licensed high-dose shot used for seniors.

The FDA "did not identify any safety or efficacy concerns with our product" and "does not further our shared goal of enhancing America's leadership in developing innovative medicines," Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel said in a statement.

It's rare that FDA refuses to file an application, particularly for a new vaccine, which requires companies and FDA staff to engage in months or years of discus-



A sign marks an entrance to a Moderna building in Cambridge, Mass., May 18, 2020. (AP)

sions.

Moderna has requested an urgent meeting with FDA, and noted that it has applied for the vaccine's approval in Europe, Canada and Australia.

In the last year, FDA officials working under Kennedy have rolled back recommendations around COVID-19 shots, added extra warnings to the two leading COVID vaccines - which are made with mRNA technology - and removed critics of the administration's approach from an FDA advisory panel.

Kennedy announced last year that his department would cancel more than \$500 million in contracts and funding for the development of vaccines using mRNA.

FDA for decades has allowed vaccine makers to quickly update their annual flu shots to target the latest strains by showing that they trigger an immune response in patients.

That's a far more efficient approach than running long-term studies tracking whether patients get the flu and how they fare. In an internal memo last year, Prasad wrote that the streamlined method would no longer be permitted - leading more than a dozen former FDA commissioners to pen an editorial condemning the statements.



A diver inspects coral at the Great Barrier Reef in Far North Queensland, Australia, on Sept. 23, 2024. (AP)

## Half of world's coral reefs bleached in 2014-2017 period

Coral bleaching from ocean warming is escalating in severity, extent and frequency, with more than half of the world's reefs affected during the 2014-17 global bleaching event, a study has warned.

Researchers from Australia's James Cook University (JCU) and partner institutions, including the U.S. National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Coral Reef Watch program, combined data from over 15,000 coral surveys with global satellite temperature data, said a JCU statement on Tuesday.

This approach allowed the scientists to better assess the true impact of the 2014-2017 Third Global Coral Bleaching Event and to predict the scale of damage expected during the current Fourth Event, it said.

The study, published in Nature Communications, found heat stress, bleaching and mortality during the 2014-2017 coral bleaching event were more severe than previously recorded, with more than half of the world's coral reefs suffering at least moderate bleaching and around one in six reefs losing over 10 percent of corals.

The central Pacific suffered the most severe bleaching and mortality, while severe heat in Fiji and the Great Barrier Reef caused some corals to rapidly die without bleaching first, the findings showed.

Coral bleaching results from the breakdown of the partnership between coral animals and their symbiotic algae due to stress, often due to unusually high summer temperatures. Under high levels of heat stress, corals can die, and the health of surviving corals remains impacted, researchers said.

"After the back-to-back bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef in 2016 and 2017, coral cover began to rebound, only to be hit again by mass bleaching in 2020, 2024 and 2025," said JCU Professor and the study's co-lead author Scott Heron.

"This creates a downward ratchet effect, where reefs only partially recover before the next bleaching event impacts them even further," Heron said, adding that if greenhouse gas emissions will not be reduced in line with previous Paris climate agreement commitments, "we can expect to lose many of the ecosystem services coral reefs provide." (Xinhua)

## EPA action may increase emissions and climate risks

## Trump set to gut US climate change policy and environmental regulations

WASHINGTON, Feb 11, (AP): The Trump administration is expected this week to revoke a scientific finding that long has been the central basis for US action to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change, according to a White House official.

The Environmental Protection Agency will issue a final rule rescinding a 2009 government declaration known as the endangerment finding. That Obama-era policy determined that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare.

A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly ahead of an official announcement, confirmed the plans, which were first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

"This week at the White House, President Trump will be taking the most significant deregulatory actions in history to further unleash American energy dominance and drive down costs," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement Tuesday.

The endangerment finding is the legal underpinning of nearly all climate regulations under the Clean Air Act for motor vehicles, power plants and other pollution sources that are heating the planet. It is used to justify regulations, such as auto emissions standards, intended to protect against threats made increasingly severe by climate change - deadly floods, extreme heat waves, catastrophic wildfires and other natural disasters in the United States and around the world.

Legal challenges would be certain for any action that effectively would repeal those regulations, with environmental groups describing the shift as the single biggest attack in U.S. history on federal efforts to address climate change.

An EPA spokesperson did not address when the finding would be revoked but reiterated that the agency is finalizing a new rule on it.

Britgit Hirsch said via email that the Obama-era rule was "one of the most damaging decisions in modern history" and said EPA "is actively working to deliver a historic action for the American people."

President Donald Trump, who has called climate change a "hoax," previously issued an executive order that directed EPA to submit a report on "the legality and continuing applicability" of the endangerment finding. Conservatives and some congressional Republicans have long sought to undo what they consider overly restrictive and economically damaging rules to limit greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

Lee Zeldin, a former Republican congressman who was tapped by Trump to lead EPA last year, has criticized his predecessors in Democratic administrations, saying they were "willing to bankrupt the country" in an effort to combat climate change.

Democrats "created this endangerment finding and then they are able to put all these regulations on vehicles, on airplanes, on stationary sources, to basically regulate out of existence ... segments of our economy," Zeldin said in announcing the proposed rule last year. "And it cost Americans a lot of money."

Peter Zalzal, a lawyer and associate vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund, countered that the EPA will be encouraging more climate pollution, higher health insurance and fuel costs and thousands of avoidable premature deaths.

Zeldin's push "is cynical and deeply damaging, given the mountain of scientific evidence supporting the finding, the devastating climate harms Americans are experiencing right now and EPA's clear obligation to protect Americans' health and welfare," he said.

