



Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince receive Acting PM, duty martyr Khaled Al-Sharaf's family  
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## Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince receive OCA President Sheikh Joaan



Amiri Diwan photo

HH the Amir receives President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Sunday President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and Qatar Olympic Committee Head Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al-Thani and his accompanying delegation.

Sheikh Joaan conveyed to His Highness the Amir the greetings of Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, along with wishes of good health

for His Highness and continued progress and prosperity for Kuwait and its people.

His Highness the Amir asked Sheikh Joaan to convey his greetings to the Qatari Amir, wishing him continued good health and further progress and prosperity for Qatar and its people.

His Highness also congratulated Sheikh Joaan on his election as OCA president,

commending his efforts in advancing sport at the regional and international levels.

Additionally, His Highness the Amir reiterated Kuwait's full support for OCA and relevant institutions to help strengthen the sports movement in Asia, wishing him continued success.

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Crown Prince Diwan photo

HH the Crown Prince receives President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

### Opinion

■ Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Maximizing GDP ... this is not how camels are watered

WE return again to agricultural and industrial holdings to emphasize that solutions are possible if there is a serious vision for increasing national income.

Agricultural and industrial holdings are among the most important avenues of a productive economy that can contribute to the state budget and help bridge the deficit.

If the goal of distributing farms to citizens is to enhance food security and strive for self-sufficiency, then a second goal should be to enable the owners of these holdings to earn a living from their income and prevent further losses to public funds.

Therefore, those who have utilized small plots to support their production at no cost to the state should not be penalized as if they have committed a major crime.

On the contrary, they should be supported for their innovation, as they have simply reduced the burden on public funds. Moreover, if taxes were applied to these projects, the beneficiaries would likely pay them willingly and happily.

For example, last week I visited a farm that its owner had transformed into a bird sanctuary, housing birds of every species

and equipped with facilities for a restaurant and café. The farm was visited by members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait, as well as citizens and residents. The owner bears all costs personally because he is prohibited from establishing a café, restaurant, or any other business.

There are dozens of similar cases where farms have been subject to decisions restricting their activities, and owners have been threatened with severe penalties if they attempt to launch projects that would increase their income.

In fact, these are the very people who drive the local economy.

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## Delivery theft charges dropped against expat

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The Court of Appeals overturned the Criminal Court's ruling that had sentenced an individual to three years' imprisonment with hard labor and deportation from Kuwait for allegedly stealing items from a delivery vehicle. The court instead acquitted the defendant of all charges.

The Public Prosecution had previously charged the defendant with breaking the window and lock of a delivery vehicle at night and stealing a mobile phone and cash.

The Criminal Court had sentenced the defendant in absentia to three years' imprisonment with hard labor, deportation from Kuwait, and ordered payment of KD 100 in legal fees.

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## Crescent watch set for Tuesday

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): The Sharia Vision Authority announced that it will convene at 5:30 pm on Tuesday -- the 29th of Sha'ban, 1447 AH. In a press statement, the Authority revealed that the meeting will be held at the Supreme Judicial Council headquarters to officially observe the Ramadan crescent moon.

It called on anyone who might see the Ramadan crescent to come forward and present his testimony. On this auspicious occasion, the Authority extended its heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the leadership -- 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 citizens and expatriates.



Amid swirling dust and gusty winds, Kuwait's flags stand tall along the bridge, a symbol of resilience and pride.

### Newswatch

## National exhibition highlights healthcare unity

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The 'Pride and Glory' National Exhibition opened Sunday at the Ministry of Health headquarters, under the patronage and in the presence of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, with Undersecretary

of the ministry Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi and several other ministry officials in attendance.

The exhibition participants include various health sectors, districts, hospitals, and technical, medical, administrative and support services departments, including nursing.

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## France top Schengen destination for Kuwaitis, expats

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin confirmed that France continues to rank as the leading Schengen destination for Kuwaitis and expatriates, with statistics showing sustained and strong demand for travel to the country.

During a media briefing, Ambassador Gauvin -- along with representatives of Capago, the French visa application center and the Consular Section staff in the Embassy of France -- presented the latest visa application figures. They disclosed that in 2023, the embassy handled 42,000 visa applications.

Although projections for 2024 and 2025 indicated a slight decline to about 36,000 applications per year (with an estimated 36,500 in 2025), the Ambassador explained that this reduction does not mean diminished interest in travel.

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## Art tells Ukraine's story of resilience

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: European Union (EU) Ambassador to Kuwait Anne Koistinen reaffirmed the commitment of the EU to support Ukraine.

Koistinen made the statement at the opening of the joint exhibition organized by the EU Delegation and the Ukrainian Embassy in Kuwait under the title "Strong in Our Courage: Voices of Resilience."

The exhibition marked the fourth anniversary of the beginning of the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine.

Koistinen said the exhibition sheds light on the human dimension of the Ukrainian people's courage and resilience through artworks created by Ukrainian artists who



9 India positions itself as Kuwait's next big bet



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin presents the latest visa application figures during a media briefing.

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## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 05:08 Asr ..... 15:13  
 Sunrise .. 06:28 Maghrib .. 17:37  
 Zohr ..... 12:02 Isha ..... 18:55

# Local

## Kuwait Amir, Crown Prince receive Acting PM, duty martyr Khaled Al-Sharaf's family



Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshel Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the Acting PM and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and the family of duty martyr First Undersecretary Officer Khaled Al-Sharaf.



Crown Prince Diwan photo

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the Acting PM and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and the family of duty martyr First Undersecretary Officer Khaled Al-Sharaf.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Moshel Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday at Bayan Palace, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and the family of duty martyr First Undersecretary Officer Khaled Al-Sharaf who passed away following a fire at the General Directorate of Correctional Institutions under the Ministry of Interior.

During the meeting, His Highness extended his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the family, recalling the martyr's dedication and distinguished service throughout his career at the Ministry of Interior.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received on Sunday at Bayan Palace Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and the family of duty martyr First Undersecretary Officer Khaled Al-Sharaf who passed away following a fire at the General Directorate of Correctional Institutions under the Ministry of Interior.

During the meeting, His Highness the Crown Prince extended his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the family, recalling the martyr's dedication and distinguished service throughout his career at the Ministry of Interior.

# Women opt for military, police in diversified role

Soft gender flourishes under wise leadership: Sheikha Jawaher



Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah  
 an increasing number of appointments to leadership positions.

The committee reviewed its 2025 achievements to develop mechanisms, enhance coordination among member entities, discuss future directions, review the national strat-

egy, align implementation with UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and set priorities for the year ahead.

It also discussed policies and plans for women's leadership in sports, strengthening their pioneering role, and reviewed international proposals for workshops and training programs to raise awareness of women's empowerment aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035.

The meeting also stressed marking international women's days, citing celebrations by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and an event by Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies honoring Women Judges Day.

Kuwait attaches special importance to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325, underscoring the necessity of women's full and equal participation in peace and security efforts, conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding.



KUNA photo  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikha Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in talks with the Italian Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani.

## FM meets counterparts at Germany 'security confab'

MUNICH, Feb 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikha Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Sudanese counterpart Mohieldin Salem on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Germany.

A ministry statement on Saturday said the meeting reviewed bilateral ties and ways to strengthen cooperation in various fields. It also discussed latest regional and international developments.

### Italy

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikha Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Italian deputy premier and counterpart Antonio Tajani on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference

(MSC) in Germany.

A ministry statement on Saturday said the meeting reviewed bilateral ties and ways to strengthen cooperation in various fields. It also discussed latest regional and international developments.

### Bahrain

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikha Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met with Bahraini counterpart Abdulatif Al-Zayani on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Munich, Germany.

A ministry statement said the meeting reviewed bilateral ties and ways to strengthen cooperation in various fields between the two brotherly countries. It also discussed the latest regional and international developments.



KUNA photo  
 Defense Minister Sheikha Abdullah Ali Abdulla Al-Sabah receives Chief of Staff of Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Ahmad Khalifa.

### Military ties boost eyed

Defense Minister Sheikha Abdullah Ali Abdulla Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace on Sunday Chief of Staff of Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Ahmad Khalifa and his accompanying delegation on occasion of official visit to the country.

The meeting was attended by Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army

Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Shuraian.

In a press statement, the Ministry said Sheikha Abdullah Al-Ali and Lt. Gen. Khalifa discussed key issues and topics related to military affairs and means of enhancing them between the two countries. (KUNA)



KUNA photo  
 Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem receives South Sinai's Governor Major General Khaled Mubarak on the occasion of celebrating National Days.

## Egypt & Kuwait ties model for Arab cooperation: Al-Ghanem

CAIRO, Feb 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem, affirmed on Sunday that the brotherly relations between Egypt and Kuwait serve as a model for joint Arab cooperation.

This came in a statement to KUNA following his meeting with South Sinai's Governor Major General Khaled Mubarak, at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Cairo, where the Governor offered his congratulations on the occasion of Kuwait's National Day celebrations.

Al-Ghanem expressed his appreciation for this kind gesture and for the warm sen-

timents expressed by Egyptian officials on Kuwait's National Day celebrations.

He said that the meeting addressed ways to enhance cooperation between the Kuwaiti Embassy and the South Sinai Governorate through joint initiatives and projects proposed by the Egyptian side, serving the interests of both countries and strengthening communication between their institutions.

Al-Ghanem praised the strong cooperation between Egypt and Kuwait in various fields, stressing the importance of developing tourism partnerships.

### Other Voices

## What happened, what's happening, what will happen!

### By Ahmad alsarraf

IT will take a long time before we fully understand what occurred on Little St. James Island and in the homes and yachts of Jeffrey Epstein, due to the sheer volume and complexity of the documents he kept, as well as the large number and high standing of those associated with him, even after his conviction and imprisonment for heinous crimes.

The American judicial system deserves credit for its diligence in safeguarding these documents from alteration or destruction since their seizure, despite the serious secrets and scandals they reveal that implicate members of the House of Windsor, some of the world's wealthiest individuals, as well as geniuses, philosophers, inventors, current and former heads of state, prominent politicians, and others.

It is clear that Epstein's activities on any of his properties were carried out under his strict control.

The aim was clearly not entertainment or historical documentation, but rather to use the material in the future to blackmail those involved, serving the interests of those who built Epstein's global persona, through wealth, connections, and influence, from a once obscure teacher who had not completed his studies. Such an entity cannot have honorable or legal objectives. These actions reflect a political alliance linked to Israel.

There is no dispute about the heinous criminal acts that occurred on Little St. James Island and elsewhere, exposing a vast network involved in exploiting girls and trafficking mi-

nors and adults for sex.

However, some parties have added layers of rumors and stories about alleged satanic practices, including torture, murder, drinking of blood, and even cannibalism of children.

There is no documented evidence of this to date. What is certain is that many girls, most of them minors, were forcibly or deceptively transported to the island on private planes, their movements restricted, and they were prevented from leaving freely, according to the Attorney General of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which has jurisdiction over Epstein's island.

One knows why Epstein did not destroy the documents and evidence implicating himself and hundreds of his guests and collaborators. These individuals fell into two categories. The first included celebrities, intellectuals, artists, inventors, and philosophers, who were used to attract the second group, consisting of politicians, heads of state, and high-ranking officials.

This latter group represented Epstein's primary target, so he reportedly installed hidden cameras throughout the island, in bedrooms and even bathrooms, recording meetings with these individuals to blackmail them politically or financially in the future, often on behalf of

the entity believed to be behind him, widely thought to be Israel.

From a medical and scientific perspective, many experts agree that there are no proven or tested health benefits to drinking human blood, and that the practice is extremely dangerous, both physically and psychologically.

Claims that consuming blood grants special mental powers or eternal youth are scientifically unfounded.

Some individuals, however, support the so-called "adrenochrome" theory or narrative, but each side maintains its own viewpoint.

From a scientific standpoint, this discussion may be unrelated to any actual desire for "adrenochrome."

It is strange that so many thinkers, philosophers, scientists, the extremely wealthy, and global business figures were guests of Epstein over the years. This stands in stark contrast to the staggering number of children who go missing annually due to kidnapping, running away, getting lost, or family conflict, amounting to nearly eight million. Even if 90 percent of them were returned to their families, some 800,000 children would still have an unknown fate. The United States ranks highest in missing persons, despite not being the most populous or the poorest country.

The truth about what occurred in these places, particularly on that remote island, remains largely hidden. It represents one of the most heinous crimes in modern history.

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# Municipality sets flag-raising rules ahead of National Day

No commercial use or damaged flags

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:** Kuwait Municipality issued comprehensive guidelines on Saturday regarding the correct way to raise the national flag during National Day celebrations, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Director of Public Relations and official

spokesperson for Kuwait Municipality, Muhammad Al-Sendan, emphasized the importance of following official regulations and respecting the symbolism of the Kuwaiti flag to instill national values among citizens and residents.

He stressed that the national flag should be raised quickly and lowered slowly, steadily, and respectfully,

ensuring it is clean, undamaged, and free of tears.

Al-Sendan highlighted common violations, including raising a torn or improperly displayed flag, or positioning it upside down with the black stripe on the right side of the flag-pole or the red stripe at the top.

He also stressed that the flag should never be marked with writing or drawings, touch the ground, or be displayed permanently on private

buildings.

Al-Sendan warned against using the national flag as a trademark or for advertising purposes, noting that respecting its symbolic nature is the responsibility of every citizen and resident.

He called on all residents to comply with the regulations to reflect a civilized and dignified image of the State of Kuwait during its national celebrations.

## Sheikh Athbi stresses joint government efforts

### Farwaniya Governor attends urban hygiene workshop

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:** Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi attended the first workshop of the Farwaniya Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, titled "Public Hygiene and Urban Aesthetics in the Streets, Squares, and Roads of Farwaniya Governorate" on Sunday.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the workshop was held in the presence of the Vice President of the Municipal Council and Chairman of the Farwaniya Governorate Committee, Khaled Muftah Al-Mutairi, the committee's Rapporteur Waleed Khaled Al-Dagher, and members of the Farwaniya Governorate

Committee Eng. Munira Al-Amir and Eng. Alia Al-Farsi.

Also present were the Deputy Director General for Municipal Affairs of Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorates Eng. Nawaf Al-Kandari, Director of the Hygiene and Road Occupancy Department at Farwaniya Municipality Mohammed Abdulhadi

Al-Jabaa, and several representatives from various government agencies.

The committee chairman welcomed the governor, expressing appreciation for his attendance and active participation in the workshop, and acknowledging the governorate's support for the Municipal Council's efforts to enhance service levels.

In response, Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser thanked the chairman and committee members for their efforts, emphasizing that this cooperation reflects a joint commitment to strengthening institutional integration, which contributes to developing public services and improving the quality of life in the governorate.

The workshop discussed the current state of public hygiene in Farwaniya Governorate and the level of urban aesthetics in its streets, squares, and roads.

It also discussed the responsibilities of relevant government agencies regarding waste management and the role of Kuwait Municipality in cleaning, municipal services, and oversight.



The Governor of Jahra performing the Ardha dance.



NCCAL photos

A scene from the closing ceremony.

## Jahra Cultural Season 2 concludes

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:** (KUNA): Jahra Cultural Season 2 which was organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) in cooperation with Jahra Governorate, concluded on Saturday evening following a series of diverse cultural and artistic activities.

The event was attended by a number of ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic missions from brotherly and friendly countries, in addition to a public turnout from various age groups, reflecting the event's growing cultural standing and its importance on Kuwait's cultural scene.

Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habshi said to KUNA on the sidelines of the closing ceremony that Jahra Cultural Season represented an important milestone in the governorate's cultural movement and contributed to highlighting its heritage identity.

The cooperation between the NC-

CAL and Jahra Governorate reflects the official authorities' commitment to supporting cultural activities, Al-Habshi added.

For his part, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for the Antiquities and Museums Sector at the NCCAL Mohammed bin Redha, confirmed in similar remarks to KUNA that the Council will continue to support cultural initiatives that contribute to preserving Kuwait's national heritage.

Bin Redha explained that organizing such events at one of Kuwait's most significant historic landmarks, the Red Palace, reflects the Council's direction toward utilizing heritage sites to invigorate cultural activity.

Furthermore, he expressed his sincere appreciation to Jahra Governor for his support and follow-up, which played a major role in the success of the season's events.

### Abdullah Al-Salem University, Medical Authority forge academic partnership

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

**KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:** The Abdullah Al-Salem University and Medical Liability Authority on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the University Council Hall in Khaldiyah -- a crucial step toward enhanced institutional integration and professional development.

Several officials from both sides attended the signing ceremony. Abdullah Al-Salem University Director Dr. Mona Al-Ahmad represented the university, while Medical Liability Authority Chairperson Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah represented the authority in signing the MoU, whose main objective is to establish a general framework for cooperation between the two parties.

The MoU covers the exchange of expertise, organizing training programs, supporting scientific research, and conducting joint academic activities focusing on the medical and legal aspects.

Al-Ahmad affirmed that this partnership is in line with the strategy of the university to establish an effective cooperation system with specialized national entities.

She pointed out that the agreement will contribute to the development of applied knowledge, improve the academic outputs, and support competencies.

She said the agreement is vital to linking academic programs to the professional reality, providing valuable training and research opportunities for the students and faculty members to ensure the smooth integration of theory and practice.

Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah expressed



Abdullah Al-Salem University photo  
Abdullah Al-Salem University Director Dr. Mona Al-Ahmad and Head of Medical Responsibility Authority Dr. Salman Khalifa Al-Sabah sign a memorandum of understanding that enhances institutional integration between the two parties.

his happiness over the signing of the agreement and commended the efforts of the university. He stressed that the partnership is a significant move toward strengthening integration between the academic and professional sectors. He added that the agreement will strengthen cooperation in medical and legal matters, easing the work of technical committees and research, to contribute to the development of the healthcare system.

He then expressed his hope for a fruitful long-term cooperation in the interest of the country. The MoU is valid for three years, with the possibility of renewal. It serves as the foundation for implementing joint programs and initiatives agreed on by both parties in accordance with the regulatory frameworks.

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### Kuwait Amir,

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Hamad Al-Jalahma, Director of His Highness the Amir's Office Retired Lieutenant General Jamal Mohammad Al-Theyan, Amiri Diwan Undersecretary Sheikh Abdulaziz Meshal Mubarak Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Amiri Diwan Mazen Issa Al-Issa.

Similarly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Sheikh Joaan during his official visit to Kuwait.

Sheikh Joaan conveyed the greetings and appreciation of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of Qatar, and His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Thani, Deputy Amir. His Highness the Crown Prince congratulated Sheikh Joaan on his election as OCA President, wishing him continued success in advancing the Asian sports movement.

### National exhibition

Other public entities like the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the National Guard also participated in the event -- a reflection of the unified goal and integrated roles among State institutions, reinforcing the concept of teamwork in serving the nation and citizens.

The exhibition presented a cohesive national montage, depicting the solidarity of the healthcare personnel, diversity of roles, and integration of efforts in different work locations.

This is an affirmation that the health sector

is vital to the development of the nation and an active partner in continuing achievements and enhancing the quality of life.