Zalzal and other critics noted that the Supreme Court ruled in a 2007 case that planet-warming greenhouse gases, caused by burning of oil and other fossil fuels, are air pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

Since the high court's decision, in a case known as Massachusetts v. EPA, courts have uniformly rejected legal challenges to the endangerment finding, including a 2023 decision by the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

## Rocket, spacecraft achieve historic launch success

## China moves closer to moon with successful tests

WENCHANG, Hainan, Feb. 11, (Xinhua): China on Wednesday successfully conducted a low-altitude demonstration and verification flight test of its Long March-10 carrier rocket and a maximum dynamic pressure abort flight test of its new-generation crewed spacecraft Mengzhou.

Carried out at the coastal Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern island province of Hainan, these tests marked major breakthroughs in the country's crewed lunar exploration program, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said.

China aims to land its astronauts on the moon before 2030. The Mengzhou, which means "dream vessel" in Chinese, is designed mainly for the mission.

The Long March-10 rocket blasted off at 11:00 a.m. (Beijing Time). Upon reaching the conditions for abort at maximum dynamic pressure, the Mengzhou received command from the rocket and successfully executed separation and abort maneuvers.

The rocket's first stage and the spaceship's return capsule splashed down separately in the



The first stage of the Long March-10 carrier rocket safely splashes down in the predetermined sea area in a controlled manner as planned, Feb. 11. (Xinhua)

predetermined sea areas in a controlled manner as planned.

According to the CMSA, Wednesday's tests featured multiple highlights, including a new rocket model, a new spaceship model and a new launch pad, as

well as involving maritime recovery tasks. The rocket and spaceship were both in their prototype configurations.

The products used in the tests have been modified to meet the requirements and procedures for reuses, the CMSA noted.

The tests also marked several historic firsts for China's space program: the first ignition and flight of the Long March-10 rocket in its prototype configuration; the first maximum dynamic pressure abort flight test of a crewed spaceship; the first maritime splashdown of a crewed spaceship's return capsule and a rocket's first stage; and the first flight test conducted via a newly built launch pad at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site.

The success of the tests has provided valuable flight data and engineering experience for the crewed lunar exploration, the CMSA said.

Previously, China conducted two static fire tests of the rocket, zero-altitude abort flight tests of the spaceship's return capsule, and landing and takeoff tests of the moon lander.

## Suns dominate Mavericks to extend Dallas' losing streak to 8 games

# Wembanyama sets the tone early as Spurs hammer injury-depleted Lakers

LOS ANGELES, Feb 11, (AP) — Victor Wembanyama scored 37 of his season high-tying 40 points in the first half of the San Antonio Spurs' fifth straight victory, 136-108 over the short-handed Los Angeles Lakers.

Wembanyama had the highest-scoring first half in the NBA this season and the highest-scoring half by a Spurs player in the 21st century while going 12 of 17 from the field with three 3-pointers against a Lakers lineup missing Luka Doncic, LeBron James and Austin Reaves.

Wembanyama played only the first eight minutes of the second half with the Spurs far ahead in their 10th win in 13 games.

The French big man became the third player in the past 50 seasons to score at least 40 points while playing 27 minutes or fewer. He also had 12 rebounds.

Deandre Ayton and Marcus Smart also sat out for the Lakers on the second night of a brutal back-to-back set against the Western Conference's top two teams. Doncic and Smart are injured, while James, Reaves and Ayton are all managing health concerns.

After winning the opening tip, Wembanyama scored 17 points in the first 4:15 on 5-for-5 shooting. He had 25 points before checking out with four minutes left in the Spurs' 47-point first quarter, and he added 12 more in the second.

Carter Bryant scored a career-high



New York Knicks guard Josh Hart (3) shoots over Indiana Pacers center Micah Potter (11) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in New York. (AP)

16 points and Dylan Harper had 15 for the Spurs.

Luke Kennard and Drew Timme scored 14 points apiece for the Lakers. Bronny James had 12 points and six assists.

### Suns 120, Mavericks 111

In Phoenix, Dillon Brooks scored 23 points, Devin Booker had 19 and the Phoenix Suns beat Dallas to send the Mavericks to their eighth consecutive loss.

Naji Marshall had 31 points and

Cooper Flagg finished with 27 for Dallas, which hasn't won since beating Golden State at home on Jan. 22. It's the Mavericks' longest skid since also losing eight in a row in 2016.

Phoenix nearly led the entire game, taking a 2-1 lead on Booker's turnaround jumper with 10:01 left in the first quarter and never trailing again. The Suns led by as many as 31 points at 61-30 on their way to what appeared would be a blowout win - until the Mavericks made a game of it late.



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama (1) is defended by Los Angeles Lakers guard Luke Kennard (10) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

A putback basket by Flagg with 6:57 left cut Dallas' deficit to 108-96, and the Mavericks cut it to six at 115-109 on Marshall's floater with 2:09 remaining.

Booker made a mid-range jumper with 1:50 left and made one of two free throws to push Phoenix's advantage to nine. After P.J. Washington's driving layup for Dallas, Booker made a pullup jumper to cap the scoring and end the Mavericks' furious comeback attempt.

### Pacers 137, Knicks 134 OT

In New York, Pascal Siakam scored 30 points, Andrew Nembhard had 24 points and 10 assists and the Indiana Pacers snapped a four-game losing streak by holding off the New York Knicks with overtime victory.

The Pacers scored the first nine points of overtime and overcame a furious Knicks run over the final 24.3 seconds, during which they scored eight points in 20 seconds.

Indiana had eight players that scored

in double figures and the Pacers' bench outscored New York's 43-18.

Jalen Brunson had 40 points and had eight assists and five rebounds for New York, which dropped only its second game in its past 11 overall and seventh time in 28 home games.

### Rockets 102, Clippers 95

In Houston, Kevin Durant scored 26 points and Alperen Sengun added 22 to help the Houston Rockets to victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Houston led by six points at the start the fourth period and scored the first seven points of the quarter to extend its lead to 85-72 with 10 ½ minutes remaining. Kawhi Leonard made two free throws, but the Rockets scored the next four points to extend the lead.

The Rockets were up by 12 later in the fourth when Durant stole the ball from Brook Lopez, and Reed Sheppard made an off-balance 3-pointer to make it 92-77 with about 6 ½ minutes to go.

Houston remained up by 15 about a minute later when Los Angeles coach Tyronn Lue cleared his bench.

Leonard led the Clippers with 24 points after scoring 41 in a blowout win in December in the last meeting between the teams. Los Angeles made 20 3-pointers in that 128-108 victory, but was just 8 for 30 from long range on Tuesday.

Jabari Smith Jr. had 13 points and 11 rebounds and Amen Thompson added 16 points for the Rockets in his return after sitting out of Saturday's win over Oklahoma City because of an illness.

'Political issues will be worked through'

## Cox promises US still welcoming place as Utah prepares to host '34 Olympics

MILAN, Feb 11, (AP) — The United States is "still a very welcoming place," Utah Gov. Spencer Cox said at the Milan Cortina Olympics, which have been a focus of global concern about the country's political direction.

The Republican governor faced pointed questions from European media at a news conference in Milan to promote the 2034 Utah Winter Games, exactly eight years before the opening ceremony.

The past Olympic week in Italy saw opinions on U.S. international diplomacy and domestic politics mixed liberally into the sports.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance was booed by fans at the opening ceremony; African members of the IOC quizzed organizers of the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Games about visas for visitors; and U.S. athletes were asked about representing their country at this time - with President Donald Trump joining a backlash against them.

"We care deeply about the political situation that is happening in the United States right now," Cox said, when asked by a German reporter to compare an upbeat Olympic vision from Utah with news from the U.S. shaped by Washington.

"Those are political issues that will be worked through," the governor said, reminding that eight years until the Winter Games return to Salt Lake City is "a long ways away, for sure."

"We have elections just like your country, in Germany. We will see how those things turn out," said Cox, whose political style has been to promote civility over polarizing divisions.



In this file photo, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox speaks about Salt Lake City's bid to host the 2034 Winter Olympics, during the 142nd IOC session at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. (AP)

The governor chided the media for asking U.S. athletes questions beyond sports, while adding "I love that we get to live in a country where people get to speak their minds."

He suggested what is broadcast on the television news "isn't the only thing happening in our country."

"You will find it still a very welcoming place. We are a very welcoming country," he said. "There are some differences of opinion right now when it comes to the way that laws are being enforced. That will play out."

Cox shared the news conference with Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall and Utah Winter Games organizing officials including Sarah Hirschland, chief executive of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

Hirschland defended Hunter Hess, who Trump called a "real loser" after the freestyle skier said at a news conference he was "not the biggest fan" of all that is happening back home.

"It is important to us to ensure that anyone who is reacting to or commenting on something that someone said understands the totality and the context of what they said," Hirschland said. "I have all the confidence in the world that every member of Team USA is proud to represent our country and understands the opportunity they have to bring people together."

"We are all here for that and that's exactly what we're going to," she said. Another unpredictable element eight years out is the climate and weather for snow.

The International Olympic Committee said last week it is open to scheduling future Winter Games in January to create space for an earlier Paralympics, before temperatures rise in March.

Fraser Bullock, president of the Utah organizing committee, said the state's cold nights in January and February offer reliability.

"So regardless of the amount of precipitation we're getting, we can make snow," he said. "We will also store snow to have available from the previous year."

The current technology with thermal blankets to cover snow preserves about 70% of the stored supply from one winter to the next.

"The Olympic Games themselves should be just fine in February," Bullock said. "We have got contingency plans to cover (the Paralympics in March)."

High prices for tickets set by FIFA for the 2026 World Cup in men's soccer have reminded fans that sports events in the United States are expensive by global standards.

# Como edges Napoli on penalties to book historic Coppa semifinals spot



Freiburg goalkeeper Florian Müller looks back as shot by Hertha Berlin goes wide during the German Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Hertha Berlin and SC Freiburg in Berlin. (AP)

## Freiburg advances to German Cup last four

**NAPLES, Italy, Feb 11, (AP) — Como advanced to the semifinals of the Coppa Italia for the first time in 40 years after beating Italian champion Napoli in a penalty shootout.**

Stanislav Lobotka's sudden death spot kick was saved by Como goalkeeper Jean Butez to spark wild celebrations on the field in Naples as Cesc Fábregas' team won 7-6 in the shootout.

The game had ended 1-1 in regulation time. Martin Baturina fired Como ahead from the penalty spot in the 39th minute, but Antonio Vergara leveled just after the break.

Napoli came close to a winner when Amir Rrahmani saw a header cleared off the line in the second half.

Romelu Lukaku failed to score for Napoli earlier in the shootout and Maximiliano Perrone also missed for Como.

Napoli is a six-time winner of the Coppa Italia, most recently in 2020.

Meanwhile, Freiburg advanced to the semifinals of the German Cup after a 5-4 penalty shootout win at Hertha Berlin.