In a statement on this occasion, Al-Awadi affirmed that celebrating national holidays renews the commitment to work hard and draws inspiration from the values of sacrifice and dedication upon which the State of Kuwait was founded.

He pointed out that the development and modernization witnessed in the health sector are an extension of the commitment of the wise leadership to support the health system, establish sustainable health security, and realize the aspirations of the nation.

### Delivery theft

Following the ruling, the Public Prosecution appealed, seeking a harsher sentence, while the defendant filed an appeal seeking acquittal. The defendant argued that the confession attributed to him was invalid and that the case file lacked conclusive evidence to support a conviction, also requesting leniency based on the victim's waiver of rights.

Lawyer Inaam Haidar submitted a memorandum to the Court of Appeals and presented arguments emphasizing that there was insufficient evidence to convict her client.

### Visibility crashes

Winds eased relatively after midnight, and weather conditions gradually improved.

Al-Ali urged citizens and residents to follow official weather updates through the department's website, application, and social media platforms.

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One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 53.361 / Net</b>
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	<b>BHD 119.173 / Net</b>

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## Kuwait's HH Amir congratulates Republic of Serbia on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic on the occasion of his country's National Day.

His Highness wished the President long-lasting health, and Serbia and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable

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His Highness wished the President long-lasting health, and Serbia and its people further progress and prosperity.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulla Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, sent a congratulatory cable to the President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vucic on the occasion of his country's National Day.

## KU holds 2nd-chance aptitude test

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait University conducted the second-chance academic aptitude test at Sabah Al-Salem University City for a total of 8,134 students.

The comprehensive examinations covered English, Arabic and Mathematics, including assessments designed for students with special needs.

The testing process incorporated paper-based and online formats.

The exams were held in two sessions: the first from 9:00 to 11:00 am and the second from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm.

The university ensured that the testing environment was highly organized, supported by integrated administrative and technical services to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the examinations.

Senior university officials like acting Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Salili, Assistant

Vice President for Academic Affairs for Assessment and Measurement Dr. Sulaiman Ali Al-Rifai and the University President toured the facilities at Sabah Al-Salem University City for a total of 8,134 students.

They closely looked into the examination procedures, evaluated the preparedness of the halls and laboratories, and met with members of the supervisory committees to make sure that the tests were administered seamlessly and in accordance with the regulations.

The university emphasized that organizing this academic aptitude test proves its commitment to develop the assessment and measurement system.

It aims to provide a structured environment that raises operational efficiency and upholds high standards of performance. Kuwait University expressed appreciation to the committees and departments overseeing the testing centers, indicating that their dedicated efforts played a vital role in ensuring discipline, precision and the overall success of the examination process.

The Munich Security Conference concluded its 62nd session after three days of intensive discussions focusing on transatlantic relations, the war in Ukraine, and the future of the international order.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdulla Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah participated in the conference alongside world leaders, senior officials, and representatives of international organizations.

Opening discussions were dominated by concerns over strains between Europe and the United States. Conference Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger warned of what he described as erosion in the global system, while German Chancellor Friedrich Merz stressed the need to restore trust across the Atlantic, affirming that US strength is tied to cooperation with Europe.

French President Emmanuel Macron called for clearer mutual commitments between Europe and Washington, as NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte underlined Europe's growing leadership role within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

On the second day, US Secretary of

## Conference concludes with focus on Ukraine and NATO ties

## Kuwait's PM returns from Munich security talks



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdulla Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, and his accompanying delegation returned to the country Sunday after heading the State of Kuwait's delegation participating in the 62nd Munich Security Conference.

State Marco Rubio reaffirmed that US-European ties remain "inseparable," while expressing doubts about Russia's willingness to end the Ukraine war and criticizing the United Nations' performance in conflict resolution.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi responded by defending the UN as an essential platform for international cooperation and reiterated Beijing's firm stance on Taiwan.

The Ukraine war featured prominently in leaders' remarks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed readiness for a just and lasting peace, while European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen backed strengthening Europe's collective defense commitments.

In the closing session, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas called for meaningful Russian concessions to secure a sustainable ceasefire and stressed the importance of European involvement in ongoing diplomatic efforts.

On the sidelines, His Highness the Prime Minister headed a high-level Kuwaiti delegation and held several bilateral meetings with regional and international officials.

Concluding the event, Ischinger thanked over 1,000 participants, noting a strong European determination to uphold unity and shared values amid evolving global challenges.

## Continued from Page 1

### Maximizing GDP ...

These pressures are compounded by the annual rent that owners of agricultural or industrial holdings must pay on schedule. If circumstances force them to delay payments, they face hefty fines that could threaten the viability of their projects, even if they have benefited from the holdings for 30 or 50 years.

Such pressures can drive some beneficiaries into bankruptcy, whereas in most countries, land used for productive projects becomes the property of the investor.

Why not transfer ownership of all industrial and service holdings in Shuaibah and elsewhere to the beneficiaries, instead of requiring them to pay annual rent?

Taxes could be applied to the goods produced by these holdings, which would encourage trade and stimulate consumer spending.

It is well known that countries do not adopt measures that hinder the work of individuals and institutions; instead, they support and assist them in reducing the burden on the state.

Oversight in these countries is conducted solely for the benefit of all, and investors are not weighed down by excessive costs.

Budget deficits are not solved by reducing salaries, arbitrarily increasing fees, or making impulsive decisions.

Such measures drive investors and business owners out of the market, leading to a contraction of the local economy.

On the contrary, budget deficits are addressed and national output is maximized by encouraging productive and industrial projects, reducing the food import bill, and establishing modern factories, medical facilities, and educational institutions.

These initiatives stimulate production, after which the state can impose fair taxes, as is done in other countries.

### Court greenlights

In addition, the court affirmed that the legislature's authority to regulate rights is discretionary and carries a presumption of constitutionality, provided that it remains within constitutional boundaries and is aimed at serving the public interest.

The core of this authority lies in choosing the most suitable regulatory alternative to safeguard legitimate public interests—a standard the court found to have been met by the contested law.

It was also pointed out that the legislature recently enacted Decree-Law No. 78/2025, amending certain provisions of Law No. 17/1973 concerning court fees.

According to the explanatory memorandum, the main objective is to preserve the right to litigation while addressing the growing number of frivolous lawsuits.

This legislative step was prompted by the fact that more than 50 years have passed since the original Court Fees Law was enacted without amendment, despite major economic and social changes that resulted in a steady rise in the number of cases filed in courts.

A reassessment of court fees became necessary to align them with contemporary realities, without undermining the essential balance between ensuring access to justice and maintaining the efficient and orderly functioning of the judicial system.

Under this decree-law, the legislature adopted a measured and equitable increase in court fees.

This was accomplished by raising the percentages of proportional fees applied to cases of a specified value, which are collected progressively according to defined brackets, and by introducing a minimum fee.

Moreover, the fixed fee for cases of unspecified value was reviewed, and the fees for notifications, announcements, and other legal documents were also increased.

It was confirmed that the decision to increase court fees falls within the authority of the legislature to impose charges for particular services provided by a public authority to those who request them.

Such fees are levied in return for judicial services in order to compensate the State for the costs incurred in delivering those services and to promote their proper use.

In determining these fees, the legislature considered the need to strike a balance between safeguarding the right to litigation and ensuring that

the cases filed in courts are serious.

The new law regulates the procedures and conditions for exemption from court fees, ensuring that any litigant who demonstrates inability to pay may be exempted, taking into account that the burden of these fees ultimately falls on the losing party, as the one who caused the case to be filed.

This entails that the legislature established a comprehensive framework governing the assessment of court fees, detailing the method of calculation, identifying the party initially responsible for payment, and defining the scope of exemption for those who prove financial hardship.

The law also refers to the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law with respect to the mechanism for challenging the assessment of these fees and determining the party liable for payment.

It is not permissible to interpret selected provisions of this regulatory framework in isolation from the rest in a way that contradicts the overall legislative intent.

If the fees are imposed in consideration of judicial services requested, then the requesting party is required to pay the prescribed amount, which does not constitute an impediment to accessing the courts or an infringement of the guaranteed right to litigation.

Accordingly, in a recent case, the court decided—sitting in chambers—not to admit the appeal and to confiscate the guarantee.

### Art tells

documented the realities of war, including loss and displacement, as well as expressions of social solidarity and national determination.

She pointed out that the EU delivered comprehensive support packages to Ukraine, including military, humanitarian and financial assistance, in addition to support for the energy and cultural sectors.

She stressed that "it is the aggressor who must make concessions, as there is no moral equivalence between the aggressor and the victim."

She also made comparisons between Kuwait in 1990 and Ukraine in 2022, highlighting how both nations strengthened national unity, identity and sovereignty during the invasion. She reiterated the commitment of the EU to a rules-based international order and adherence to the United Nations (UN) Charter.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait Maksym Subkh said Ukraine continues to defend its freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity, indicating that the Ukrainians have shown remarkable resilience throughout the four years of war.

He called on the attendees to observe a minute of silence in memory of the civilians and children who have lost their lives since the onset of the invasion.

He praised the supportive position of Kuwait regarding the sovereignty of Ukraine and expressed gratitude for Kuwaiti assistance, particularly the provision of generators to sustain the critical electricity sector during power outages.

The event concluded with a display of photographic works by Eduard Kryzhanivsky, the official photographer of the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accompanied by a musical performance featuring compositions by Ukrainian and European composers.

The occasion conveyed a cultural message underscoring that resilience extends beyond the battlefield to encompass art, culture and national identity.

### France top

He attributed the decrease stems to the enforcement of a new European regulation introduced in 2023, which eases travel for Kuwaiti nationals by granting five-year multiple-entry visas, provided their passports meet the required validity criteria.

He stressed that this is a significant measure, as it removes the need for Kuwaiti travelers to apply for visas in successive stages—practice still required in some other countries. He said applicants are now able to receive a five-year visa in one step, on the condition that their passport remains valid for the full duration of the requested visa period plus an additional three months.

He also underscored the exceptionally low rejection rate for Kuwaiti applicants, which stands at no more than 0.2 percent. He pointed out this contrasts sharply with the anticipated overall rejection rate of about 2.6 percent for all nationalities in 2025, proving the strong level of confidence and reliability associated with Kuwaiti travelers.

Such fees are levied in return for judicial services in order to compensate the State for the costs incurred in delivering those services and to promote their proper use.

In determining these fees, the legislature considered the need to strike a balance between safe-

guarding the right to litigation and ensuring that the cases filed in courts are serious.

He clarified that these statistics apply to short-term Schengen visas, which allow stays of up to 90 days within any 180-day timeframe.

In addition, he affirmed that France warmly welcomes Kuwaiti students who want to pursue higher education through long-stay visas. He stated that students must start their application process at the Campus France Office located within the French Institute in Jabriya before moving to the final visa application stage.

He revealed that the embassy processes an average of 150 visa applications per day, indicating the number increases to as many as 300 during the peak summer season.

He acknowledged that the surge in summer applications inevitably results in extended waiting periods, with appointment scheduling potentially reaching four weeks or more and processing times extending to nearly one month.

To ease seasonal congestion and provide applicants with a smoother experience, he strongly recommended submitting applications six months ahead of the intended travel date, in line with the standard allowable application timeframe.

He also affirmed improvements in the appointment scheduling system, particularly the introduction of online prepayment. "This measure aims to reduce missed appointments and no-shows, thereby improving the management and reallocation of available appointment slots to other applicants," he added.

With regard to visas for domestic workers accompanying their employers, he clarified that eligibility is based on the nationality worker rather than that of the employer. "This visa category requires additional documentation, including a comprehensive employment contract specifying the duration of service, salary and year of employment. Applicants must also submit proof of health insurance and confirm compliance with mandatory social security contributions in France," he elaborated.

He emphasized that the authorized duration of stay for a domestic worker visa differs from that of the sponsor's visa, and strict compliance with the approved period is required, as any overstay may negatively affect future visa applications.

He stressed the necessity of applying through the country that is the primary or initial destination within the Schengen Area. "If France is the principal or longest-stay destination, the application must be lodged with the French embassy. If another Schengen country is the primary destination, the application should be filed with that country's embassy," he expounded.

He warned that failure to adhere to this requirement may result in questioning or complications upon entry, as border authorities are entitled to verify that the visa was issued by the appropriate country corresponding to the travel itinerary.

On passport renewal, he said a visa remains valid in the old passport until its expiration date. "If a new passport is issued—whether due to filled pages or any other reason—the traveler must carry both the old and new passports, since the visa is linked to the number of the old passport," he stated.

He also pointed out that two valid visas cannot be held at the same time, except in certain circumstances involving long-stay visas.

He reiterated that applications must be submitted only through the officially authorized center in coordination with the embassy. He cautioned applicants against relying on agencies or intermediaries who claim to accelerate procedures for additional fees, asserting that such claims do not influence processing times or visa decisions.

He urged applicants to ensure the accuracy of the information they provide and to assume full responsibility for their data, as inaccuracies may complicate the application file or lead to refusal.

Regarding visa issuance procedures, the ambassador emphasized that securing an appointment is mandatory, as walk-in submissions are not accepted. "Applicants are required to complete the online submission process before booking an appointment to visit the application center with all the necessary documents. Personal attendance is compulsory for biometric fingerprint collection. However, children under 12 years of age and individuals whose fingerprints have been recorded within the past 59 months are exempt from this requirement. The fingerprints of holders of five-year visas may expire before the visa itself expires, making re-registration necessary when submitting a new application," he said.

Meanwhile, Haroun Yamani, Director of Operations at Capago, announced that during Ramadan, passport collection will be from 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm, seven days a week, with possible minor adjustments to the application submission timings.

## PAM notifies staff of salary cuts via Sahel

### Delays trigger company suspension

#### KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:

**Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has started implementing a new mechanism to inform private sector employees of the reasons for and amounts of salary deductions through the Sahel app, reports Al-Rai daily.**

According to informed sources, the new service is part of measures to ensure companies comply with depositing salaries into employees' accounts and to monitor any delays or shortfalls in payments.

Immediate penalties apply to companies that fail to deposit employees' salaries, including the suspension or

temporary closure of the company's file until the issue is resolved and the required deposits are made.

Any salary deduction is automatically detected by PAM's automated system, which suspends the company's file until the reasons for the deduction are identified and clarified. The affected employee is then notified via Sahel app with details of the deduction and the reasons behind it.

The sources said PAM continues to collaborate with Sahel application to send employee notifications regarding absences and other labor-related procedures connecting employees to their companies, which enhances transparency and protects employee rights.

## Al-Safa launches 23rd relief mission

### KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15:

Al-Safa Charitable Humanitarian Society organized its 23rd relief mission under the slogan, "With Your Donation, We Help Them," to support underprivileged Syrian families in the borders between Turkiye and Syria on Feb 7-12, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Society Mohammad Al-Shayya affirmed that the Society continues its field presence to help ease the suffering of refugees and those impacted by the harsh humanitarian conditions they have endured for years.

### Announcement: Updated List of Creditors (Restructuring)

#### Sunny Side Up Restaurant Company

## INTERNATIONAL

## America

**N.Calif under winter storm watch:** As people travel for the holiday weekend, much of Northern California is under a winter storm watch, with communities bracing for several feet of snow.

The National Weather Service warned people traveling to and from the Sierra Nevada and its popular ski resorts to expect "major travel impacts" and to use "extreme caution."

But there is still time for people to get to their destinations for Presidents Day weekend.

Dakari Anderson, National Weather Service meteorologist in the Sacramento office, told The Associated Press that Saturday through Sunday morning is going to be the "best travel window" ahead of the incoming cold weather system.

While there was some snow earlier in the week, conditions remained quiet on Saturday, Anderson said. But things are expected to pick up Sunday afternoon - with communities that are situated at elevations of 3,000 to 4,000 feet (914 to 1,219 meters) expecting to be blanketed with between 1 and 2 feet (30 and 60 centimeters) of snow. (AP)

**3 killed in Colorado plane crash:** At least three people were killed in a plane crash in Steamboat Springs, US state of Colorado, on Friday morning, according to a preliminary report from the Federal Aviation Administration.

The US National Transportation Safety Board said on X that it is investigating the crash of an Epic Aircraft E1000, a single-engine, six-seat turboprop light aircraft.

The aircraft crashed near Emerald Mountain at about 12:20 a.m. local time under unknown circumstances, local media reported.

The Routt County Sheriff Doug Sherar said the coroner was working to identify the victims and notify their next of kin. (Xinhua)



Dr Gabe Lewis, a research scientist, measures snow depth and mass to calculate density and snow water equivalent at Central Sierra Snow Lab in Soda Springs, Calif on Jan 5. (AP)

**Surfers rescue 6 people:** Surfers in Santa Cruz are being lauded as heroes after they swam toward a capsized boat and pulled six injured people onto their boards until emergency crews arrived.

Droves of surfers were catching large waves Feb. 6 at Steamer Lane, a famous point along California's Central Coast, when a small motor boat barrelled by and collided with a wave, throwing two adults and four children into the water. Several of the passengers were not wearing life jackets, according to an incident report from the Santa Cruz Fire Department.

"I basically live at that beach - I'm there almost every day - and that's one of the craziest things I've seen," said Vince Tuzzi, who was filming the surfers when the boat capsized.

Tuzzi said he knew something was about to go terribly wrong when he saw the fast-moving boat out of the corner of his eye. Afterward he watched as about 10 surfers, two of them just 14 years old, got the people to safety. (AP)

**geles public school system, told Xinhua she joined the protest to honor her parents, who migrated from Mexico before she was born.**

**Tensions rose as protesters gathered outside the Metropolitan Detention Center, where ICE agents reportedly requested additional backup. Officers later moved to disperse the crowd.**

## 'Unfair and illegal detentions'

## Students in LA join protests against ICE

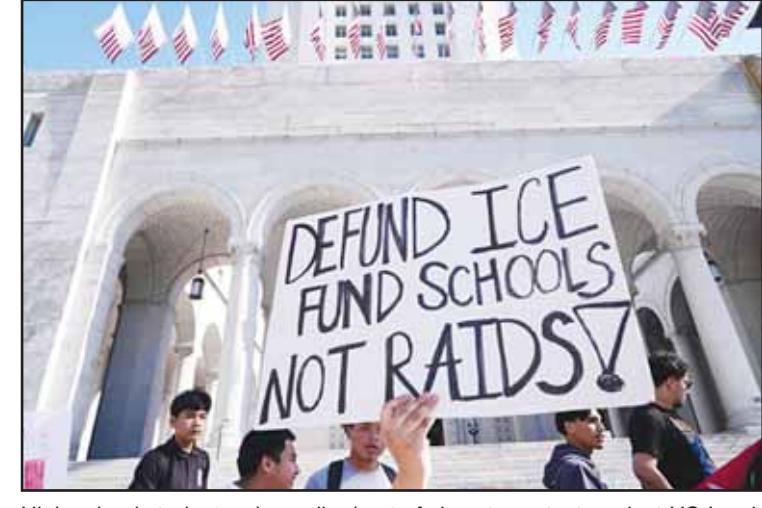
LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (Xinhua): Thousands of high school students in Los Angeles walked out of class Friday and took to the streets, marching through downtown before gathering at City Hall for a rally condemning US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies.