Freiburg goalkeeper Florian Müller saved Pascal Klemens' sud-

den death spot kick in the Olympiadion in Berlin to secure his team's place in the last four of the competition. Yuito Suzuki's strike had put the visitors 5-4 in front, meaning Kl-emens had to score to keep the shootout going.

After the game ended goalless in regulation time, Yuito Suzuki fired Freiburg ahead in the 96th minute. Eight minutes later the game was level again when Fabian Reese struck with a shot into the top corner.

Müller denied Michael Cuisance

earlier in the shootout, but Freiburg's Johan Manzambi then saw his spot kick saved by Hertha keeper Tjark Ernst.

Atletico Madrid and FC Barcelona meet Thursday in the second semifinal of the Copa del Rey in Madrid.

The match is a repeat of last season's semifinal, although the order of the legs is reversed. A year ago, Barcelona hosted the first leg before winning 1-0 in Madrid after a 4-4 draw in the Catalan capital.

Diego Simeone's side enters after a turbulent week. Atletico thrashed Real Betis 5-0 away to reach the quarterfinals, then fell 1-0 at home to the same opponent in La Liga on Sunday.

The defeat drew criticism of the Metropolitan pitch. With Barcelona's possession-based style, conditions on Thursday could influence the tempo, although Atletico is expected to rely on counterattacks against the league leader.

Midfielder Pablo Barrios is out with a muscle injury, while forward Julian Alvarez has not scored in La Liga in more than three months and appears out of form. Simeone will look to new signing Ademola Lookman to add pace, while Alexander Sorloth has six goals in 10 career appearances against Barcelona.

Barcelona has its own concerns. Raphinha is expected to miss out again with a groin strain, potentially clearing the way for Marcus Rashford to start alongside Lamine Yamal and Ferran Torres. Pedri remains sidelined, with Fermin Lopez likely to partner Frankie de Jong in midfield. Defender Ronald Araujo could return after recently speaking publicly about his struggles with anxiety and depression.

The return leg is scheduled for March 3 at Camp Nou in Barcelona.



Como's goalkeeper Jean Butez (1) celebrates with teammates after the Italian Cup quarterfinal soccer match against Napoli in Naples, Italy. (AP)

## De Zerbi leaves after humiliating 5-0 loss

MARSEILLE, France, Feb 11, (AP) — Marseille coach Roberto De Zerbi is leaving the French league club in the wake of a 5-0 thrashing at the hands of PSG in French soccer biggest game.

The nine-time French champions said on Wednesday that they have ended "their collaboration by mutual agreement."

The heavy loss Sunday at the Parc des Princes restored defending champion PSG's two-point lead over Lens after 21 rounds, with Marseille in fourth place after

the humiliating defeat.

De Zerbi's exit followed another embarrassing 3-0 loss at Club Brugge two weeks ago that resulted in Marseille exiting the Champions League.

De Zerbi, who had apologized to Marseille fans after the loss against bitter rival PSG, joined Marseille in 2024 after two seasons in charge at Brighton. After tightening things up tactically in Marseille during his first season, his recent choices had left many observers puzzled.

## Change of Name

I, SHAIK JOWAR ALI S/O S K SULTAN ALI, Passport No. V3747211. Having permanent address - SANPUR, MAJURAI, TARADAPADA, JAGATISINGHAPUR, PIN Code- 754103, Odisha, INDIA. Residents in Kuwait as presently in Kuwait, hereby declared that henceforth my name will be read as "SHAIKH JOHAR ALI"

# Pierre stars as TCU reels off final 12 points to upset Iowa State

FORT WORTH, Texas, Feb 11, (AP) — Jayden Pierre's 3-pointer put TCU ahead with 48 seconds left and the Horned Frogs scored the final 12 points to upset No. 5 Iowa State 62-55. Tanner Toolson had 17 points and nine rebounds off the bench for TCU (15-9, 5-6 Big 12), which earned its first victory over a top-five team since beating No. 3 Houston in January 2024. Micah Robinson also scored 17.

Pierre's pull-up 3 gave the Horned Frogs a 57-55 lead, and Xavier Edmonds stole the ball from Iowa State point guard Tamin Lipsey near midcourt on the

ensuing possession. That started a fast break, which Robinson finished with a dunk to make it 59-55 with 28 seconds remaining.

Lipsey then missed the front end of a 1-and-1 before Toolson sank three free throws to seal it.

Joshua Jefferson had 12 points, nine assists and eight rebounds for the Cyclones (21-3, 8-3), who had won five straight. Lipsey also finished with 12 points, but Iowa State went scoreless over the final 2 ½ minutes.

TCU scored 19 points off 17 Iowa State turnovers. The Cyclones appeared in control after their 10-0

run erased an eight-point TCU advantage with just under five minutes remaining. But after taking a 55-50 lead on Nate Heise's layup with 2:38 to play, Iowa State didn't score again.

Iowa State forced 15 turnovers, including five during a six-minute stretch when the Horned Frogs were held without a field goal. Robinson's dunk with 2:14 remaining snapped the 7:15 dry spell and cut the Cyclones' lead to 55-52. Pierre's hook shot pulled TCU within one with 1:35 left.

Iowa State led by nine in the first half, but TCU

went on a 10-0 run to grab a brief lead behind five points each from Robinson and Toolson. Jefferson's layup as time expired stopped the spurt and gave the Cyclones a 30-29 lead at halftime. Emanuel Sharp set the school record for career 3-pointers and finished with 27 points to lift No. 3 Houston over Utah 66-52.

Sharp made a career-high eight 3s on 8-of-13 shooting from beyond the arc to give him 277, surpassing Marcus Sasser (276 in 2019-23) for the school mark. The record-breaking 3 was a 30-foot jumper with 15:06 to play.

## SPORTS

## Farwaniya Governor highlights equestrian sport's role in Kuwait's heritage



Farwaniya Governor poses with participants.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The horse racing event kicked off at the Hunting and Equestrian Club, under the patronage and in the presence of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, as well as the management of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Racecourse.

The Governor was warmly welcomed by the Director of Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Racecourse Eid Al-Walan, the Director of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Horse Racing Club Sultan Al-Athab, and Advisor to the Hunting and Equestrian Club, Mufreh Gharib Al-Mutairi.

During his visit, the Governor toured the racecourse facilities and organizational structures, while looking into the workflow, level of readiness, and technical and administrative preparations for the races. He praised the considerable efforts exerted to ensure the success of this traditional sporting event.

He then honored the winners, commending their exceptional performance and the high level of competition that embodied the authentic spirit of horsemanship.

He stressed that equestrian sports is the

pillar of the Kuwaiti national identity and a living extension of the heritage of the forefathers. The Governor also lauded the vital role played by the Hunting and Equestrian Club in preserving its longstanding sport and strengthening its presence in Kuwait's sporting and cultural arena.

Club officials presented a commemorative plaque to the Governor in appreciation of his patronage and attendance, asserting that his support is in line with the commitment of the State to champion heritage sports and its dedication to reinforcing their status in Kuwaiti society



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah honors a winner.

## South Africa beats Afghanistan after dramatic double tiebreaker

Pakistan avenges 2024 loss to US

**AHMEDABAD, India, Feb 11, (AP):** South Africa held off Afghanistan in a dramatic double tiebreaker Wednesday at the Twenty20 World Cup, with spinner Keshav Maharaj just holding his nerve in the second Super Over.

It was one of the tightest, most seesawing matches in elite cricket's shortest international format.

Fazalhaq Farooqi's runout ended Afghanistan's chance to win it in regulation with two balls to spare, with his team finishing all out for 187 after 19.4 overs chasing South Africa's 187 for six.

That meant it had to go to a tiebreaker - the so-called Super Over. Twice.

Afghanistan posted 17 in the first Super Over and Farooqi was in position to win it again, this time with his bowling. He restricted South Africa to 11 runs with one ball remaining until Tristan Stubbs plundered a six to level the scores again.

South Africa batted first in the second tiebreaker, posting 23 with David Miller and Stubbs combining for three sixes off Azmatullah Omarzai.

Maharaj seemingly gave the 2024 T20 World Cup finalists control with a wicket and two dot balls to start the second Super Over, leaving Afghanistan needing 24 runs



Pakistan's Shadab Khan plays a shot during the T20 World Cup cricket match between Pakistan and the United States in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)

from four balls. That would usually require clearing the boundary rope four times.

Enter Rahmanullah Gurbaz. With nothing to lose, the big-hitting opener - who earlier blazed 84 from 42 deliveries as Afghanistan chased down South Africa's target - plundered three consecutive sixes to get the equation down to six runs off one delivery.

A wide from Maharaj lowered the target to 5 from one delivery, and raised the prospect of yet another tiebreaker. But the South African finished it off when he had Gurbaz caught out. It was game over.

Lungi Ngidi, who took 3-26 during the match and then bowled the first of the Super Overs for South Africa, was voted player of the match.

South Africa is 2-0 after winning its opening game over Canada. Af-

ghanistan is now 0-2 after an opening loss to New Zealand and unlikely to progress to the Super Eights from a group containing three highly-ranked teams. Only the top two teams in each of the four groups will advance.

Quinton de Kock (59) and Ryan Rickelton (61) combined in a 114-run second-wicket partnership to set South Africa on course for 187-6 after being sent in by Afghanistan.

The South Africans were 98-1 at the halfway point of the innings, with 23 runs coming off the 10th over from Noor Ahmad.

But Rashid Khan's double-wicket strike in the 13th over, removing both established batters, stemmed the flow of runs.

The South Africans added 60 in the last seven overs, and Azmatullah Omarzai returned 3-41 for Af-

ghanistan.

Afghanistan lost wickets in clumps, racing to 51 in 4.1 overs before losing three wickets within seven deliveries.

Ngidi took a pair of wickets within three deliveries with clever slower balls and Kagiso Rabada chimed in with a wicket in the sixth over as Afghanistan slipped to 52-3.

The U.S., which gave co-host India a scare in its opening game before going down by 29 runs in Mumbai, struggled against Pakistan's spinners and lost by 32 runs in Colombo. It gave Pakistan its second successive win in Group A ahead of its huge showdown with archrival India on Sunday, a match that will go ahead after Pakistan reversed its decision to boycott.

Opener Sahibzada Farhan (73) and the experienced Babar Azam (46) gave Pakistan a strong total of 190-9 despite fast bowler Shadley van Schalwyk snaring his second four-wicket haul of the tournament.

The U.S. entered the game with happy memories of its stunning win over Pakistan in Texas in 2024, but its batters couldn't get momentum against mystery spinner Usman Tariq (3-27) and leg-spinner Shadab Khan (2-26). The other two spinners, Mohammad Nawaz and Abrar Ahmed, shared two wickets.

The U.S. batters looked more at ease against the pace of Shaheen Shah Afridi, who returned 1-42 before Pakistan's tactic of deploying five spinners for the rest of the game worked well under the lights at Sinhalese Sports Club.