As they marched, students chanted "ICE out!" and denounced what they described as "unfair" and "illegal" detentions and deportations affecting friends and family members.

The walkouts were fueled by a growing number of reports, videos and personal accounts alleging excessive force, racial profiling and mistreatment by ICE officers. Many students shared their own stories, or those of relatives and peers, describing traumatic encounters with immigration enforcement in their communities and sometimes near school campuses.

The demonstrations also focused on ICE's presence at or near schools, an issue that has sparked concern in Southern California, home to a large immigrant population. Students argued that schools should remain safe spaces where all children, regardless of immigration status, feel protected.

Maria P., a student in the Los Angeles public school system, told Xinhua she joined the protest to honor her parents, who migrated from Mexico before she was born.



High school students who walked out of class to protest against US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) hold a rally outside Los Angeles City Hall as part of the nationwide Spring Surge to Melt ICE! on Feb 13. (AP)

cause of ICE's violence against innocent immigrants," she said.

Tensions rose as protesters gathered outside the Metropolitan Detention Center, where ICE agents reportedly requested additional backup. Officers later moved to disperse the crowd.

## Control of Congress at stake

## In battleground Michigan, three Democrats test vision of affordability in Senate primary

SAGINAW, Mich., Feb 15, (AP): When Donald Trump fought his way back to the White House in 2024, he capitalized on simmering economic discontent in political battlegrounds such as Michigan. Now Democrats are trying to harness those same concerns, which have lingered as people across the country lose confidence in the Republican president's ability to ease the cost of living.

The only question is how to do it. That nationwide challenge is especially urgent in Michigan, where three Democrats are running in the US Senate primary in August.

The candidates - US Rep Haley Stevens, state Sen. Mallory McMorrow and physician Abdul El-Sayed - are making different pitches to voters, and their success or failure will help determine the party's fortunes in the November midterm elections, when control of Congress is at stake.

The party's chances of winning back control of the Senate will become much harder without retaining the seat held by retiring Democratic Sen. Gary Peters.

The likely Republican nominee is Mike Rogers, a former congressman seeking a Senate seat for the second time. In 2024, he lost by 19,000 votes to Democrat Elissa Slotkin, who moved from the House to the Senate.

Wearing a welding helmet and gloves, Stevens moved in close toward flying sparks as a plumbing

apprentice showed off his welding technique at a union training workshop in Saginaw.

Her suburban Detroit district is part of the automobile hub central to Michigan's economy and workforce. She is building off her relationships with organized labor and campaigning against Trump's tariff strategy, saying the president is hurting the state's manufacturing sector and driving up prices across the board.

"He's been more focused on cutting deals all over the world than cutting deals here in Michigan, and now we have job insecurity and in some cases job loss," Stevens said in an interview.

Stevens introduced herself to students at their work stations and asked questions about their projects, such as carefully connecting pipes with tightly fitted grooves as an alternative to welding.

At one station, three apprentices showed the congresswoman paper sketches of plumbing construction designs. She told them how important their careers will be as existing infrastructure ages. She promised that she will find the money to hire people to fix it.

"We like that," said one student.

After the tour, Stevens sat around a table with union leaders. Speaking over whirring machinery, she sympathized with the complexity of providing health care benefits.

Justin Pomeroy, the business man-



This combination of photos shows Rep Haley Stevens, on Feb 6, 2025, in Washington, (left), Michigan state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, on Aug 19, 2024, in Chicago, (center), and Abdul El-Sayed in Detroit on July 28, 2018. (AP)

ager at UA Local 85, said that the "far left" and the "far right" are failing to improve things in politics, a complaint that dovetailed with Stevens' efforts to pitch herself as a moderate.

"This is why I like walking a day in people's shoes," she said.

A crowd of Democrats recently packed into a dimly lit side room of Churchill's Food & Spirits in downtown Flint. "Jesse's Girl" played over the speakers as McMorrow's team shuffled chairs to squeeze in a few more people before she took to the microphone.

The lawmaker has hosted campaign

stops at various breweries around the state. Her favorite beer is a blood orange honey ale from the Cheybogan Brewing Co.

She got into politics after Trump's victory in 2016, and she was first elected in 2018. McMorrow is in the state Senate's Democratic leadership and has gained national recognition for a few viral moments in recent years, including bringing a Project 2025 prop to the party's national convention in 2024. She is running with a new motivation this time around for the sake of her 5-year-old daughter.

"Like any parent, I am thinking a lot

about what tomorrow looks like," she said.

One of her goals is expanding a Michigan program that helps mothers with new children by giving them cash grants.

"When something's working, you expand on it," McMorrow said in an interview. "I think there's a huge opportunity where Michigan has done a lot of things right that we can ensure every American benefits from."

Karen Breasbois, a former farmer, asked McMorrow what she would do about Trump's tariffs that have hurt soybean operations. McMorrow promised to listen to rural communities, not act like a "missionary" like other Democrats from liberal urban areas.

"We need another Debbie Stabenow," Breasbois said in an interview, referencing Michigan's longtime agriculture champion in the US Senate who retired in early 2025. "Mallory, she's got that spunk."

El-Sayed, a physician and former county health official, delivered a diagnosis for the cost of living problem at a recent town hall: corporate greed.

About 100 people turned out at a community college in Detroit in late January on a brutally cold night. El-Sayed, who finished far behind the current governor, Gretchen Whitmer, in the 2018 Democratic primary for that office, led the crowd in a chant he uses

to begin and end his rallies: "Money out of politics, money in your pocket, Medicare for all."

El-Sayed has long campaigned for Medicare for all, a slogan that champions universal health care. In recent weeks, he has started adding an asterisk, saying that people should be able to obtain additional coverage from their union or employer.

The discussion at the gathering often circled back to the high cost of health care, something he chalks up to corporate entities and their lobbying powers.

"In an era where union membership is near an all-time low and in an era where inequality is near an all-time high, we have to recognize that these two things are not a coincidence, they are one in the same problem," he said from a small stage where campaign staff and volunteers filmed from multiple angles for social media.

In an interview, El-Sayed said he has been talking about the cost of living for years, while other candidates, Democrats and Republicans alike, are just now getting on board with the affordability focus.

Natalie VanGessel, a medical assistant from Royal Oak who sat in one of the first rows at the town hall, has followed El-Sayed since he ran for governor in 2018 and regularly tunes into his podcast, called America Dissected.

"He's very well thought out, very intelligent," she said. "And really, I think, has some good ideas."

## Trump's desire to obtain Greenland remains unchanged: Danish PM



People protest against US President Donald Trump's policy towards Greenland in front of US consulate in Nuuk, Greenland on Jan 17. (AP)

in the Swiss Alpine town of Davos last month.

Meanwhile, Trump also announced his decision not to follow through on his threat to impose new tariffs on eight European countries over Greenland following a meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte.

Greenland, the world's largest

island, is a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, with Copenhagen retaining control over defense and foreign policies.

Since returning to office in 2025, Trump has repeatedly expressed a desire to "obtain" Greenland, a move that has sparked backlash across Europe.

## Europeans push back at US over claim they face 'civilizational erasure'



European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas speaks during the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany on Feb 15. (AP)

It suggested that Europe is being enfeebled by its immigration policies, declining birth rates, "censorship of free speech and suppression of political opposition" and a "loss of national identities and self-confidence."

"Contrary to what some may say, woke, decadent Europe is not facing civilizational erasure," Kallas told the conference. "In fact, people still want to join our club and not just fellow Europeans," she added, saying she was told when visiting Canada last year that many people there have an interest in joining the EU.

Kallas rejected what she called "European-bashing."

"We are, you know, pushing humanity forward, trying to defend human rights and all this, which is actually bringing also prosperity for people. So that's why it's very hard for me to believe these accusations."

## Ukrainian drone strike sparks fires at Russian Black Sea port ahead of talks



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky addresses the audience during a session at the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany on Feb 14. (AP)

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in Germany on Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky suggested there were still questions remaining over future security guarantees for his country. Zelensky also questioned how the concept of a free trade zone - proposed by the US - would work in the Donbas region,

which Russia insists Kyiv must give up for peace.

He said the Americans want peace as quickly as possible and that the US team wants to sign all the agreements on Ukraine at the same time, whereas Ukraine wants guarantees for the country's future security signed first.

## 'EU and not Russia is Hungary's real threat'

BUDAPEST, Hungary, Feb 15, (AP): The real threat facing Hungary is not Russia but the European Union, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in a speech to supporters on Saturday, as his nationalist party ramps up an anti-EU campaign ahead of national elections.

With only eight weeks until the April 12 vote, Orbán and his Fidesz party are facing their most serious challenge since the right-wing populist leader retook power in 2010.

Most independent polls show Fidesz trailing the center-right Tisza party and its leader, Péter Magyar, even as Orbán has campaigned on the unsubstantiated premise that the EU would send Hungarians to their deaths in neighboring Ukraine if his party loses.

In his speech on Saturday, Orbán compared the EU to the repressive Soviet regime that dominated Hungary for over 40 years last century, and dismissed the belief of many European leaders that Russian President Vladimir Putin poses a threat to the continent's security.

## Europe

**Germany apartment fire kills 1:** An 81-year-old man was found dead and two others injured after a fire broke out in an apartment above a shopping center in the city center of Kiel, northern Germany, on Saturday evening.

The man was discovered during a fire-fighting rescue. The two others suffered minor smoke inhalation and were treated at the scene, said the Kiel police, cited by local media Kieler Nachrichten.

A police spokesperson said emergency services were alerted at around 8:10 pm local time (1910 GMT) after residents heard cries for help and noticed smoke coming from the apartment. The fire was extinguished by firefighters. The shopping center is part of a large complex of arcades, offices and apartments. (Xinhua)

**3 skiers killed in France avalanche:** Three skiers were killed on Friday after being caught in an avalanche in Val-d'Isere in France's Savoie department, local media reported. The avalanche swept away six skiers in total, four of whom were accompanied by a professional guide, French daily Le Monde reported, citing a statement released by the resort.

Despite the rapid intervention of rescue services, three victims have died, it said, adding that they were all equipped with avalanche transceivers. (Xinhua)

## INTERNATIONAL

'China willing to strengthen exchanges at various levels with Austria'

## Wang calls on Germany to become driving force for cooperation between China, Europe

MUNICH, Germany, Feb 15, (Xinhua): Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday called on Germany to become a driving force for pragmatic cooperation between China and Europe and an anchor of stability for the strategic relationship between the two sides.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the appeal when meeting here with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

Wang conveyed cordial greetings of the Chinese leadership to Merz, and said the Chancellor's speech Friday at the opening ceremony of the Munich Security Conference reflects Germany and Europe's aspiration for strategic autonomy as well as self-reliance and strength. China supports Germany in playing a greater role in this regard, he said.

All initiatives proposed and all actions taken by China on the international stage are meant to uphold the international system with the United Nations (UN) at its core, Wang said.

noting that although the UN's authority and status have been weakened, its important status remains irreplaceable. The Global Governance Initiative proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping is aimed at revitalizing the UN and building a more just and equitable global governance system, he said.

China and Germany should demonstrate the responsibility of major countries and make new contributions to world peace and development, Wang said.

Noting that China and Germany share extensive common interests and have strong complementary advantages, and strengthening cooperation is a strategic choice based on the practical needs of both countries, Wang said China's commitment to high-level opening-up will provide tremendous opportunities for German companies to invest and operate, hoping that Germany will also provide a more fair and equitable business environment for Chinese companies.

Wang said China stands ready to



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, holds a trilateral meeting with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadehul and French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barot in Munich, Germany on Feb 13. (AP)

work with Germany to prepare for the next stage of high-level exchanges, strengthen pragmatic cooperation in

various fields, explore trilateral cooperation, and elevate the China-Germany all-round strategic partnership to a

new level.

For his part, Merz asked Wang to convey his sincere greetings to the Chinese leadership. Noting China's globally recognized remarkable achievements in development, Merz said that the country plays a pivotal role internationally.

Germany and China enjoy close economic and trade relations, and both are beneficiaries and supporters of economic globalization, he said, calling on the two sides to seize opportunities, tap potential and deepen cooperation. Germany consistently opposes protectionism, advocates free trade, and encourages German companies to increase investment and cooperation in China, Merz noted.

Germany adheres to the one-China policy and looks forward to close high-level exchanges with China, strengthening cooperation in various fields, and promoting greater development of Germany-China relations, he added.

China is willing to strengthen exchanges at various levels and enhance mutually beneficial cooperation with

Austria, Wang Yi said on Friday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks while meeting with Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Beate Meinl-Riesinger on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

The world is changing rapidly and should be getting better, not worse, said Wang, noting that it is now the time for countries to strengthen solidarity and cooperation, to jointly safeguard the authority of the United Nations, and to practice genuine multilateralism.

Urging all countries to work together to build a community with a shared future for humanity, Wang also voiced China's support for Europe in pursuing a path of strategic autonomy and contributing to building a safer, more harmonious and fairer world. Austria, as a European country with unique advantages, is believed to make new contributions in this regard, he said.

## Asia

**Cambodia vows to eradicate online scams:** Cambodia is committed to eliminating online scam networks by April 2026, as more than 7,000 online scam suspects have been deported so far, said a spokesperson on Friday.

The Southeast Asian country has launched an unprecedented nationwide crackdown on cyber scam networks to maintain social security, safety, and public order, and to restore the kingdom's image on the international stage.

The government "has set a deadline to completely eradicate online scam networks in Cambodia by April 2026," Ministry of Interior Spokesperson Touch Sokhak said in a press briefing.

He said that since 2025 to date, the kingdom has expelled 7,657 online scam suspects back to their birth countries.

Of them, more than 5,500 were deported throughout 2025, and over 2,000 were expelled in just over a month in 2026, he added. (Xinhua)



Sokhak

**Japan stabbing kills 1, suspect flees:** A 17-year-old boy was killed, and two other boys were injured after they were stabbed in central Osaka, western Japan, late Saturday, local media reported.

The police received an emergency call around 11:55 pm

local time reporting that people had been stabbed on the first floor of a building located in Osaka's busy Dotombori shopping area, Kyodo News reported, citing the Osaka police.

A young man suspected of carrying out the stabbings in the downtown area with many eateries has fled on foot and remains at large, the report said.

The deceased victim from Nara Prefecture sustained stab wounds to the chest and other areas and was pronounced dead at the scene, while the two other 17-year-old boys were taken to hospital with injuries, according to police.

The attacker, believed to be in his twenties, knew the three victims, and they had a dispute shortly before the attack, police said. (Xinhua)

□ □ □

**1 dead, 3 hospitalized in Sydney stabbings:** One person has died and three others have been hospitalized following three separate stabbing incidents in western Sydney on Sunday.

Police in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said in a statement that emergency services were called to reports of a stabbing at a residence in Lethbridge Park, about 40 km west of central Sydney, shortly before 2 pm year-old man was treated by ambulance paramedics but died at the scene.

A second man, aged 25, was also treated for stab wounds and stable condition after being found with multiple stab wounds in a vehicle in Hoxton Park, about 33 km west of central Sydney, shortly after midnight. (Xinhua)

It followed two separate stabbing attacks in western Sydney in the early hours of Sunday, Australia's 9News network reported.

A man aged in his 20s was taken to the hospital in a serious but stable condition after being found with multiple stab wounds in a vehicle in Hoxton Park, about 33 km west of central Sydney, shortly after midnight. (Xinhua)



Lawmakers vote on an amnesty bill at the National Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela on Feb 12. (AP)

## Venezuelan prisoners families stage hunger strike demanding liberation of dissidents

CARACAS, Venezuela, Feb 15, (AP): Relatives of Venezuelan prisoners went on hunger strike on Saturday to demand the freedom of their loved ones as politicians in the South American nation debate an amnesty law for dissidents imprisoned under President Nicolas Maduro's rule.

In a message posted on Instagram, the Committee for the Freedom of Political Prisoners said the hunger strike is being staged by 10 people and would last until the government frees all 33 political prisoners still being held at a prison known as Zona 7, according to the civil society group's estimates.

Earlier on Saturday 17 prisoners were released from the Zona 7 detention center in Caracas and held tearful reunions with their families.

Relatives of dissidents being held at the facility have been sleeping outside since Jan 8, when Venezuelan officials had announced there would be significant prisoner releases aimed at promoting national reconciliation following a US raid on the country in which Maduro was captured with his wife.

But while hundreds of dissidents have been released from other prisons in Venezuela in recent weeks, liberations at Zona 7 have been scarce.

"We demand that National Assembly president Jorge Rodriguez keep his word and release all of the political prisoners," said Yessy Orozco, the daughter of a former legislator who was arrested in November.

Venezuela's authoritarian government has been under pressure from Washington to make political reforms even as the Trump administration eases sanctions on the nation's oil industry and officials from both nations meet to discuss ways to jump start oil production.

The National Assembly, which is still controlled by the ruling party, on Thursday debated a measure that could free hundreds of opposition members,

soon as it takes place it will be better not only for Venezuelans but also for the region and the United States," said Machado, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December.

She did not provide a date for when elections should be held, arguing that depended on "political conditions." Trump administration officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have also expressed their desire for new elections in Venezuela, but have so far refrained from laying out a time frame.

Machado rejected suggestions made by some analysts that chaos would break out in Venezuela if the current government is replaced.

"We have a civil society that is cohesive, united, with no religious, racial or regional factions," she said. "And we have the support of the majority of the armed forces."

Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez proposed the bill.

The bill's latest draft defines its purpose as "granting a general and full amnesty for crimes or offenses committed" during specific periods since 1999 that were marked by politically-driven conflicts in Venezuela, including the "act of politically motivated violence" in the context of the 2024 presidential election.

Ruling party loyalists declared Machado the winner of that election despite ample credible evidence to the contrary. That led to protests and the arrest of more than 2,000 people.

General amnesty has long been a central demand of Venezuela's opposition and human rights organizations, but they have viewed the proposal with cautious optimism and raised several concerns about how it will be implemented and who will be eligible for release.

Venezuela-based prisoners' rights group Foro Penal estimates more than 600 people are in custody for political reasons.

Lawmakers vote on an amnesty bill at the National Assembly in Caracas, Venezuela on Feb 12. (AP)

activists and human rights defenders who have been detained for months or years for political reasons.

The debate in itself was a stark turn for Venezuela, where authorities have for decades denied the country has any political prisoners.

Although lawmakers approved portions of the measure, they ultimately voted to suspend the session to resolve some sticking points, including whether people who left the country to avoid detention can be granted amnesty.

The debate is expected to resume next week.

Venezuela's exiled opposition leader, Maria Corina Machado, said on Saturday that she will continue to push for new elections to be held in the country as part of a transition to democracy.

She was speaking via video conference to a group of policy analysts who had attended the Munich Security Conference, an annual event that is attended by world leaders.