## Al-Qadsia and Kuwait Club secure key wins

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

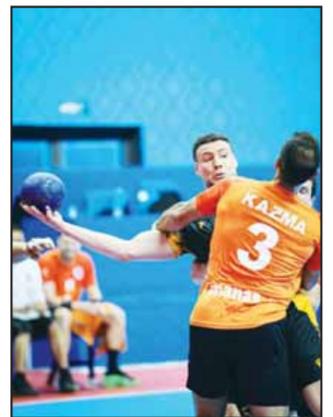
KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Al-Qadsia Club regained its momentum after a recent setback, narrowly defeating Kazma 21-20 in a tough match in the 10th round of the Handball Premier League at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall. In the same round, defending champions Kuwait Club overcame Al-Salmiya 35-27.

Following these results, Al-Qadsia moved up to fourth place with 10 points, tied on goal difference with third-placed Burgan. Meanwhile, Kuwait Club maintained its position at the top of the Premier Handball League standings with a perfect 20 points. Kazma remains second with 13 points, while Al-Salmiya dropped to seventh place with six points.

The 11th round begins next Saturday, with Al-Nasr facing Al-Salmiya and Al-Qadsia taking on Al-Arabi. On Sunday, Al-Sulaibikhat will meet Burgan, while Kuwait Club faces Kazma.

In the First Division Handball League, Yarmouk will play Qurain at 5:00 p.m., followed by Fahaheel against Khaitan at 7:00 p.m.

Khaitan leads the First Division standings



Qadsia and Kazma players fighting for the ball.

with 12 points, followed by Burgan with 10, Yarmouk with seven, the Youth National Team with five, Fahaheel with four, and Al-Sahel at the bottom with no points.

## Real Madrid and UEFA reach agreement that formally ends divisive Super League project

BRUSSELS, Feb 11, (AP): The formal end of the divisive Super League project in European soccer was signaled Wednesday with an agreement announced between Real Madrid and UEFA.

A short statement in dense legal language was published days after Barcelona formally pulled out of the Super League that left 15-titular European champion Madrid and its president Florentino Perez looking even more isolated.

Though Madrid and Barcelona won a ruling at the European Court of Justice at Luxembourg against UEFA more than two years ago, no new clubs publicly came forward to join the breakaway project which had no clear path forward.

The agreement Wednesday between Madrid, UEFA and the influential European Football Clubs group said principles were

agreed that "will also serve to resolve their legal disputes."

It was announced as European soccer leaders met in Brussels on the eve of UEFA's annual congress of 55 member federations.

The statement spoke of "months of discussions conducted in the best interests of European football" with a future principle being "the enhancement of fan experience through the use of technology."

Real Madrid was at the head of 12 Spanish, Italian and English clubs which attacked Champions League organizer UEFA in April 2021 by launching a breakaway Super League which hoped to start play with 20 teams.

The project quickly collapsed within 48 hours amid a fierce backlash in England by fans and the government which threatened legislation to protect the traditional structure of European soccer.

## Chelsea drops points in 2-2 draw against Leeds

## Sesko rescues draw for Man U at West Ham

LONDON, Feb 1, (AP): Manchester United's winning run couldn't go on forever. But a dramatic late equalizer from Benjamin Sesko rescued a 1-1 draw at West Ham in the Premier League and kept the momentum going under coach Michael Carrick.

Sesko struck in the 96th minute at the London Stadium to keep United in fourth place ahead of Chelsea, which also dropped points in a 2-2 draw against Leeds.

Tottenham was dragged closer to the relegation zone after a 2-1 loss at home to Newcastle and is now just five points ahead of 18th-place West Ham.

Carrick was moments away from his first loss as United coach as the clock ticked down at West Ham.

After four straight wins, United trailed following Tomas Soucek's goal from early in the second half.

But Carrick, who was part of so many famous comebacks as a United player, is getting used to dramatic turnarounds as a coach as well. After late winners against Arsenal and Fulham, he watched his team salvage a point through substitute Sesko.

The Slovenia international produced a brilliant flicked goal at the near post to stun the home fans and maintain Carrick's unbeaten run.

"It is those times when you aren't totally at your best that you find a way," Carrick said. "Credit to the

boys for the spirit to get a late goal when we needed it. It is a great quality to have. We'll take the point and move on."

While United battled to salvage a point, Chelsea blew a two-goal lead at home to draw with Leeds as Liam Rosenior dropped points for the first time since taking over at Stamford Bridge.

Lukas Nmecha and Noah Okafor sealed the comeback for Leeds.

Joao Pedro and Cole Palmer from the penalty spot seemed to put Rosenior on course for a fifth-

straight league win. But Chelsea was stunned by two goals in the space of six minutes from in-form Leeds and had to settle for a point.

The top four are guaranteed qualification to the Champions League, but the Premier League is likely to be given an extra spot because of the performances of English teams in Europe this season.

It increasingly looks like a battle for survival for Tottenham. The same might be said for coach Thomas Frank.

The pressure is building on Frank,



Chelsea's Malo Gusto, left, and Leeds United's Gabriel Gudmundsson battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match in London. (AP)

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Bournemouth's James Hill, left, and Everton's Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall battle for the ball in the penalty box during their English Premier League soccer match in Liverpool, England. (AP) — See Page 15

# Sports

## Abdullah highlights Kuwait's sports growth and regional partnerships



Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports speaks during the Bahrain Sports Summit.

MANAMA, Feb 11: Bashar Abdullah, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Sports, highlighted yesterday that Kuwait's participation in the Bahrain Sports Summit in Manama reflects the authority's commitment to boosting regional partnerships and learning from successful experiences to advance the national sports system and improve institutional efficiency.