"A transition to democracy will be orderly, it will be peaceful, and as

## At least 6,000 killed over 3 days during RSF attack on Sudan's el-Fasher: UN

CAIRO, Feb 15, (AP): More than 6,000 people were killed in over three days when a Sudanese paramilitary group unleashed "a wave of intense violence ... shocking in its scale and brutality" in Sudan's Darfur region in late October, according to the United Nations.

The Rapid Support Forces' offensive to capture the city of el-Fasher included widespread atrocities that amount to war crimes and possible crimes against humanity, the U.N. Human Rights Office said in a report released on Friday.

"The wanton violations that were perpetrated by the RSF and allied Arab militia in the final offensive on el-Fasher underscore that persistent impunity fuels continued cycles of violence," said U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk.

The RSF and their allied Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, overran el-Fasher, the Sudanese army's only remaining stronghold in Darfur, on Oct. 26 and rampaged through the city and its surroundings after more than 18 months of siege.

The 29-page U.N. report detailed a set of atrocities that ranged from mass killings and summary executions, sexual violence, abductions for ransom, torture and ill-treatment to detention and disappearances. In many cases, the attacks were ethnicity-motivated,

it said.

The RSF did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

The paramilitaries' Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo has previously acknowledged abuses by his fighters, but disputed the scale of atrocities.

The alleged atrocities in el-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur, mirror a pattern of RSF conduct in its war against the Sudanese military. The war began in April 2023 when a power struggle between the two sides

exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum and elsewhere across the country.

The conflict created the world's largest humanitarian crisis with parts of the country pushed into famine. It has also been marked by heinous atrocities which the International Criminal Court said it was investigating as war crimes and crimes against humanity. The RSF was also accused by the Biden administration of carrying out genocide in the ongoing war.

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'Bring back the king'

## Thousands rally in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nepal, Feb 15, (AP): Thousands of supporters of Nepal's former king gathered outside Kathmandu airport Friday to greet him and demand the restoration of abolished monarchy in the Himalayan nation.

Gyanendra Shah waved to the cheering crowd from the sunroof of his car as hundreds of police officers in riot gear struggled to control the supporters crowding the main entrance at Tribhuvan International Airport.

"Bring back the king. We love our king more than our own selves. Restore constitutional monarchy," the crowd chanted.

More supporters lined the route from the airport to the former king's private residence. The crowds were peaceful and no arrests were made.

The former king was returning from a trip to eastern Nepal.

Massive street protests in 2006 forced Gyanendra to give up his authoritarian rule, and two years later the parliament voted to abolish the monarchy as Gyanendra left the Royal Palace to live the life of a commoner.

An estimated 10,000 supporters turned out for a similar rally last year at the airport. Another pro-royal rally last year had turned violent leaving two dead and many injured.

Gyanendra has not commented on the calls for the return of monarchy. Despite growing support for the former king, Gyanendra has slim chances of immediately returning to power as the support is not as significant as that for other political parties opposing the idea.

The show of support for the monarchy comes ahead of crucial parliament elections next month. Pro-Gyanendra groups, which won about 5% of seats in the last election, are hoping to win seats.



Former King Gyanendra Shah receives flowers from supporters upon his arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal on Feb 13. (AP)

## Pakistan ex-PM Khan to get treatment after partial vision loss, says minister

ISLAMABAD, Feb 15, (AP): Pakistan's imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan will undergo treatment for an eye condition at a specialized medical facility, a Cabinet minister said Saturday, days after the Supreme Court ordered a medical evaluation amid growing concerns about his eyesight.

Information Minister Attullah Tarar wrote on X that an examination would be conducted by leading eye specialists as part of Khan's ongoing treatment which began in late January after Khan reported a partial loss of vision in his right eye.

The minister did not say at which medical facility and when Khan would be treated.

"A detailed report will also be submitted to the Supreme Court. Conjecture, speculations and efforts to turn this into political rhetoric and mileage for vested interests may please be avoided," Tarar said.

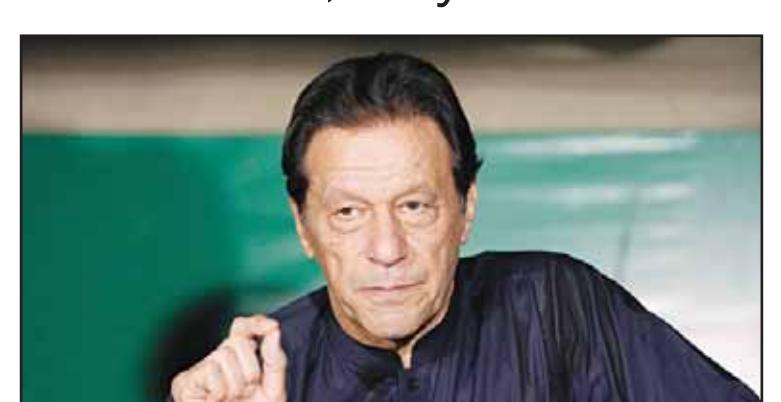
Earlier this week, Khan's lawyer, Salman Safdar, told the Supreme Court that the former premier had lost roughly 85% of vision in his right eye. The court subsequently directed authorities to arrange a medical assessment by a panel of doctors and facilitate a tel-

ephone call between Khan, 73, and his sons before Feb 16.

Supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI, have staged protests in Islamabad and other cities, demanding he be moved from prison to a hospital for specialized treatment. Some of the lawmakers from

PTI and its allies are also staging a sit-in outside the parliament.

Khan's family angrily responded to Tarar's announcement, saying it had not been consulted before he was taken for treatment and has called for family members and his personal physician to be present during any future procedures.



Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan gives a press conference at his home, in Lahore, Pakistan, on May 18, 2023. (AP)

## Boursa Kuwait ends session lower

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15, (KUNA): The Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Sunday in negative territory, as the general market index fell by 44.52 points, or 0.51 percent, to settle at 8,659.34 points. Trading activity saw 171.2 million shares exchanged through 12,086

transactions, totaling a value of KD 51.14 million (around USD 156 million).

The Main Market Index dropped 24.58 points (0.30%) to 8,058.45 points, with 67.8 million shares traded through 4,934 deals, worth KD 11.3 million (USD 34.4 million).

Supported by strong fundamentals across the region

## Markaz sees continued momentum in GCC real estate positive outlook for H1

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" has released its latest Real Estate Outlook: H1 2026" report, offering a comprehensive analysis of real estate market performance across the key real estate sectors in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The report provides an in-depth review of sector activity during H2 2025 and outlines expectations for the first half of 2026. It highlights that real estate markets across the region demonstrated upward momentum in H2 2025, supported by steady economic growth, easing monetary conditions, and a more accommodative interest rate environment. Building on this trend, Markaz expects the GCC real estate market to remain in an accelerating phase in H1 2026.

Furthermore, higher oil production, growth in the non-oil economy, continued government spending on infrastructure and development projects, along with policy rate cuts, are expected to improve liquidity and credit growth. These factors support borrowing and investment activity across residential, commercial, and industrial real estate segments.

### Kuwait: Stability with Selective Upside

Kuwait's real estate sector maintained a stable growth trajectory through the first nine months of 2025, supported by rising land prices and rental rates across Istimari (investment) and commercial segments. Land prices increased on an annual basis across governorates, while rental rates in the investment segment recorded steady gains.

Real estate transaction activity strengthened in three quarters of 2025, with total real estate sales rising by 26.9% year-on-year to KD 3,043 million, driven by growth across all segments. Investment segment sales increased by 60.0% year-on-year, while residential and commercial segment sales rose by 8.0% and 17.4% respectively. Transaction volumes grew by 27.8% year-on-year to 4,247, supported by increased activity across residential, investment, and commercial properties.

Looking ahead, Kuwait's real GDP is projected to grow by 3.9% year-on-year in 2026, driven by higher oil production, improved non-oil activity, stronger project awards, and anticipated interest rate reductions. These factors are expected to support demand for commercial and industrial real estate.

Based on macroeconomic indicators and a Markaz Real Estate Macro Index score of 3.45 out of 5.0, Markaz expects Kuwait's real estate market to remain stable in H1 2026, with prospects for increases in land prices and rental rates.

### Saudi Arabia: Acceleration Continues

Saudi Arabia's real estate sector remained in an accelerating phase in H2 2025, driven by strong residential activity and tight office market conditions. Residential transactions increased by 17.9% quarter-on-quarter in Q3 2025, with Riyadh and Jeddah leading price gains, while developers continued to accelerate supply through gigaprojects and premium residential developments.

The office segment remained highly constrained, with vacancy in Riyadh at near-zero levels (0.5%), supporting prime rent growth of 7.3% year-on-year. Demand was underpinned by the Regional Headquarters Program and

expanding activity in healthcare and technology sectors.

While the fiscal deficit widened to 3.7% of GDP in 2025 and is expected to remain at similar levels in 2026, increased capital expenditure under Vision 2030 is anticipated to support construction activity, sustaining demand across commercial and residential segments. Population growth continues to underpin housing demand, with Saudi Arabia's population reaching 35.3 million by mid-2024, up 4.7% year-on-year, with non-Saudis accounting for 44.4% of the total.

Based on these trends, Markaz believes Saudi Arabia's real estate market remains in the accelerating phase and is expected to sustain momentum in H1 2026, signaling stable market conditions with room for further gains for investors.

### UAE: Strong Performance with Signs of Peaking

The UAE real estate market recorded strong performance during the first three quarters of 2025. In Dubai, real estate transaction values increased by 28.3% year-on-year to AED 554.1 billion, while Abu Dhabi recorded total real estate sales of AED 58 billion, reflecting a 75.8% year-on-year increase. The number of transactions in Abu Dhabi also rose by 42.3% year-on-year to 15,800.

The UAE continues to offer attractive rental yields compared to global peers. As of June 2025, rental yields in Dubai stood at 7.47%, marginally lower than the previous month but well above yields in major global markets such as Singapore (3%), New York (5.8%), and London (3.3%).

Although Dubai's annual sales values have consistently outperformed the previous year over the past three years, concerns regarding sustainability have emerged. Markaz notes that the current growth cycle is supported by strong fundamentals, reducing the likelihood of a sharp correction. However, a period of moderation or cooling is expected over the medium term. Nonetheless, Markaz forecasts that the UAE real estate market could peak in H1 2026, marked by steady growth in prices and rental rates in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Despite evolving macroeconomic dynamics, GCC real estate markets are expected to sustain momentum in H1 2026. Markaz believes real estate will remain a key contributor to the region's economic development, offering attractive opportunities for investors across residential, commercial, and industrial segments.

### About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

Established in 1974, Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C "Markaz" is one of the leading asset management and investment banking institutions in the MENA region with total assets under management of over KD 1.52 billion (USD 4.98 billion) as of 31 December 2025. Markaz was listed on the Boursa Kuwait in 1997. Over the years, Markaz has pioneered innovation through the creation of new investment channels. These channels enjoy unique characteristics, and they have helped Markaz widen investors' horizons. Examples include Mumtaz (the first domestic mutual fund), MREF (the first real estate investment fund in Kuwait), Forisa Financial Fund (the first options market maker in the GCC since 2005), and the GCC Momentum Fund (the first passive fund of its kind in Kuwait and across GCC that follows the momentum methodology), all conceptualized, established, and managed by Markaz.

# Business

## Aimed at embedding these values into all Group HR practices

### NBK launches Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council

#### Najla Al-Sager:



Najla Al-Sager

- The DEI Council serves a compass guiding the Bank in recruitment, development, and recognition policies to ensure equal opportunities.
- The Council is comprised of 11 members from NBK Group's officials across its various markets in which it operates.
- This reflects NBK's leading role in adopting the best human resources practices regionally and globally.
- The DEI Council should empower employees to express their opinions and actively participate in developing the work environment.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: In line with its commitment to adopting the best governance practices and establishing a diverse work environment, National Bank of Kuwait launched the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, with the aim of setting a sustainable institutional framework to incorporate these values into all human resources practices, ensuring equal opportunities under a fair work environment that transforms diversity into a source of strength and creativity.

This step reflects NBK's continued commitment to building a more balanced and inclusive work environment for all its employees across the different departments and job levels within the Bank. Moreover, creating this Council is a step that is clearly consistent with NBK's direction towards promoting a corporate culture that embraces diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences, strengthens the organization, drives innovation, and allows the Bank, together with its international branches and subsidiaries, to better serve the community and all its stakeholders.

In December 2024, NBK launched its official DEI Commitment Statement announcing its commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and affirming that it holds these values as fundamental pillars on which its corporate culture stands. The commitment statement embodies the Bank's dedication to establishing a work environment based on justice and equal opportunities, rejecting all forms of discrimination, and aligning its policies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), specifically SDG 5: Gender Equality and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. These SDGs focus on promoting gender equality, reducing inequalities, and supporting decent work and economic growth, as well as incorporating these principles into the practices of Talent Management to ensure a productive, fair, and sustainable work environment.

that supports the Bank's long-term vision for institutional development.

Moreover, the DEI Council is a part of NBK's leading journey in adopting the best human resources practices at the regional and global level, and an important shift in promoting the active participation of employees, ensuring fair opportunities, and developing policies and initiatives that support the inclusion of all groups within the work environment.

The Council held its first meeting on January 27, 2026, where it began working on developing clear measurement mechanisms and accurate performance indicators to monitor and disclose progress in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, thereby enhancing transparency and highlighting the Bank's commitment to achieving tangible results in this area.

The Council is comprised of 11 members from NBK Group's officials across its various markets in which it operates, including Kuwait, Singapore, Bahrain, KSA and London, reflecting the inclusiveness of representation and the diversity of expertise within the group.

Additionally, this Council will enable employees to express their opinions and actively participate in developing the work environment, and it will also focus on supporting women in leadership, empowering national talent, creating safe spaces for dialogue and the exchange of ideas, and adopting initiatives that promote openness and diversity in the workplace.

The council will also come up with new policies and advanced training programs, as well as launching awareness and cultural initiatives aimed at raising awareness of diversity and inclusion. Moreover, it will support work teams in building an environment based on respect for difference and stimulating creativity. In this way, the Council will enhance the role of employees in shaping the future of the Bank's internal culture, through

specialized working committees that include representatives from various departments.

On this occasion, Najla Al-Sager, Head of Talent Management and Learning at NBK, commented: "The establishment of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council comes within the framework of our strategy aimed at promoting a work environment based on justice and equal opportunities, to serve as a compass that guides our policies and decisions related to employment, development and recognition".

Al-Sager emphasized that NBK made significant progress in diversity and inclusion over the past years, whether in empowering women, supporting national talents, or developing training programs aimed at promoting a culture of inclusive leadership, highlighting some of the indicators recorded by the Bank during 2025, where the percentage of women in the total workforce reached 42.5%, while women in leadership roles reached 27.4%, and new recruitments of women reached 34.5% of the total workforce.

Finally, she added: "In recent years, we introduced many innovative initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion, most notably the NBK Rise program, which is the first initiative of its kind in Kuwait, specifically designed to support and empower women leaders to reach the highest leadership positions, which has won many regional and international awards".

It is worth noting that NBK is strongly committed to empowering women across the entire Group and increasing their presence in leadership positions by providing appropriate guidance and opportunities for career development. The Bank also collaborates with leading universities and training centers around the world to provide specialized programs and workshops aimed at developing female leaders and equipping them with tools and techniques that help them in the field of leadership.

Company honored winners of the 3rd Kuwait National Robotics Championship

## Zain Kuwait's investment in youth is shaping tomorrow's digital & knowledge economy



Al-Khashti delivers Zain's speech.



A group photo of the organizers and winners.



Dr. Al-Jalahma and Al-Khashti honor the winners of Zain's 'Innovation Nation' Award.



Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma honors Waleed Al-Khashti, joined by Dr. Dina Al-Mailam and Nasser Al-Sheikh.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Through a third consecutive strategic partnership with the Kuwait National Robotics Championship (KNRC), Zain Kuwait reaffirms its ongoing commitment to supporting high-impact initiatives that develop young people's digital skills and empower them to lead the future with confidence. This is achieved by providing practical, applied learning platforms that help prepare national talent to keep pace with the requirements of the digital and knowledge economy.

Zain took part in the closing ceremony hosted at the Conference Center at Sabah Al-Salem University City, attended by H.E. Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma, President of Kuwait University Dr. Dina Al-Mailam, Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Youth, Nasser Al-Sheikh, and Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait Waleed Al-Khashti. Al-Khashti joined the ceremony to honor the winners and announced the recipient of Zain's Innovation Nation Award, recognizing the team whose project best integrated innovation with sustainability.

KNRC was jointly organized by Kuwait University, the Public Authority for Youth, and the Ministry of Education, in strategic partnership with Zain Kuwait, reflecting an integrated model that brings together the education sector, the youth sector, and the private sector in service of Kuwait's future.

During the closing ceremony, Waleed Al-Khashti said: "We remain committed to investing in young people and developing national talent ready to lead the digital and knowledge economy. By empowering a generation confident in its technical capabilities, Zain is advancing sustainable development through innovation and digital solutions."

He added: "KNRC is among the most prominent national platforms combining applied learning, experimentation, and teamwork. It has contributed to developing analytical thinking, problem-solving, programming, and engineering prototyping skills, which we see as essential foundations for building national talent that can lead the future with confidence. For this reason, we present the annual 'Innovation Nation' Award, offered by Zain each

year to the team that best integrates innovation and sustainability into science and technology applications."

Al-Khashti concluded: "Our strategic partnership with the championship continues to stand out in its third year. Through close collaboration with various national institutions, we have shared the technology passion of more than 700 students across different educational stages. This represents a successful model of cross-sector integration in ser-

vice of Kuwait's future and aligns with Zain's direction of investing in human capital and supporting applied learning pathways."

KNRC is one of Kuwait's largest national platforms encouraging school and university students to innovate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). It runs through a series of progressive stages throughout the season, combining hands-on learning, technological experimentation, and teamwork, thereby devel-

oping participants' capabilities in analytical thinking, problem-solving, engineering prototyping, and programming.

The current season also featured a range of accompanying events and activities, including specialized competitions, training tracks, workshops, and scientific camps aimed at increasing students' readiness for regional and global competitions. This included the hosting of competitive qualifiers at the Scientific Center recently, with broad participation

from teams across different age groups.

This ongoing partnership aligns with Zain's approach to investing in human capital and supporting applied learning pathways, helping build a generation that is confident in its technical abilities and able to contribute to achieving the goals of Kuwait Vision 2035 through innovation and the development of digital solutions that serve society and enhance its competitiveness.

## Explainer: Who really pays Trump's tariffs?

WASHINGTON, Feb 15. (Xinhua): When U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled his sweeping tariff package in 2017, he framed it as a cost to be borne by foreign exporters and governments.

Ten months later, the tariffs remain in force. By September 2025, the trade-weighted statutory rate had climbed to roughly 27 percent -- the highest level in nearly a century -- though the effective rate paid by importers was closer to 14 percent, according to a working paper by the U.S. National Bureau of Economic Research.

The central question is no longer what was promised, but who ultimately pays.

### Legal liability for tariffs

Under U.S. law, tariffs are collected at the border by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Legal liability rests with the importer of record -- typically a U.S.-based company bringing goods into the country. Foreign governments are not billed, and overseas exporters are not required to remit duties directly to Washington.

Legal responsibility, however, does not determine who bears the economic burden. Economists describe this as "tariff incidence" -- how the cost of a tariff is divided between foreign exporters and domestic importers. If exporters lower their prices to offset the duty, they absorb part of the burden; if export prices remain largely unchanged, the burden falls on the U.S. importers.

A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that nearly 90 percent of the tariffs' economic impact fell domestically. During the first eight months of 2017, the share reached 94 percent, before easing to 86 percent in November.

In an article published in the Chicago Booth Review, researchers analyzing U.S. official data estimated that 94 percent of the tariffs were passed along to U.S. importers in 2017. In the 10 sectors facing the largest tariff increases, pass-through rates reached as high as 114 percent.

Other independent analyses drew similar conclusions. The U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that foreign exporters would absorb only about 5 percent of the cost, and Germany's Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW) in January calculated a tariff pass-through rate of 96 percent.

"In terms of who's paying for more of it, it's disproportionately, almost entirely so far, on the U.S. side," said Brent Neiman, a professor at the University of Chicago.

### From importers to consumers

As the burden has largely remained within the United States, the next question is how it has been distributed domestically.

According to the CBO, in the near term, "U.S. businesses will absorb 30 percent of the import price increases by reducing their profit margins; the remaining 70 percent will be passed through to consumers by raising prices."

Corporate disclosures provide additional insights. An analysis by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy noted that companies across several industries in the United States have told investors they intend to pass tariff-related costs on to consumers through higher prices.

During a recent earnings call, agricultural equipment manufacturer John Deere said its tariff-related expenses are expected to double from 600 million U.S. dollars in 2017 to 1.2 billion dollars in 2018. Executives told investors they plan to adjust prices accordingly.

Similarly, ITT Inc., a manufacturer of transportation and industrial components, told investors at a December conference that price

increases were implemented in response to tariffs, adding that "the customer is taking care of tariffs."

Newell Brands, a consumer products manufacturer, said in a December presentation that it increased prices "early and pretty aggressively" in response to tariff pressures.

According to the Budget Lab at Yale (TBL), the combined effect of the 2017 tariffs would raise overall prices by about 1.3 percent in the near term, translating into an average household income loss of roughly 1,800 dollars.

The burden is not evenly distributed: goods such as metals, leather and apparel could see much sharper adjustments, with initial price spikes of 28 to 40 percent before moderating to increases of 10 to 14 percent over time.

For U.S. consumers, the impact of higher import costs is felt most directly in everyday purchases.

Grocery prices have remained elevated even after the Trump administration exempted certain food and agricultural imports from its reciprocal tariff program in November. Beef is up 15 percent from a year earlier, while coffee costs have risen 18 percent, according to Axios.

Amid persistent price pressures, the Conference Board reported that U.S. consumer confidence fell in January to its lowest level in nearly 12 years.

The Wall Street Journal described the current environment as "a triple whammy" -- inflation, labor-market concerns and tariffs, noting that some interviewees doubted that the new tariffs would achieve much beyond raising prices.

"Everything is going up in price very quickly," Jeremy Tolbert, a 47-year-old web developer in Lawrence, Kansas, told CBS News.

### Government gains from family losses

When U.S. families face higher costs due to tariffs, the U.S. government gains more revenue.

According to the Financial Times, the tariffs have brought in 124 billion dollars for the federal government so far this fiscal year, more than triple the same period a year earlier. If Trump's 2017 tariffs remained in place, the TBL estimated that they would raise more than 2.5 trillion dollars over the next 10 years.

However, rather than transferring wealth from foreign countries to the United States, tariffs function much like a consumption tax -- shifting money from U.S. consumers to the U.S. Treasury, the IfW concluded. The TBL further highlighted the regressive nature of the tariffs, finding that the lowest income decile faces more than three times the short-run burden of the highest decile.

As for the economy, the CBO reported that inflation will be higher over the next three years than previously expected because of tariffs, and that tariffs will "continue to weigh on growth by raising the cost of imported goods, reducing investment from abroad, and lowering the efficiency of the U.S. economy."

U.S. supply chains will bear the costs as well. Companies relying on imported inputs face higher costs. The IfW warned that they must either absorb these costs by reducing profits and investment, pass them to customers by raising prices for downstream buyers, or scramble to find alternative sources, potentially incurring adjustment costs and delays.

"The tariffs are, in the most literal sense, an own goal. Americans are footing the bill," said the IfW.

## Strategic trust key to investment surge: Kathuria

# India positions itself as Kuwait's next big bet

By Chaitali B. Roy  
Special to the Arab Times

As global trade fractures, supply chains realign, and geopolitical tensions redraw economic partnerships, India is positioning itself not merely as a survivor but as an alternative growth engine for the world. It was against this backdrop that Dr. Rajat Kathuria, Senior Visiting Professor at ICRER, former Director and Chief Executive of the institution, and Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Shiv Nadar University visited Kuwait to deliver a keynote lecture as part of the 'Viksit Bharat 2047: India-Kuwait Dialogues', organised by the Indian Embassy in collaboration with the Indian Business & Professional Council (IBPC).

The theme of his lecture focused on India's resilience amid global disruptions, emerging trade realignments, and investment opportunities in one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. Addressing policymakers, business leaders and members of the Indian diaspora, Dr. Kathuria examined how India has sustained 7-8% growth despite global slowdown, tariff wars and geopolitical uncertainty. With over 20 years in academia and 25 years in economic policy alongside assignments with the World Bank, ILO, UNCTAD and ADB, Dr. Kathuria brought a blend of policy insight and global perspective to the discussion.

In an exclusive interview with Arab Times, he spoke about India's services-driven growth model, the strategic advantage of its 1.4 billion-strong domestic market, the acceleration of trade partnerships with Europe and beyond, and the structural reforms needed to make India a competitive manufacturing hub. He also outlined concrete opportunities for Kuwaiti investors in infrastructure, capital markets, manufacturing and emerging sectors while cautioning against inward-looking economic policies. His message to Kuwait was direct and strategic: this is a moment of global realignment, and India offers not just growth, but partnership.

**Arab Times:** India has been growing at approximately 7.8%, according to Prime Minister Modi's statement in the first quarter of this year. Many major economies are growing more slowly than India is. Why has India grown faster than most countries during a global economic slowdown?

**Dr. Kathuria:** I think one must look at this in at least two ways. First, we are not only one of the largest economies in the world but will soon become the third largest. Our population is also very large. If you multiply our per capita income of roughly \$2,500-\$2,700 by 1.4 billion people, you get a very large number.

Our economy is large relative to that of the rest of the world, but our per capita income remains relatively low. We are large, which is good, but this is only the start of a process. Our size must be seen in context. Therefore, growth of 7-7.5% or even 8% is essentially about meeting our needs and aspirations.

One explanation is the logic of arithmetic. We are still a relatively poor country, and emerging markets tend to grow rapidly. So that partly explains our growth. Secondly, we are growing rapidly because we have a very large domestic market -- 1.4 billion people. Approximately 50% of our growth is attributable to consumption. Some comes from investment, but consumption plays a major role. On the demand side, we have consumption, investment, and exports. On the production side, our services sector has been very robust. Services account for approximately 60% of our GDP. If that 60% grows at 9%, then 9 x 0.6 gives you 5.4%. So, 5.4% out of a 7-8% GDP growth is already contributed by services. That is what drives India's growth. However, we need to do better if we want to become a truly large economy. The two reasons are: the arithmetic of being a large yet poor country, and the strong growth of the services sector.

**AT:** Your topic was global disruptions and challenges, and how India is managing to hold its own. If we speak of the war in Ukraine, rising prices have affected the world. How has India managed rising prices while maintaining economic growth?

**Dr. Kathuria:** One important point today is that the difference between nominal GDP and real GDP is historically low. The difference between nominal and real GDP essentially reflects inflation, as measured by the GDP deflator. It is growing at only about 0.5%, indicating very low inflation. We are at historically low inflation rates for several reasons. One reason is that industrial manufacturing no longer has strong pricing power. Oil prices, despite domestic taxes, are relatively low globally. We have been importing oil at historically low global prices, around \$30-\$40 per barrel at certain times. Prices remain high domestically due to taxes. But the import price of oil has not been increasing. The stability of oil prices is helping to keep inflation under control. If oil prices rise to \$60 and we do not reduce taxes, inflation will rise.

Another factor is agricultural output. We had a strong agricultural year, and expectations are that output will remain strong. When agricultural output is strong, food prices remain stable, and expectations of price rises are lower. Low inflation is both good and concerning. It is good because food prices are under control and oil prices are stable. But low inflation can also reflect weak pricing power in the industry. Right now, although the economy is growing, industries lack strong pricing power.

One complicating factor is China's huge excess



Dr. Rajat Kathuria delivers a keynote lecture as part of the 'Viksit Bharat 2047: India-Kuwait Dialogues'.

capacity. Many countries are adopting a "China + 1" strategy, leading to excess capacity in China. Even if that excess capacity is not directly dumped into India, the expectation is that it could affect pricing decisions in India.

**AT:** India is currently the fastest-growing large economy in the world. Does this make India a natural competitor to China?

**Dr. Kathuria:** Yes. India offers today what China offered 15-20 years ago — a large domestic market that absorbs imports and exports to the world. Investment opportunities exist in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, sports goods, and medical equipment, as well as sunrise sectors like cloud services, data services, mobile manufacturing, electronics components, and even semiconductor manufacturing. Traditional sectors such as chemicals also offer opportunities.

You can think of India as having two parts: Bharat and India. Bharat represents rural India, encompassing agriculture, food processing, fisheries, and the primary sector. India is a globally competitive economy that produces CEOs of global companies and competes in technology, FMCG, film, and other sectors.

**AT:** Regarding Kuwaiti investment in India, the government has increased spending on roads, railways, airports, and other infrastructure, sustaining strong growth even during difficult times. Do you see foreign companies or countries with economic strength, such as Kuwait, finding opportunities in India's infrastructure sector?

**Dr. Kathuria:** I think the interest from Kuwait has to go beyond the traditional areas of oil and the diaspora. Those are important, but it has to expand further. In my less than two days here, I have observed that Kuwait has an appetite for investment but lacks adequate conduits. The kind of handholding and trust between India and Kuwait has not been deeply entrenched. To answer your question, yes, there are opportunities.

From what I understand, some Kuwaiti funds invest in India indirectly via U.S.-based funds. They do not directly invest in India. However, there are many opportunities for them to invest directly in India, even if they do not want to build manufacturing units like Samsung or other large corporations, as the Japanese did with Suzuki or as Nokia did. If they do not want to establish physical factories, they can invest in the stock market. There are infrastructure bonds and investment trusts that offer attractive returns. However, direct exposure to India still seems limited. Look at CDPQ, the Canadian pension fund, or Macquarie, the Australian pension fund. They are investing directly in India and have been receiving good returns. If a Canadian pension fund, subject to its investors' regulatory requirements, can invest in India, what is preventing Kuwait from doing so?

**AT:** India and Kuwait have a longstanding relationship, but the two countries need to strengthen economic trust to accelerate investment.

**Dr. Kathuria:** Yes, we have not built that level of trust. I have not personally experienced it, but it is a rational and justifiable argument. What has been the dominant image of Indians in Kuwait? Primarily blue-collar workers. That shapes perceptions. It is similar to what used to happen in America. When I was there, Indians were often associated with petrol pumps or low-skilled jobs. Now it has changed 360 degrees. I believe part of the hesitation is stereotyping and perception. There needs to be greater direct engagement and better understanding between the two countries.

**AT:** This recent trade deal with the USA — things are a little grey, aren't they? The recent issues with tariffs - Has it cast a shadow on India-US image as great friends?

**Dr. Kathuria:** I think there has been a lot of positive fallout from the back-and-forth between Mr

AT: Given the increasing use of economic sanctions and tariffs as political tools, should India focus more on self-reliance?

**Dr. Kathuria:** Self-sufficiency is a discredited doctrine for India. We tried that approach in the past. To become a developed country and raise per capita income to \$8,000-\$9,000, India must engage with the world. External engagement brings investment, technology, skills, and competition. We cannot produce everything ourselves. However, we must calibrate our engagement and prepare for risks. The recent India-EU engagement reflects a commitment to a rules-based order. India should insure itself against uncertainty but not turn inward. No country can develop in isolation.

The regional investment powerhouse earns praise for its leadership and consistent performance across asset classes

## Kamco Invest recognized by Forbes Middle East among top asset managers in the Middle East for 2026

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, was recognized among top asset managers in the Middle East by Forbes Middle East for 2026. The award ceremony was held in Abu Dhabi on the sidelines of the Top Advisors & Investors Summit, a gathering that brought together senior leaders, decision-makers, and experts from across the regional and global financial community.

The award was received by Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of Kamco Invest, in recognition of the Company's continued excellence and leadership in asset management across the Middle East.

Kamco Invest has assets under management of USD16.5bn invested in various jurisdictions and asset classes including listed equities, fixed income, private equity, and real estate, amongst others. The Company has built a strong track record in asset management, with a diverse range of investment strategies designed to deliver long-term value for clients. The Company's regional strategies continue to rank among the top performers, across both country-specific mandates in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as well as broader regional investment strategies.

Furthermore, the investment banking team has also played a pivotal role in executing major capital market transactions across the region. The team has successfully led and managed 14 debt capital market transactions in 2025 totaling USD7.0bn. The transactions consisted of thirteen sukuk and bond issuances for financial institutions and corporates in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar in addition to one liquidity management transaction for a Kuwaiti company.

The Company's success is driven by the talent and commitment of its investment professionals, who continuously analyze market dynamics, identify opportuni-



Faisal Mansour Sarkhou receiving the award from Forbes Middle East.

ties, and implement innovative solutions to meet clients' evolving needs.

Commenting on this recognition, Sarkhou said, "This

ment in strengthening the firm's position as a leading regional powerhouse in asset management and investment banking, underpinned by a disciplined investment approach, strong governance, and a continued focus on delivering long-term value to clients."

He added, "Our clients continue to adopt a long-term investment mindset, recognizing that periods of market uncertainty often present attractive opportunities, particularly for investors with available liquidity. Across the region, investors are becoming more sophisticated and increasingly informed, with a growing shift toward thematic investing and well-diversified portfolio strategies."

This evolution in investors' needs is underscored by the rising prominence of fixed income as a core asset class, alongside the growing emphasis on constructing well-balanced portfolios, where diversification plays a central role in navigating market dynamics with resilience and discipline.

Sarkhou concluded, "We remain firmly focused on continuously strengthening our capabilities and expanding our client offerings through strategic partnerships with leading international asset managers. These collaborations enhance our ability to deliver differentiated solutions and global expertise tailored to our clients' evolving needs. Most recently, our strategic partnership with PGIM, concluded earlier this month, represents another important milestone in this journey. We will continue to pursue partnerships that reinforce our long-term vision and create sustainable value for our clients."

Kamco Invest remains dedicated to expanding its market presence, enhancing its investment offerings, and continuing to serve clients with excellence. It acknowledges this achievement as a shared success, made possible by the expertise, dedication, and teamwork of its professionals.

# What's On

## SPOTLIGHT



For the 14th consecutive year

### Kuwait Finance House organizes Quran Memorization & Recitation Competition

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the launch of its 14th annual Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition, dedicated to children and youth, and the receiving of applications for those wishing to participate during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

The contest affirms KFH's social role and its keenness to promote Islamic values within the community, in addition to encouraging individual to recite and memorize the Holy Quran.

Executive Manager Social Media and PR Services Center at KFH, Abdullah Al-Saif, said that the contest encourages the discovery of talents in Tajweed, recitation, and memorization of the Holy Quran. "It motivates the current generation to read and memorize the Holy Quran, while also clarifying some of the rules of Tajweed." He also noted that the contest will be broadcast on KFH's social media channels with extensive media coverage from various outlets.

He added: "Having been launched 14 years ago, the contest is the oldest and the largest of its kind in Kuwait in terms of prizes value, with over 10,000 participants so far. It is part of KFH's integrated Ramadan program, demonstrating the Bank's commitment to its social responsibilities and aligning with the



#### Al-Saif:

■ The contest affirms the Bank's social role and aligns with the core values of Ramadan

core values of Ramadan, a time for Quranic reflection and recitation."

Al-Saif further noted that registration for the contest will be available through several modern digital channels to facilitate participation and accommodate the recurring high annual demand. Participants will be categorized into age groups, and according to recitation and memorization sections.

He pointed out that the contest has earned growing trust among Quran reciters year after year, supported by appreciation for KFH as the first bank to initiate such initiative, in addition to the presence of several valuable elements that enhance competitiveness and motivate participants. These include a distinguished judging panel of esteemed scholars, as well as well-structured organization tailored to the varying abilities, age groups, and recitation levels.

Al-Saif revealed that the contest is organized separately for

male and female participants. "It includes awards for approximately 40 winners, with prizes distributed to those selected from among the applicants at the conclusion of the contest.

Participants will memorize or recite specific verses from designated sections, as determined by the judging panel." Another contest is being held for KFH employees, with valuable prizes for 30 winners, as clarified by Al-Saif.

Further to Iftar campaigns and mosque hospitality to sports events, public engagement, and Iftar meals distribution, KFH's Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan program offers a diverse range of community initiatives, showcasing its dedication to social responsibility. The program also encompasses daily competitions, Gergean events, awareness videos and sharing Iftar with many entities that perform their duty during Iftar time, as well as distributing Ramadan Basket, affirming KFH's leadership in social responsibility.

### Initiative bridges Kerala's startup ecosystem

### PPF Kuwait hosts TRANSCEND 2026 to promote Kerala startup investments

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait hosted its Annual General Body Meeting followed by TRANSCEND 2026 on Friday, 6 February 2026, at Park Inn by Radisson, Mahboula, positioning the event as a platform for cross-border dialogue on startup development and investment opportunities in Kerala.

A key highlight of TRANSCEND 2026 was an interactive talk session featuring Mr. Anoop Ambika, CEO of Kerala State Startup Mission (KSUM), and Mr. Kashif Sayed, cross-border investment expert representing the Indian Business Promotion Council (IBPC) Kuwait. The session was moderated by Mr. Prasanth Warrier, former President of PPF Kuwait.

The discussion examined Kerala's startup ecosystem through an investor and institution lens, covering policy frameworks, incubation and acceleration models, governance standards, and practical pathways for engaging with startups from the state. The dialogue also addressed challenges associated with scaling ventures and accessing global markets.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Anoop Ambika, CEO of Kerala State Startup Mission, said:

"TRANSCEND 2026, organized by Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait, is a strategic thought leadership and networking initiative designed to bridge the gap between the expatriate professional community in the GCC region and the evolving economic landscape of Kerala by acting as a knowledge bridge. TRANSCEND fosters Kerala's entrepreneurial ecosystem by strengthening cross-border investment, mentorship, global expertise, institutional collaboration, networking, and reverse brain drain."