Speaking at a panel titled "Sports Management" on the second day of the summit, Abdullah said the event serves as a key platform to discuss major challenges facing modern sports, including sports administration, sector investment, youth empowerment, governance, sustainability of sports facilities, and the role of sports in social and

economic development.

He emphasized that Kuwait's participation aligns with the country's strategic vision, focusing on adopting global best practices and benefiting from the experiences of sister and friendly nations. Such gatherings, he noted, create new opportunities for collaboration and help build effective partnerships to serve Kuwaiti sports.

Abdullah also stressed the authority's active involvement in summit sessions and workshops, aiming to present a comprehensive view of Kuwait's sports landscape. He highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance sports infrastructure, support federations and clubs, and develop national talent through training programs and capacity-building initiatives.

## Kuwaiti rowers make mark at 8th Arab Women's Clubs Games



The Kuwaiti rowers in action at the 8th Arab Women's Clubs Games.

SHARJAH, Feb 11: Kuwaiti national rowing team athletes Maryam Al-Ajmi and Janan Khalifwah, representing Al-Bahri Sports Club, made a historic impression at the 8th Arab Women's Clubs Games. The competition took place on the waters of Al-Hamriya Beach and was organized by the Sharjah Women's Sports Foundation under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al-Qasimi, Chairwoman of the Foundation and consort of the Ruler of Sharjah.

Emirati media outlets, including TV channels and newspapers, lauded Al-Ajmi and Khalifwah for their outstanding presence, highlighting them as exemplary Arab athletes confidently developing their technical skills and enhancing their regional competitive profile. Both athletes displayed remarkable coordination and technical harmony in a competition featuring strong participation from Arab countries with closely matched levels of skill.

The rowers emphasized that their passion for rowing and love of the sea have been the main motivators for their ongoing growth. They also noted that the supportive sports environment provided crucial opportunities to refine their skills and gain valuable experience. Their participation followed a major challenge — a fire at the club's rowing and boat storage facilities — which further inspired them to persevere and represent Kuwait with distinction.

Al-Bahri Sports Club Secretary-General Khaled Al-Foudari congratulated Al-Ajmi and Khalifwah on their exceptional achievement, praising their skill, determination, and commitment to proudly representing Kuwait at this major Arab sporting event.

## Maâloul wants Burgan fixture delayed ahead of Al-Ain clash



Nabil Maâloul directs Qadsia players from the touchline.

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: Qadsia head coach Nabil Maâloul has voiced his hope that his team's upcoming clash against Burgan in the preliminary round of the Amir Cup, scheduled for Saturday, will be postponed.

The request comes as Al-Qadsia prepares for a crucial encounter against Al-Ain of the UAE next Wednesday in the sixth and final round of Group A in the GCC Champions League. Speaking after his side's 1-0 victory over Iraq's Zakho, Maâloul said postponing the Burgan fixture would allow the team to prepare properly for the decisive trip to the UAE.

"Al-Qadsia represents Kuwait, and we hope the match will be postponed," he said, stressing the importance of adequate recovery and preparation time.

Maâloul highlighted the demanding schedule his team has faced in recent weeks, including high-profile matches against Al-Arabi and Kuwait Club in the Super Cup, as well as a league clash with Kuwait Club before the Zakho game. He noted that such intense fixtures require significant physical effort from the players.

The win over Zakho lifted Al-Qadsia to seven points in third place in the group, keeping its hopes of qualification alive. It will meet second-placed Al-Ain, who has nine points, while Zakho top the group with 10 points.

The Tunisian coach also pointed to the impact of injuries in recent weeks, which led to inconsistent performances and disappointing results. However, he added that the return of injured players and adjustments to the foreign roster have helped restore balance to the squad, praising his players for their improved displays.

## Kuwait Club and Al-Rayyan set for West Asia Volleyball Championship semifinals

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 11: The semifinals of the 4th West Asia Clubs Volleyball Championship kick off today at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall. The tournament, hosted by Kuwait Club, runs through February 14.

In the first semifinal at 3:00 p.m., hosts Kuwait Club will face defending champion Al-Rayyan of Qatar. The second semifinal, at 6:00 p.m., features a Bahraini derby on Kuwaiti soil between Dar Kulaib and Al-Ahli.



Players vie for the ball during the West Asia Volleyball Championship.

In the quarterfinals, Kuwait Club earned a 3-1 victory over Oman's Al-Seeb (25-22, 26-24, 23-25, 25-19). Al-Rayyan claimed a 3-0 win against Al-Wakrah in the all-Qatari clash, while Al-Ahli of Bahrain defeated Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad by the same score. Dar Kulaib also advanced with a 3-0 victory over Iraq's South Gas.

Under the tournament format, the top two teams from each group qualify for the quarterfinals, along with the two best third-placed teams from the three groups.

## 'Change at this point in the season is necessary'

### Tottenham fires coach after desperate EPL run

LONDON, Feb 11, (AP): Thomas Frank was fired by Tottenham on Wednesday after only eight months in charge and with his team just five points above the relegation zone in the Premier League.

Despite leading Spurs to the round of 16 in the Champions League, Frank has overseen a desperate domestic campaign. A 2-1 loss to Newcastle on Tuesday was greeted by boos from the home fans and left Spurs still without a league win in 2026.

"The Club has taken the decision to make a change in the Men's Head Coach position and Thomas Frank will leave today," Tottenham said in a statement. "Thomas was appointed in June 2025, and we have been determined to give him the time and support needed to build for the future together."

"However, results and performances have led the Board to conclude that a change at this point in the season is necessary." Frank's exit means Spurs are on the lookout for a sixth head coach in less than seven years since Mauricio Pochettino departed in 2019.