Mr. Anoop Ambika also outlined KSUM's role in supporting early-stage



Photo during the event.

ventures, enabling innovation-led enterprises, and facilitating collaboration between startups, industry, and institutions. From an investor perspective, Mr. Kashif Sayed emphasized the importance of governance, predictability, and execution discipline in investment decision-making, noting that funding follows transparent systems and credible operating frameworks rather than ambition alone.

The session further highlighted areas where startups from Kerala are seeking mentorship, strategic partnerships, and capital support, and the role of cross-border platforms in connecting founders with international investors. Speakers underlined the importance of regulatory clarity, institutional maturity, and long-term policy consistency in attracting sustainable investment.

Mr. Suresh K. P., Secretary of the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC), speaking of the event, noted that such initiatives play an important role in connecting Indian states with the global business community.

"Kerala today offers a compelling investment narrative, supported by infrastructure-led growth, policy-driven facilitation, and a vibrant innovation ecosystem. Platforms like TRAN-

SCEND enable investors and professionals to gain first-hand insights and explore structured opportunities aligned with Kerala's development vision," he said.

He also appreciated the efforts of Progressive Professional Forum (PPF) Kuwait in showcasing business opportunities in Kerala and highlighted the state's strong talent pool, startup-friendly policies, advanced digital infrastructure, and proactive government initiatives, which together position Kerala as an attractive destination for entrepreneurs and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

Kerala's startup and investment ecosystem is currently focused on sectors such as IT and digital services, healthcare and life sciences, manufacturing and engineering, clean energy and sustainability, agritech, tourism and hospitality, and emerging deep-tech areas supported by research institutions and academic partnerships. Through initiatives such as TRANSCEND, PPF Kuwait continues to position itself as a thought-leadership platform for informed dialogue on professional skill development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and cross-border investment, strengthening engagement between the Indian diaspora and institutional stakeholders in Kerala.



Photo during the event.

### TEF-Kuwait conducts its 2nd technical event

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: As part of the TEF-Kuwait 2026 event series, the Technical Seminar on Advanced Pump Technologies was successfully organized on 04 February 2026 at Safr Hotel, Fintas. The seminar brought together industry professionals for an enriching technical knowledge-sharing experience.

TEF-Kuwait was pleased to host an expert panel from M/s. Celeros Flow Technology, along with their local sponsor, CANAR TRADING & Contracting Company, who jointly shared their extensive expertise in pump technologies. The technical sessions focused on specialized pump topics from both Original Equipment and After market perspectives, offering valuable insights for professionals involved in pump design, operation, and maintenance.

The program commenced with participant registration, followed by an inaugural session that included Tamil Thai Vaazthu, a Safety Moment, Thirukkural, and a Welcome Address. The event was smoothly anchored by Mr. Krishnan Nivas and Mrs.

Nithya, ensuring a well-structured and engaging flow throughout the evening.

The technical program began with an introductory address by Mrs. Viji Menon, Sales Director, who provided a comprehensive company overview, setting the context for the technical discussions that followed.

The first technical presentation was delivered by Mr. Scott McAllister, Pump Product Manager and Mr. Gowri Shankar, Regional Sales Manager, on High Energy Pumps and CO2 Injection Pumps, covering design considerations, operational challenges, and performance requirements.

Following the first technical session, the presenters were recognized for their valuable contributions with a token of memento presented by Former TEF President Mr. Raja, Mr. P. P. Muthu, Operations Manager – Golden Palm Petroleum Services, TEF-Kuwait President Mr. Rajendrakannan, and General Secretary Mr. Agnel Stanley Charles.

The seminar continued with the second technical

presentation by Mr. Scott Callum, Techno-Commercial Lead (Pump Upgrades and Re-rates) and Mr. Sanji Das, Regional Sales Manager, who discussed pump upgrades and re-rates, highlighting practical solutions, operational experiences, and lifecycle optimization strategies.

After the second technical session, the presenters were felicitated with mementos by TEF-Kuwait Vice President Mr. Raghuraman and Mr. Saravanan, Supply Chain Manager – MECC, along with TEF-Kuwait President Mr. Rajendrakannan and General Secretary Mr. Agnel Stanley Charles, in appreciation of their contributions. The event also featured a Vote of Thanks, followed by dinner and networking, providing attendees an opportunity to connect, exchange ideas, and strengthen professional relationships.

This 2nd Technical Seminar conducted as the 3rd event of TEF-Kuwait for the year 2026, was well received and reaffirmed TEF-Kuwait's commitment to technical excellence, industry collaboration, and continuous professional development.



Waldorf Astoria Kuwait

program, the hotel reinforces its commitment to social responsibility and sustainability through the "Green Ramadan" initiative, aimed at reducing food waste and promoting responsible consumption. In this context, an agreement has been signed with the Nemati initiative, under the sponsorship of Boubyan Bank, to manage the daily collection and distribution of surplus food with support from the bank's volunteers. Waldorf Astoria Kuwait also will collaborate with Hefz Al Nema Association and Al-Najaat Charity to collect food and non-food donations, ensuring their efficient and sustainable management while maximizing community impact. These efforts are further sup-

### Waldorf Astoria Kuwait launches refined Ramadan experience blending gastronomy, wellness, & purpose

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Waldorf Astoria Kuwait invites guests to immerse themselves in an exceptional Ramadan experience that honours the spirit of the Holy Month while celebrating togetherness, generosity, and meaningful connection, all within an atmosphere of refined luxury and world-class standards. From the starlit Kubbar Tent and thoughtfully curated culinary offerings, to exclusive dessert creations, restorative spa rituals, and purpose-driven community initiatives, the hotel presents a distinguished season that reflects the true essence of Ramadan hospitality.

At the heart of the experience is the open-air Kubbar Tent, an enchanting destination inspired by the natural beauty of Kubbar Island. Accommodating up to 330 guests, the tent provides a serene yet elegant setting for Iftar and Ghayra beneath the stars, complemented by subtle live Ramadan-themed entertainment. The Kubbar Tent is proudly sponsored by Al Babtain Infiniti and Ali Bin Ali, whose partnership enhances the elevated ambience and guest experience, reflecting a shared commitment to excellence and meaningful seasonal engagement.

Guests are invited to embark on a rich culinary journey that brings together Middle Eastern traditions and global flavours. Lavish buffet selections feature cold and hot mezze, vibrant salads, premium seafood, sushi, and an array of live cooking stations, including shawarma, falafel, pasta, tandoori breads, Turkish specialties, and whole lamb ouzi. The experience concludes with an indulgent dessert showcase offering live kunafa, artisanal ice cream, traditional Arabic sweets, and international confections, accompanied by signature Ramadan juices and beverages.

For those wishing to enjoy the Waldorf Astoria experience at home, the hotel also offers takeaway Iftar boxes and a refined Ramadan chocolate collection inspired by traditional flavours such as saffron, pistachio kunafa, Arabic coffee, and dates.

Throughout the holy month, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait presents an exclusive collection of signature Ramadan cakes, crafted especially for the season and available at Peacock Alley. The collection includes distinctive creations such as Moonlight Delight, Golden Suhoor, Eternal Iftar, and Sweet Crescent, each reflecting refined flavours and elegant, innovative design.

For moments of reflection and renewal, the hotel's award-winning Wellness Spa introduces a curated selection of Ramadan Spa Rituals, thoughtfully designed to nurture both body and mind. Highlights include the signature 24K AMRA Gold Hammam Journey, an indulgent experience combining purifying steam, gold-infused treatments, and a personalised massage using AMRA luxury skincare products, renowned for their high-performance natural formulations. Available throughout Ramadan, these rituals offer a serene escape rooted in well-being and refinement, with exclusive retail privileges allowing guests to extend their wellness journey beyond the spa.

In alignment with the goals of Hilton's Travel with Purpose 2030

ported through the adoption of the "Recipe of Change" campaign, launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to reduce food waste and promote resource sustainability, in addition to local sourcing practices and innovative solutions such as live, made-to-order bread stations.

"We warmly invite our guests and the wider community to experience Ramadan at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait. Throughout the holy month, we have curated a range of dining, wellness, family, and community offerings designed to be enjoyed together in an atmosphere of elegance and warmth. We look forward to welcoming everyone to share in the spirit of Ramadan and celebrate the joyful moments of Eid Al-Fitr with us", on behalf of the General Manager of the hotel, Mr. Saleh Al Bataineh.

#### About Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts

Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts is an award-winning portfolio of 36 iconic properties, each embodying a distinct sense of place through sincerely elegant service, one-of-a-kind experiences, and culinary mastery in landmark destinations around the world. Waldorf Astoria New York is now open, marking a defining moment for the brand, reintroducing a legend while ushering in a new era of luxury. Inspired by their timeless environments, Waldorf Astoria hotels deliver an effortless experience seamlessly, creating a true sense of place for guests through stunning architecture, the famous Peacock Alley, refined art collections, Michelin-starred dining and elevated in-room amenities. In addition to the brand's world-class hotel offerings, Waldorf Astoria boasts a global residential portfolio that provides the comfort of a private home combined with unsurpassed amenities and high-touch service. Waldorf Astoria is part of Hilton, a leading global hospitality company. Experience an unforgettable stay at Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts by booking at [waldorfastoria.com](http://waldorfastoria.com) or through the industry-leading Hilton Honors app. Hilton Honors members who book directly through preferred Hilton channels have access to instant benefits. Learn more about Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts at [stories.hilton.com/waldorfastoria](http://stories.hilton.com/waldorfastoria), and follow the brand on X and Instagram.

#### About Mabanee

Mabanee is a leading Kuwaiti shareholding company and real estate developer with a paid-up capital of 110.5 million Kuwaiti dinars. Listed under the real estate sector in the Kuwait Stock Exchange since 1999 and the Premier Market Index in Borsa Kuwait, as well as part of the prestigious MSCI Index, the company has several projects in the GCC and continues to expand. For more information, please visit [www.mabanee.com](http://www.mabanee.com).

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# Features

ARAB TIMES  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2026

## 'Brat' singer takes a delightful detour into new territory

### Charli xcx broods on 'Wuthering Heights' soundtrack

LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (AP): Charli xcx's soundtrack for Emerald Fennell's adaptation of Emily Brontë's "Wuthering Heights" is a brooding collection approximating some image of gothic romanticism.

Its enjoyable if not revelatory 12 tracks are a collaboration with songwriters and producers Finn Keane and Justin Raisen, and her first full-length album since the zeitgeist-shaping "Brat."

It is not the role of every film soundtrack to function as a standalone album, though Charli has said that was her ambition here. In the midst of her "Brat" summer two years ago, she worked on "Wuthering Heights," delighted to detour into different territory.

But how different is it in ethos? There's a shared spirit of deep devotion and infatuation, surely, in both "Brat" and Brontë's "Wuthering Heights," and a shared sexuality in Charli and Fennell's art - people wear corsets to nightclubs these days. Instrumentation might be the big-

gest distinction; here, Charli uses strings arrangements for the first time, often for propulsion, like on the anxious "Seeing Things."

The rave work might have been put to the side, but Charli's signatures remain throughout: auto-tuned vocals, unexpected production, shackled and resonant pop hooks.

They are everywhere on "Wuthering Heights," from the previously released singles like "Wall of Sound" - no Phil Spector here - and the spacey ballad "Chains of Love," with its echoes of Taylor Swift, to the electro-pop "My Reminder" and an underutilized Sky Ferreira on "Eyes of the World." The last is their first collaboration since 2019's "Cross You Out" and samples English rock band Wolf Alice's "Don't Delete the Kisses."

It's likely that Charli has a great industrial record in her, evidenced by the first song released for the sound-

track and its undisputed best: "House," featuring the great experimentalist John Cale. (It's no wonder it works so well: Charli is an undisputed Velvet Underground superfan. The band's high art, pop fame is a central theme in her vision, as is their ability to combine the "elegant and brutal" - a favorite quote of hers that is actually a quote of his.) Cale recites a poem in his weathered Welsh tone atop cello and metallic sounds, building into its booming final minute. "I think I'm gonna die in this house," he and Charli harmonize. It builds in distortion from there, the album's only true moment of gothic seduction, before Cale brings it to a spoken word coda. "In every room," he says, "I hear silence."

In whole, "Wuthering Heights" does function as an album as much as it does a soundtrack - but that's mostly the benefit of having a single artist realize their single vision, a privilege rarely afforded. Charli xcx does not waste it here.



Charli xcx poses for photographers at the photo call for the film 'The Moment' during the International Film Festival, Berlinale, in Berlin, Saturday, Feb. 14. (AP)

#### Variety

**ST. PAUL, Minn.:** Former CNN host turned independent journalist Don Lemon pleaded not guilty to federal civil rights charges Friday, following a protest at a Minnesota church where an Immigration and Customs Enforcement official is a pastor. Four others also pleaded not guilty in the case.

Lemon insists he was at the Cities Church in St. Paul to chronicle the Jan. 18 protest but was not a participant. The veteran journalist vowed to fight what he called "baseless charges" and protect

his free speech rights. "For more than 30 years, I've been a journalist, and the power and protection of the First Amendment has been the underpinning of my work. The First Amendment, the freedom of the press, are the bedrock of our democracy," Lemon said outside the courthouse after his arraignment. "And like all of you here in Minnesota, the great people of Minnesota, I will not be intimidated, I will not back down."

Dozens of supporters gathered outside the courthouse, chanting "Pam Bondi has got to go" and "Protect the press." (AP)

**WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.:** Bad Bunny really wanted to see Carlos Correa play for Puerto Rico at home in the World Baseball Classic.

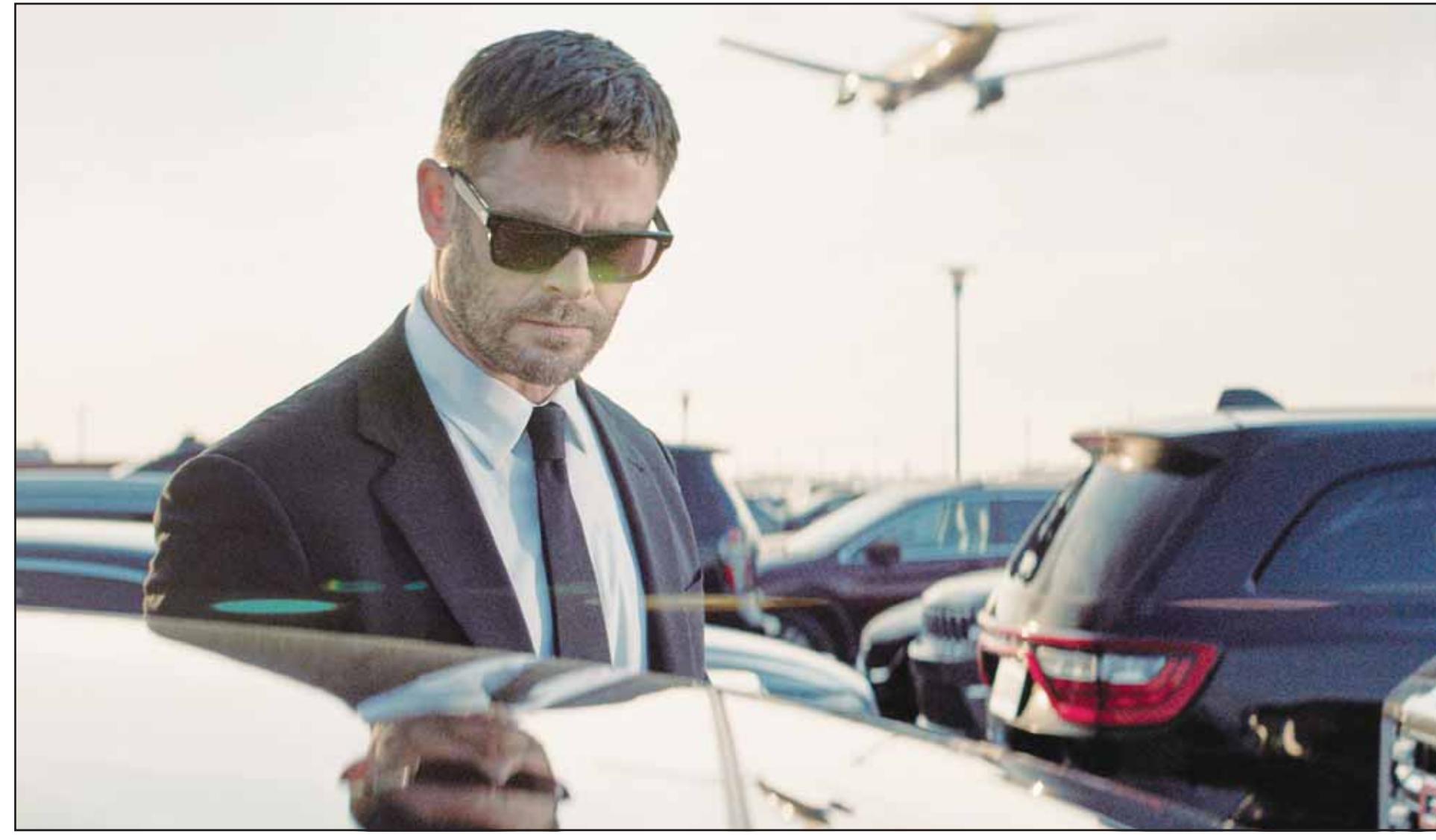
Correa, the infielder for the Houston Astros left off the WBC roster over insurance coverage, said Friday that the music superstar and fellow native of Puerto Rico had offered to pay for a pol icy.

"It means a lot that he's that involved," Correa told reporters at the Astros' spring training complex. "He tried to do everything possible. I wanted to play and make sure that I was going to go out there and play for Team Puerto Rico in Puerto Rico. The fact that he did that means a lot in how much he cares for the country, how much he cares for the fans back home. I'm deeply grateful that he tried that hard." (AP)

**SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador:** A five-concert "residency" by singer-songwriter and superstar Shakira in El Salvador's capital builds on President Nayib Bukele's yearslong effort to remake the Central American country's international image from one of the world's most violent countries into one of the safest.

The sold-out shows in the country's National Stadium Jorge "El Magico" González this week follow international surfing tournaments and the Miss Universe competition two years ago. El Salvador has seen big name performers in recent years, but like Bad Bunny in 2022 and Karol G in 2024, they typically play one concert and move on. (AP)

#### Film



This image released by Amazon MGM Studios shows Chris Hemsworth in a scene from 'Crime 101.' (AP)

### Chris Hemsworth leads stylish crime thriller

## 'Crime 101' is a middle-of-the-road LA heist movie

LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (AP): Bart Layton's "Crime 101" is a "Heat" pastiche that, even if it falls well shy of its Michael Mann blueprint, has some basic appeal going for it. Los Angeles crime movies are fun. Chris Hemsworth looks good in a suit. And we're all suckers for savvy criminals with good escape routes.

Just as Robert De Niro's Neil McCauley strategized along L.A.'s asphalt arteries in "Heat," Mike Davis (Hemsworth) works exclusively up and down the 101 freeway. Near its exit ramps, he hits high-value targets with insider information. He works stealthily and alone, slipping out of surveillance camera sight in time to stash his window-tinted car in a garage.

And like McCauley in "Heat," there's a detective on his trail. Detective Lou Lubesnick (Mark Ruffalo) has deduced a pattern in Mike's heists. Not many in the department, though, have much interest in his theories. His boss is pushing clearance rates, and his partner (Corey Hawkins) is beginning to realize Lou may be detrimental to his career ambitions.

If any of this sounds like familiar territory, there's more. Mike also has a budding romance with a woman (a vibrant Monica Barbaro) who doesn't know his profession. Lurking on the outside is a dangerously reckless thief (a typically scuzzy Barry Keoghan) who doesn't have Davis' panache. Oh, and Mike tells his sole contact (Nick Nolte) he'll do just one more job and then he's gone for good.

So, yes, "Crime 101" can feel a little like an introductory course to the heist movie. But those making out their syllabi would be better sticking with the OG standbys ("The Asphalt

Jungle," "Rififi") and the more muscular modern classics ("Heat," "Inside Man," "Logan Lucky") than this stylish but hollow iteration.

"Crime 101," adapted by Layton from Don Winslow's novella, isn't trying to recreate the heist-movie wheel. It's a solid if trope-heavy throwback that leans into genre clichés with an expansive, character-first approach. But even with the aid of a good ensemble cast, "Crime 101" ends up lacking in both depth of character and set-piece spectacle, leaving it stuck in the middle of the road.

In both documentaries ("The Impostor," "The Deepest Breath") and fiction films ("American Animals"), Layton has evidenced an abiding fondness for the heist movie. His passion for the genre is self-evident from the start in "Crime 101," just as is the benefit of cinematographer Erik Wilson, who gives the movie a cool sheen. In the opening credits, as Mike dresses for a job, he brushes off dead skin and the particles float softly in the morning light like falling snow.

But "Crime 101" also has a Big Theme to announce at the start. Over the opening montage a disembodied voice over sounds with the encouragement that all is attainable: "Today is a beautiful day of opportunity." As "Crime 101" proceeds, all of its central characters are in some way wrestling with their need, or desire, for more.

Some characters illustrate this unsavory and repetitive point better than others. While Hemsworth's Mike is smooth and compelling when the action starts, the character is preposterously thinly sketched. A former foster kid raised to steal, he lives

hermit-like in Malibu. This, too, mirrors De Niro's McCauley; presumably attachment-adverse thieves all share the same real-estate agent.

But "Crime 101" has a few more captivating supporting characters. Halle Berry plays Sharon, an insurance broker with a Rolodex of wealthy clients who mixes into the unfolding drama. Her on-theme characteristic is that the chauvinistic leaders of her company keep dangling a partnership that never comes. But Berry imbues Sharon with enough personality and verve to make you wonder why she wasn't the main character.

Ruffalo also predictably elevates the material. His detective is a rumpled heap of midlife trouble, with a divorce getting underway. Again, this is far from an uncommon type, but Ruffalo's natural sensitivity warms the character into three-dimensionality.

With Mike fixed on a big score, all of these characters are ultimately forced to reckon with their proximity to millions, and make a choice. That things end up ultimately with someone donning a hotel worker uniform - one more time: like McCauley - extends the "Heat" parallels to an almost comical degree. "Crime 101" is the rare film to make you wonder: Can a movie cosplay another movie? The real heist of "Crime 101" is an old one: If you're going to steal, steal from the best.

"Crime 101," an Amazon MGM released is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language throughout, some violence and sexual material/nudity. Running time: 140 minutes. Two stars out of four.

### Film paints a vivid portrait of Nigeria in 1993

## A deeply affecting day with father in 'My Father's Shadow'

LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (AP): Two young boys spend a day with their oft-absent father in Lagos amid political turbulence in "My Father's Shadow," an affecting debut feature from Akinola Davies Jr.

The film, which premiered at last year's Cannes Film Festival, might have missed out on the Oscars (the U.K.'s selection didn't even make the shortlist), but don't let that oversight dissuade you from seeking it out now that it's finally opened in North American theaters recently. "My Father's Shadow" is a gem, a deeply felt memory piece and vibrant portrait of Nigeria in 1993.

The script was a collaboration between Davies Jr. and his brother, Wale Davies, who were born and raised in Nigeria and lost their father at a young age. They were 8 and 10 at the time of the 1993 election, the same age as the two main characters, but this story is only loosely autobiographical - inspired by that loss and those feelings. In "My Father's Shadow," the father, Folarin (a brilliant Sopé Dirisù) is very much alive, but there's dread in the air. Time seems to slow when they pass by a group of military men who all turn and stare, like Folarin has a target on him. More than a few characters seem downright startled to see him, too, as though he's already a ghost.

It might sound a little silly or contrived, but it's done with such subtlety it's quite moving in execution. After all, Folarin is already kind of a fading memory for his sons, Aki (Godwin Egbo) and Remi (Chibuike Marvelous Egbo), as absent as he is in their lives. At the beginning of the film, the boys catch him stopping by their house in the village to change clothes quickly before departing again. At first, you're not sure what kind of man and father Folarin is - he seems distant and uninterested in the boys, who insist on coming with him on his journey to the city. A kinder, gentler side will emerge in time, but it's Folarin's complexities and contradictions that make him such a fascinating



This image released by Mubi shows Chibuike Marvelous Egbo, from left, Sopé Dirisù, and Godwin Egbo in a scene from 'My Father's Shadow.' (AP)

world around them.

These three pack quite a bit of life into their day and a half in Lagos, where Folarin's main objective is to try to get six months of back pay from a supervisor who is never around (and doesn't seem to pay any of his other employees regularly either). Folarin is told he might come back for the night shift, and that he and his sons should just explore Lagos in the interim. Davies, working with cinematographer Jermaine Edwards (who shot on 16 mm), paints a colorful portrait of the Nigerian metropolis. Folarin gets to impart some life lessons, too, about protecting family and the importance of preserving memories, like that of the brother he lost when he was young.

The political backdrop doesn't weigh too heavily on these kids. It's mostly something that the grown-ups around them are always talking about, but children can sense the unease of tentative hope too. When they start their adventure, Moshood Abiola, or MKO, has won the presidential election, and there is optimism in the air for the maybe the first time in their young lives. By the end, the dream has been shattered. The boys have also just made a startling revelation about their father. And everyone seems to lose a little innocence all at once. As violence erupts around them, all that's left to do is retreat. At least they're together.

At its heart "My Father's Shadow" has a simple and profoundly sad message about family and time. Folarin has been absent trying to make money to send to his family; But all the boys want is for him to be around more.

"My Father's Shadow," a Mubi released in theaters Friday, is has not been rated by the Motion Picture Association. Running time: 93 minutes. Four stars out of four.

## FX-Hulu series criticized for profiting off Kennedy's legacy

## 'Love Story' revisits JFK Jr. and Carolyn Bessette, sparks backlash

LOS ANGELES, Feb 15, (AP): With just a single photo released from their wedding day, much of the relationship between John F. Kennedy Jr. and Carolyn Bessette remains shrouded in romanticized legend: the courtship between the fashion publicist and the scion of an already much-mythologized family, the private nuptials and, just three years later, their deaths in a tragic plane crash.

The new FX and Hulu series premiered Thursday, "Love Story: John F. Kennedy Jr. & Carolyn Bessette," attempts to fill in the gaps and chronicle their life together. It details a meet cute at a party and culminates in the deaths of the couple and Bessette's sister Lauren Bessette on July 16, 1999, when a small plane piloted by Kennedy crashed into the Atlantic Ocean.

Jack Schlossberg, Kennedy's nephew, spoke out against the series last year, saying it was profiting off his family "in a grotesque way" accusing

executive producer Ryan Murphy of "making millions" off Kennedy's legacy. Murphy retaliated on California Gov. Gavin Newsom's podcast, saying it was an "odd choice to be mad about your relative that you really don't remember." Schlossberg, now running for Congress in New York, took to social media to share memories of his uncle.

Murphy was absent from the recent press circuit for "Love Story," but executive producer Brad Simpson - a veteran of Murphy's based-on-a-true-story "American Crime Story" projects - told The Associated Press that the creative team is "fully aware that there are real people and real tragedies often at the heart of these stories."

"I'm not going to pretend like on some level we're not making an entertainment product out of it, but we've tried to be ethical and we've tried to be incredibly sincere," Simpson said.

Paul Anthony Kelly and Sarah

Pidgeon, who portray Kennedy and Bessette in the series, say they took care in playing the couple, but do respect Schlossberg's opinion.

"I don't know what it's like to have a TV show or a movie or a book written about my family, and I understand his sensitivities, and I fully support him speaking his mind," Pidgeon said.

Added Kelly: "We tried to have as much integrity and love going into this and retelling that I hope that people see that."

The series is based on the book "Once Upon a Time: The Captivating Life of Carolyn Bessette Kennedy" by Elizabeth Beller. Episodes detail Bessette's ambition, rising through the ranks of Calvin Klein, to Kennedy's struggles keeping George magazine afloat.

We see Grace Gummer as Caroline Kennedy and Naomi Watts as Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, nearing the end of her life and disapproving of both the magazine and



Paul Anthony Kelly, (left), and Sarah Pidgeon pose for a portrait to promote 'Love Story: John F. Kennedy Jr. & Carolyn Bessette' on Monday, Feb. 2, in New York. (AP)

Kennedy's on-again, off-again relationship with Daryl Hannah (Dree Hemingway). As the series

tells it, Kennedy and Bessette had a magical first date that went nowhere for years because, shortly after, the tabloids reported he was back together with Hannah.

Pidgeon admits she worried the project would be more salacious than sincere, but quickly realized that wasn't the case.

"I felt a fear that we were going to sensationalize this. And then as I got on board the project that could not be, in my experience, further from the truth."

The show's creator, Connor Hines, is adamant that it's "extensively researched."

"We obviously had Elizabeth's book, but I read every single newspaper article that was written about them, every tell-all," said Hines. "Obviously, all of that material has to be taken with a grain of salt, and you have to be very judicious in terms of how you extract some of this information, because people have their own memories,

people have their own slights, but we were exhaustive and diligent in how we approached this and I think that will ring true when people watch it."

"Love Story" isn't the first show about the Kennedy family that has faced criticism. In 2011, The History Channel dropped a miniseries starring Greg Kinnear as President John F. Kennedy and Katie Holmes as Jacqueline Kennedy, saying the finished project didn't fit the network's brand after Kennedy associates complained about script inaccuracies. "The Kennedys" ended up airing on Reelz Channel.

And it's not the only show about the Kennedy family coming soon: Netflix has announced its making "Kennedy," a series focused on the political dynasty's origins and based on Fredrik Logevall's "JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956." Michael Fassbender will play Joe Kennedy Sr., the family patriarch.

Visitors invited to explore art, culture, and history

## Hekaya launches 'Reflections' at Kuwait Towers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Hekaya World for Artistic Production, Advertising, and Media, in collaboration with the Touristic Enterprises Company, has announced the launch of "Reflections," a three-month seasonal art and cultural experience at the Kuwait Towers Garden, running from February 14 to May 14.

For the first time, Kuwait Towers Garden will open its doors to the public as a destination that brings together art, culture, and history, offering an immersive experience that tells the story of one of Kuwait's most iconic national landmarks. The project presents a narrative journey

celebrating the history of Kuwait Towers, a symbol of national identity, resilience, pride, and continuity. The Towers stand as a lasting testament to Kuwait's journey, reflecting generations of ambition, endurance, and shared memory.

Through "Reflections," Hekaya continues to embody its core vision of storytelling through spaces and cultural experiences. Visitors will explore interactive artistic creations and reflective visual installations, alongside a curated journey through the rich heritage and history of Kuwait Towers, complemented by live musical performances and sea-

sonal cultural programming. The project also features a garden café and a vibrant community space designed to encourage connection and engagement, reflecting the artistic and cultural spirit of the venue.

As the creative force behind the project, Hekaya has ensured that "Reflections" becomes a living story shaped by its audience, in partnership with the Touristic Enterprises Company.

Hekaya invites the public to experience this unique journey beneath the iconic Towers and will announce the season's full events calendar on the first day of Eid.

## Religion

## A month of worship, reflection, and festive gatherings

## A look at Ramadan and how Muslims worldwide observe the holy month

CAIRO, Feb 15, (AP): Observant Muslims the world over will soon be united in a ritual of daily fasting from dawn to sunset as the Islamic holy month of Ramadan starts. For Muslims, it's a time for increased worship, religious reflection and charity. Socially, it often brings families and friends together in festive gatherings around meals to break their fast.

Ramadan is followed by the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar; the month cycles through the seasons.

The start of the month traditionally depends on the sighting of the crescent moon. This year, the first day of Ramadan is expected to be on or around Feb. 18 or 19. The actual start date may vary among countries and Muslim communities due to declarations by multiple Islamic authorities around the globe on whether the crescent had been sighted or different methodologies used to determine the beginning of the month.

This year, the start of Ramadan is expected around the same time as Ash Wednesday, a solemn day of fasting and reflection that signals the start of Lent, the most penitential season of the church calendar for Catholics and many other Christians.

Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, along with the profession of faith, prayer, alms-giving and pilgrimage.

Muslims see various meanings and lessons in observing the fast.

It's regarded as an act of worship to attain piety and one of submission to God. The devout see benefits, including practicing self-restraint, cultivating gratitude and empathizing with people who are poor and hungry.

The daily fast in Ramadan includes abstaining from all food and drink - not even a sip of water is allowed - from dawn to sunset, before breaking the fast in a meal known as "iftar" in Arabic.

Muslims typically stream into mosques for congregational prayers and dedicate more time to religious contemplation and the reading of the Quran, the Muslim holy book.

Charity is a hallmark of Ramadan. Among other ways of giving, many seek to provide iftar for those in need, distributing Ramadan boxes filled with pantry staples, handing out warm meals alongside such things as dates and juice, or helping hold free communal meals.

Muslims eat a predawn meal, called "suhoor," to hydrate and nurture their bodies ahead of the daily fast.

There are certain exemptions, such as for those who are unable to be cause of illness or travel. Those unable to fast due to being temporarily ill or traveling need to make up for the missed days of fasting later.

Muslims are ethnically and racially diverse and not all Ramadan traditions are rooted in religion. Some customs may transcend borders, while others can differ across cultures.



Residents of Ezbet Hamada in Cairo's El Matareya district peer from their balconies to celebrate a mass break-fast, 'iftar' during the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Cairo, March 15, 2025. (AP)



Muslim devotees pray as the head priest displays a holy relic believed to be a hair from the beard of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) during special prayers at Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir, March 22, 2025. (AP)

Many social rituals center on gathering and socializing after the daily fast. Some Muslims decorate their homes, put out Ramadan-themed tableware and centerpieces or throng to markets and Ramadan bazaars.

In Egypt, Ramadan is typically a festive time. Colorful lanterns, in different shapes and sizes, dangle from children's hands and adorn homes. Ramadan songs may be played to welcome the month.

Hundreds of residents in Tangerang, a city outside the capital, Jakarta, flock to the Cisadane River to wash their hair with rice straw shampoo and welcome the fasting month with a symbolic spiritual cleansing.

Across the island of Sumatra, after evening prayers, many boys and girls parade through the streets, carrying torches and playing Islamic songs.

In the United States, where Muslims make up a racially and ethnically diverse minority, gathering at mosques and Islamic centers when possible for iftar meals and prayers provides many Muslim families with a sense of community. Some Muslims also organize or attend interfaith iftar meals.

A lineup of new television series is another social fixture of the month in some countries, and advertisers compete for viewers' attention.

In various regions, some Muslims worry that the month is getting commercialized, and say an emphasis on decorations, TV shows, outings or lavish iftar banquets can detract from Ramadan's religious essence. Others say that a balance can be struck and

that, in moderation, such rituals are part of the month's festive spirit.

## Art

## 'Painting has become a refuge from fear'

## In Gaza, Palestinian girl transforms tent into gallery of war memories

GAZA, Feb 15, (Xinhua): A gallery has taken form within a tent, once a temporary refuge for a displaced family in Gaza. Its walls now bear dozens of stark black-and-white paintings, created with charcoal salvaged from cooking pots and the ink of discarded ballpoint pens.

Though it seems to upend the conventions of both exhibition space and artistic medium, the gallery has become, for locals, a repository of memory, preserving the raw emotions of the latest chapter in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which erupted on Oct. 7, 2023.

The paintings were created by Marah Al-Zaanin, an 18-year-old Palestinian girl who established and now operates the tent-turned-gallery in Gaza City, in the northern Gaza Strip.

"I did not know how to paint seriously before the war," she said. "But painting has become my own world, a refuge from fear and from the scenes of death that we have been living with."

Originally from Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza, Al-Zaanin and her family members were forced to flee to a shelter in the Rimal neighborhood in western Gaza City after Israeli forces prevented locals from returning to their homes, despite the latest Israel-Hamas ceasefire that took effect in October 2025.

"Losing the house and feeling unstable was a huge shock. I tried to turn this harsh reality into a space for artistic expression," she said.

During the conflict, she began sketching in moments of fear. "Whenever the bombing intensified or I felt overwhelmed, I would draw," she recalled, adding that painting gave her a sense of control over something she could not change.

Day by day, Al-Zaanin found herself drawing dozens of paintings, channeling her emotions into artistic expression.



Palestinian artist Marah Al-Zaanin (first left) draws a painting at a school-turned shelter in Gaza City, on Feb. 12. (Xinhua)

authorities in Gaza.

Most of Al-Zaanin's works were drawn in black and white, a choice she describes as both symbolic and practical. "Black and white reflect the bitterness of what we've lived through, and the scarcity of art supplies left me no choice but to use whatever I had at hand," she explained.

Al-Zaanin said she had long dreamed of holding an art exhibition, and decided not to wait. "I wanted to create my exhibition inside my tent, a space that encapsulates everything I've felt during the war," she said.

She divided the tent into sections, each reflecting different themes of the conflict: mass displacement, amputee children, hunger, and mothers mourning the dead.

The exhibition has attracted many visitors, some of whom share the experiences Al-Zaanin has depicted. Mohammed Abu Khalil, 42, displaced from the Shuja'iyya neighborhood east of Gaza City, said he stopped by the tent out of curiosity.

## 10th-century Baksei Chamkrong temple restored

## Egypt finds 10,000-year-old rock shelter in Sinai

CAIRO, Feb 15, (Xinhua): The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities announced on Thursday the discovery of a prehistoric rock shelter on Jabal Umm Arak in South Sinai province, dating back up to 10,000 years.

In a statement, the ministry described the natural sandstone shelter as one of the most important ancient sites in terms of historic value and exceptional artwork.