The Dane was appointed at the end of last season when

Ange Postecoglou was fired despite leading Tottenham to its first trophy in 17 years by winning the Europa League and securing Champions League qualification.

Frank had built up an impressive reputation for his work during a nine-year spell at Brentford when he established the modest London club as a Premier League force. But he was unable to repeat that success at Tottenham, where he won just seven of 26 games in the league.

Spurs' last league win was Dec. 28 and defeat at home to Newcastle extended a ruinous run to one win in 11 in England's top flight.

Spurs dropped to 16th in the standings on Tuesday and two places above the relegation zone.

Frank was not helped by an extensive injury list that included star players James Maddison, Dejan Kulusevski, Rodrigo Bentancur, Mohammed Kudus and Lucas Bergvall.

Captain Cristian Romero was also absent against Newcastle after being sent off in the previous game against Manchester United. Frank said after defeat to Newcastle that he was "convinced" he would still be in charge for the next match against Arsenal later this month.

# Von Allmen wins super-G for third Olympic gold

## US rule women's moguls

BORMIO, Italy, Feb 11, (AP): Franjo von Allmen shrugged his shoulders and gestured with his gloves to indicate that he didn't feel his run was good enough for gold. Maybe not even good enough for any medal. He playfully stuck out his tongue as well.

But it was enough. It was enough for history, too.

The 24-year-old Swiss racer joined elite ski-racing company by winning the men's super-G on Wednesday for his third Olympic gold medal of the Milan Cortina Games.

Von Allmen became the third men's Alpine ski racer to win three events at one Winter Olympics. The other two are legends of the sport, Jean-Claude Killy of France, who won three at the 1968 Grenoble Games, and Austrian Anton "Toni" Sailer, a three-time winner at the 1956 Winter Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy.

"It sounds stupid, but I'm not really interested in what's on the paper," von Allmen said of equaling records. "For me, I'm really trying to enjoy the Olympics here, and maybe in a few years it will be important for me. For now, it isn't really."

Von Allmen, the seventh racer on the course, found a fast line on snow growing softer and softer in the warming weather to finish in a time of 1 minute, 25.32 seconds. He beat American Ryan Cochran-Siegle by 0.13 seconds, while von Allmen's teammate, Marco Odermatt, captured bronze.

Regardless of conditions, he's racing at a different level in Bormio. He won the downhill on Saturday and paired with Tanguy Nef to win the inaugural team combined event Monday.

Odermatt, a four-time overall World Cup champion, added bronze to his silver in the team event. He was fourth in the downhill over the weekend.

After finishing as the 10th racer on the super-G course, Odermatt bent down and began shaking his head. He wasn't confident his time would hold up. Little did he realize the snow conditions would make it tough for anyone to take his bronze.

"The slope got slower and slower, so the guys behind didn't really have the chance to ski much faster," Odermatt said. "So that was on my side."

The Italian duo of Giovanni Franzoni and Dominik Paris — the silver and bronze downhill medalists — couldn't knock Odermatt off the podium. Franzoni took sixth while Paris was a "did not finish" after equipment issues. He was in the middle of a fast run when his right ski popped off its binding. He fell to the snow and slid to a stop before hiking back up to retrieve his ski.

"It's a bit heavy for me to accept that, but what do you do?" Paris said.

Odermatt is the reigning Olympic champion in the next event on the men's program, the giant slalom. Any chance von Allmen lobbies to compete in the Elizabeth Lemley and Jaelin Kauf won gold and silver for the United States in women's freestyle moguls skiing.

Lemley, 20, won the eight-skier final with a score of 82.30 points.

The 29-year-old Kauf repeated as silver medalist with a score of 80.77. She also won silver in 2022 in Beijing.

Perrine Laffont of France, the 2018 gold medalist, took bronze.



Switzerland's Franjo von Allmen speeds down the course during an alpine ski, men's super-G race, at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Bormio, Italy. Inset: Von Allmen, gold medalist in an alpine ski, men's super-G race, center, celebrates on the podium with silver medalist United States' Ryan Cochran Siegle, left, and bronze medalist Switzerland's Marco Odermatt. (AP)

Defending champion Jakara Anthony of Australia finished eighth after slipping on the last run of the final.

Julia Simon became the first Frenchwoman to win an Olympic gold medal in the women's 15-kilometer individual biathlon race and teammate Lou Jeanmonnot took silver. Simon missed only one target and completed the course in 41 minutes, 15 seconds. Jeanmonnot missed two and finished 53 seconds behind.

It was Simon's second gold of the Milan Cortina Games after teaming with Jeanmonnot, Eric Perrot and Quentin Fillon Maillet to win the mixed relay on Sunday. Lora Hristova of Bulgaria shot a perfect race to secure a bronze medal and upset the favorites from Italy, Germany and Sweden, who have often stood atop the podium in individual Olympic biathlon competitions. Hristova finished

1:04 behind Simon.

Vanessa Voigt of Germany finished fourth, 1:17 behind, while Dorothea Wierer of Italy was fifth, 1:33 back.

The individual event is the longest and most challenging of all biathlon race formats. Racers go out at 30-second intervals and ski a 3-kilometer loop five times, shooting in the prone and standing positions in between. Accurate shooting is critical. Instead of skiing a penalty loop for missed shots, they get one minute added to their time for each miss. All three medalists in the individual race at the 2022 Beijing Olympics have retired, but Hanna Oeberg of Sweden won gold at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games. Oeberg missed three targets on Wednesday and finished a disappointing 41st - 4:04 behind.