Discovered by the Egyptian archaeological mission, the shelter spans over 100 metres. Its ceilings are adorned with vivid red and grey paintings depicting animals, symbolic figures, and scenes of daily life from various periods, some dating back to between 10,000 and 5,500 BC.

Engravings on site show hunters with bows and dogs, camel and horse riders, and early Arabic inscriptions, the statement said.

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Sherif Fathy said the discovery reflects the unique cultural and human richness of the Sinai Peninsula, providing new evidence that many civilizations flourished in Sinai over millennia.

The diversity of finds positions Umm Arak as a natural open-air museum, documenting humanity's artistic and symbolic development from prehistory up to early Islamic times, the statement added.

Archaeologists also uncovered animal remains and living units, suggesting the shelter was used for thousands of years as a gathering place for people and livestock. Stone tools and pottery shards from ancient Egyptian, Roman, and medieval periods were also found in the site, added the statement.

Meanwhile, archaeologists have been undertaking restoration work on the upper section of the early 10th century Baksei Chamkrong temple in Cambodia's renowned Angkor Archaeological Park, the APSARA National Authority (ANA) said in a news



Migratory birds fly above Giza, Egypt, on Feb. 13. (Xinhua)

release on Friday.

Chhun Ratana, an official at the ANA's Department of Conservation of Monuments and Preventive Archaeology, said the conservation team is currently reinforcing both the interior and exterior walls of the temple's upper structure, which has been identified as being at "high risk."

"The upper section has suffered severe damage due to rainwater infiltration," she said. "Prolonged exposure to moisture has caused bricks to deteriorate and fall, while cracks and water leakage in both the interior and exterior walls have further weakened the structure."

Ratana said that to restore the temple's stability and ensure long-term preservation, the team will carefully remove decayed or unstable bricks and replace them with new ones by following proper technical standards.

"The work also includes reinforcing

weakened areas, filling cracks, preventing further water leakage, and installing additional structural supports where necessary," she said.

In October 2025, the ANA's leadership approved the restoration project in phases, Ratana said, adding that the first phase focuses on urgent conservation and structural reinforcement of the upper section and surrounding walls, and the subsequent phase will involve more comprehensive restoration and strengthening efforts.

Made of bricks, laterite and sandstone, Baksei Chamkrong temple is an early 10th-century Hindu temple built during the reign of King Rajendravarman II.

It is one of the temples in the UNESCO-listed Angkor Archaeological Park in northwest Siem Reap province, which is home to 91 ancient temples built from the ninth to the 13th centuries.

## Kuwait conference focuses on training and critical care advancements

# AI, digital tech key to transforming medical practice, says minister

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, emphasized the growing importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital transformation in contemporary medical practice, particularly in supporting clinical decision-making, enhancing the accuracy of predicting complications, and improving safety in operating rooms and intensive care units, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In his opening statement at the 12th Anesthesia, Intensive Care, and Pain Management Conference on Friday, Minister Al-Awadhi described the conference as a vital platform for exchanging expertise, promoting scientific re-

search, and exploring development opportunities, especially in emerging fields where national talent is being trained and invested in.

He noted that the conference underscores one of the most critical pillars of the healthcare system, a specialty directly linked to patient safety and the quality of medical care.

"The field of anesthesia and intensive care is a pivotal component of the treatment process and a key partner in the success of various medical and surgical interventions," the minister said.

Dr. Al-Awadhi underscored the continuous support provided by the political leadership to the health sector, stressing the importance of investing in human capital through education, training, and the development of national capabilities. He noted that these efforts form the cornerstone for advancing healthcare services and achieving sustainability and excellence.

He explained that the fields of anesthesia, intensive care, and pain management intersect with numerous medical specialties and play a vital role in managing critical cases and enhancing clinical performance. This requires keeping pace

with scientific advancements, strengthening teamwork, and establishing a culture of quality and safety.

Minister Al-Awadhi praised the dedicated professionals in this specialty, highlighting their essential role in ensuring health security and their position as the first line of defense in safeguarding patient safety.

He also expressed his appreciation to the organizing committee, speakers, participants, and sponsors for their contributions to the conference, expressing hope that the outcomes would generate actionable recommendations to further improve healthcare services.



In this image from video provided by NASA, (foreground from left), Russian Andrei Fedyaev, Americans Jack Hetherington and Jessica Meir and France's Sophie Adenot, gather with, background from left, Russian Sergey Kud-Sverchkov, American Christopher Williams and Russian Sergei Mikayev, after a new crew entered the International Space Station on Saturday, Feb. 14. (AP)

### Four new astronauts arrive at ISS to replace evacuated crew

The International Space Station returned to full strength with Saturday's arrival of four new astronauts to replace colleagues who bailed early because of health concerns.

SpaceX delivered the US, French and Russian astronauts a day after launching them from Cape Canaveral. Last month's medical evacuation was NASA's first in 65 years of human spaceflight. One of four astronauts launched by SpaceX last summer suffered what officials described as a serious health issue,

prompting their hasty return. That left only three crew members to keep the place running - one American and two Russians - prompting NASA to pause spacewalks and trim research.

Moving in for eight to nine months are NASA's Jessica Meir and Jack Hetherington, France's Sophie Adenot and Russia's Andrei Fedyaev. Meir, a marine biologist, and Fedyaev, a former military pilot, have lived up there before. During her first station visit in 2019, Meir took part in the

first all-female spacewalk.

Adenot, a military helicopter pilot, is only the second French woman to fly in space. Hetherington is a captain in the US Navy.

"Bonjour!" Adenot called out once the capsule docked to the space station 277 miles (446 kilometers) up.

A couple of hours later, the hatches swung open and the seven space travelers hugged and exchanged exuberant high-fives. "Let's get rolling," Meir said. (AP)

### Long March-10 passes key tests

## China shows AI computing power in outer space with new satellite network

HANGZHOU, Feb 15, (Xinhua): China has taken a major step toward building an AI-powered space infrastructure, with a satellite constellation deploying 10 AI models in orbit and establishing inter-satellite networking.

The deployment demonstrates AI applications in deep space exploration, smart city development and natural resource surveys, according to Zhejiang Lab, which developed the constellation with global partners.

China placed 12 satellites, the first group of the space computing constellation called "Three-Body Computing Constellation," into orbit in May 2025.

After nearly nine months of in-orbit testing, the constellation has demonstrated core capabilities including networking, computing, model deployment and scientific payload verification.

Among the space-based models are an 8-billion-parameter remote sensing model and an 8-billion-parameter astronomical time-domain model. These rank among the largest parameter AI models operating in orbit globally.

In November 2025, the remote sensing model conducted an infrastructure census across 189 square kilometers in northwest China, automatically identifying stadiums and bridges despite heavy snow cover.

For astronomical research, two satellites equipped with cosmic X-ray polarization detectors deployed an AI model that rapidly classifies gamma-ray bursts in orbit with 99 percent accuracy while dramatically reducing data transmission and processing times.

The team also achieved inter-satellite links among six satellites, a crucial step toward space networking.

Once its planned 1,000-plus satellites are in orbit, the constellation will crunch 100 quintillion operations per second, according to the lab.

"With a computing constellation, part of the data can be processed in space and delivered straight to users," said Li Chao from Zhejiang Lab.

Meanwhile, the recent successful key tests have laid the groundwork for the maiden flight of China's Long March-10 rocket series, a launch vehicle designed to support the country's



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)

manned lunar exploration missions, according to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

On Wednesday, China successfully conducted a low-altitude demonstration and verification flight test of the Long March-10 carrier rocket, along with a maximum dynamic pressure abort flight test of its new-generation crewed spaceship Mengzhou, with both the rocket and spaceship still in their prototype phases.

During the tests, the rocket prototype undertook three tasks -- verifying the maximum dynamic pressure abort conditions during the Mengzhou spaceship's ascent, demonstrating the reliability of its multi-stage parallel operations, and testing critical return-phase technologies, according to Yang Shutao, an expert from the CASC.

The Long March-10 rocket series includes two configurations: the Long March-10 with three stages and bundled boosters, and the Long March-10A with two stages and no boosters.

Approximately 55 meters in length, the prototype rocket tested on Wednesday is powered by seven liquid oxy-

gen/kerosene engines in parallel, generating nearly 1,000 tonnes of thrust. It currently has the largest single-module thrust among China's rockets, Yang said.

In the future, the Long March-10 rocket will integrate two identical boosters in parallel with its seven-engine core stage, giving it a significantly larger carrying capacity, according to Yang.

To ensure the safety of the abort operation during the tests, the rocket and spacecraft systems were jointly designed, with careful optimization of the separation and escape timeline, and meticulous planning of the relative positions, speeds and angular relationship between the rocket and the spaceship, Yang said.

After the spaceship separated, the rocket continued its flight until the first stage reached the predetermined height and speed, at which point its engines were shut down.

During the unpowered upward glide phase, the rocket continuously adjusted its attitude, shifting from nose-forward to tail-forward, to meet the subsequent ignition requirements.

At an altitude of about 110 km, the rocket deployed its four grid fins, just like a bird spreading its wings, getting ready for the return and recovery.

Then came the powered deceleration phase. Two engines were ignited for the second time to decelerate while correcting the rocket's flight position and attitude.

When the engines shut down and the rocket entered the aerodynamic deceleration phase, it further slowed down by relying on its own drag and the aerodynamic forces generated by the grid fins, while deflecting the fins to adjust its position and attitude.

During the final landing phase, three engines ignited successively, and the rocket maneuvered toward the predicted landing site. At about 120 meters above sea level, the onboard tether mechanism was deployed to simulate the capture by a ground-based recovery net system. When reaching about 5 meters in altitude, the rocket achieved a quasi-hovering state before executing a controlled splashdown in the sea.

### Male lungs more reactive than female

## Male and female lungs work differently: study

SYDNEY, Feb 15, (Xinhua): Male and female lungs are "wired differently" at the molecular level, a new study confirms, providing further evidence supporting sex-inclusive respiratory disease research and treatment.

The study, led by Australia's University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, is the first to show that sex modulates gene networks controlling bronchial responsiveness under normal physiological conditions, said a UTS statement on Thursday.

"Biological sex fundamentally shapes how the lungs function, even

under healthy, non-diseased conditions," said study lead author, UTS and Woolcock Institute Research Fellow Razia Zakarya.

"Male lungs are intrinsically more reactive to inhaled triggers than female lungs, which helps explain why the sexes experience respiratory disease differently," Zakarya said, adding these differences arise from discrete gene network activity rather than a single gene or hormone.

The study, published in the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology journal, shows that sex differences in lung function exist at the earliest stages of discovery.

deep molecular level, long before disease develops.

"Essentially, the sexes utilize different genetic toolboxes when exposed to environmental factors," Zakarya said.

The team also found that early-life environmental exposures could alter these molecular networks in sex-specific ways, potentially influencing vulnerability to diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Zakarya said the findings underscore the need for sex-inclusive biomedical and environmental health research from the earliest stages of discovery.

### Chinese team performs Samoa's first lung biopsy

## Scientists develop laser system to control immune cells inside tumors

ST. PETERSBURG, Feb. 15, (Xinhua): Russian scientists have developed a new photothermal cancer immunotherapy that enables precise control of immune responses inside cancer tumors, ITMO University announced Friday.

The method is based on light-sensitive microcarriers that, when subjected to a laser, release an immunomodulating drug "at the right time and in the right amount," the university said in a news release.

"In this study, we demonstrate that we can remotely control treatment release and the moment of its activation," said Lidia Mikhailova, a junior researcher at ITMO's Faculty of Physics.

"After injection, the drug will remain inactive until we point a laser at the necessary location. This is the main advantage of using a laser in this method: thanks to such precise control, we can minimize side effects and prevent undesirable impact on healthy tissue," she said.

Researchers noted that tumor development and survival depend not only on genetic changes in cancer cells, but also on their interaction with surrounding tissues. Many tumors can "reprogram" immune cells known as macrophages, prompting them to protect the tumor instead of attacking it.

Meanwhile, Tanzanian Prime Minister Mwigulu Nchomba on Thursday called for stronger regional and continental cooperation to combat cancer.

Speaking at the 30th anniversary of the Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) in Dar es Salaam, Nchomba said progress in cancer control requires joint efforts in research, specialist training, and the sharing of technology and expertise.

The prime minister stressed that collaboration is essential to address Africa's growing cancer burden, adding that Tanzania is ready to serve as a regional hub for the fight against the disease through the ORCI.

Nchomba directed the Ministry of Health to develop a strategy to reduce new cases and mitigate the economic and national well-being impacts.

The government has expanded early screening services for various cancers to primary healthcare facilities, Nchomba said.

According to Ministry of Health statistics, around 44,900 people were newly diagnosed with cancer in Tanzania in 2022, while approximately 29,700 died from the disease that year.

In another development, a Chinese medical team has successfully performed Samoa's first bronchoscopic alveolar lavage and biopsy at the Tupua Tamases Meaole (TTM) Hospital, marking a breakthrough in the diagnosis of respiratory diseases in the Pacific island nation.

The patient, a 76-year-old man, had been repeatedly hospitalized due to right lung atelectasis complicated by infection.

Following multiple consultations

between Samoan and Chinese specialists, doctors decided to conduct a bronchoscopy to determine the underlying cause.

After a comprehensive preoperative assessment, Liu Han, a physician specializing in respiratory and critical care medicine from the Chinese team, performed the bronchoscopy along with bronchoalveolar lavage and biopsy.

The patient remained in stable condition after the procedure.

Cong Xiaoqiang, head of the team, noted that invasive bronchoscopic procedures had never previously been carried out in Samoa.

Due to a lack of specialized equipment at the local hospital, the First Hospital of Jilin University in northeast China's Jilin Province dispatched a shipment of dedicated surgical supplies from China to ensure the operation could proceed smoothly.

During the procedure, the team also provided hands-on training and multidisciplinary collaboration with local medical staff, offering standardized technical guidance and laying the groundwork for the gradual establishment of a respiratory disease diagnosis and treatment system in Samoa.

The 10th Chinese medical team to Samoa consists of 10 specialists from the First Hospital of Jilin University, covering disciplines including cardiology, ophthalmology, gynecology, otolaryngology, intensive care medicine, and traditional Chinese medicine.

### Serious hobbies improve mental and social health

## Yoga, climbing, or D&D: serious leisure boosts your well-being

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



By Emily Messina

Florida International University

What do collecting old editions of Dungeons & Dragons monster manuals, securing the same tailgate spot for over 20 years and mastering your yoga postures have in common? They are all forms of "serious leisure."

These pursuits are different from casual hobbies in several ways. They require participation over longer periods, which makes people who practice them more skilled and more connected with the activity over time. The driving force for casual leisure is having fun; when a participant becomes more focused on accomplishment and improving their skills, the pursuit can gradually become more serious.

After the spaceship separated, the rocket continued its flight until the first stage reached the predetermined height and speed, at which point its engines were shut down.

During the unpowered upward glide phase, the rocket continuously adjusted its attitude, shifting from nose-forward to tail-forward, to meet the subsequent ignition requirements.

At an altitude of about 110 km, the rocket deployed its four grid fins, just like a bird spreading its wings, getting ready for the return and recovery.

Then came the powered deceleration phase. Two engines were ignited for the second time to decelerate while correcting the rocket's flight position and attitude.

When the engines shut down and the rocket entered the aerodynamic deceleration phase, it further slowed down by relying on its own drag and the aerodynamic forces generated by the grid fins, while deflecting the fins to adjust its position and attitude.

During the final landing phase, three engines ignited successively, and the rocket maneuvered toward the predicted landing site. At about 120 meters above sea level, the onboard tether mechanism was deployed to simulate the capture by a ground-based recovery net system. When reaching about 5 meters in altitude, the rocket achieved a quasi-hovering state before executing a controlled splashdown in the sea.



A chair yoga class is conducted at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan in New York, March 28, 2025. (AP)

traits and qualities. The outcomes of battles, decisions and interactions are determined by dice rolls.

My study included convening focus groups with regular D&D players to determine whether their experiences playing the game represented serious leisure, as opposed to casual leisure associated with traditional board games.

Players described developing their characters for years and acquiring knowledge and skills. They learned how magical items and weapons worked, made calculations and researched their character sheets. All of these practices are attributes of a uniquely D&D subculture.

Participants also described the benefits they received from playing the game. For many of them, D&D offered a sense of community. It also was a safe space and a welcoming activity for those who might feel excluded by traditional leisure pursuits, such as sports and competitive games.

### Studies

Prior studies have identified many other activities that can qualify as serious leisure, depending on the level of engagement. Some are in-person physical activities like yoga, sport clubs and rock climbing. Others include online pursuits like multiplayer online games and a virtual Harry Potter running club where members share running stories and experiences keyed to Harry Potter-themed discussion topics, such as logging miles in virtual races for their specific Hogwarts houses. Studies have explored game-based pursuits like tournament bridge, and even the social art of tailgating among serious football fans.

In each case, researchers found that participants experienced hallmarks of serious leisure. For example, participants in multiplayer online games describe prolonged immersion in the activity. Yoga students pursued systematic training and skill development. And maniacally devoted Florida

Gators fans scheduled family events around football season.

In all cases, participants became increasingly involved over time, acquired knowledge and skills, and often forged shared identities and social connections.

How do you know if your favorite leisure pursuit has gotten serious? One indication could be spending a lot of time

Young budding talent Ali Al-Ansari claims Gross award

# Mishary Al-Zamanan wins Toyo Golf Tournament



Participants of the Toyo Golf Tournament pose for a group photo.



Winners of the Toyo Golf Tournament.



Players in action.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Toyo Golf Tournament was organized on Friday 13th Feb 2026 at the Sahara Golf Club. It was the 41st year of this prestigious event, which started in 1983 and since then has been held each year with the exception of 1991 and the pandemic years. Held in February each year for commemorating the National & Liberation Days, the trophy is appropriately called the Liberation Cup.

The tournament is quite popular among golf enthusiasts, as participation is not just limited to Sahara Club members but open to golfers from all over. The game is played in the standard 'Stableford' format which together with shotgun start, allows for relatively speedy play.

The highlight of the day was a superb performance by the talented golfer Mishary Al-Zamanan, who scored a brilliant 38 points to win the trophy. He was closely followed by Scott Dunning, the Runner-up at 37 points and Mohan Singh who won the third prize with a score of 36 points. The coveted Best Gross award was won by the young budding talent Ali Al-Ansari who scored a brilliant 65 points. Moreover, Ali won the prize for Longest Drive (Men's) as well with a superlative shot. Incidentally, his brother Bader Al-Ansari received the award for Nearest to Pin (Men's). Both Ali and Bader come from a family of golfers – their father Mazen Al-Ansari is a keen golfer himself. Among other prizes, Fadia Emaadi, who has consistently performed very well in the past tournaments, won the prizes for both Longest Drive and Nearest to Pin in the Ladies' Category.

The weather was quite pleasant this Friday. Thankfully, the cold weather system which had developed over Kuwait last week had subsided, giving way to ambient temperature and a mild cool breeze, resulting in optimum playing conditions.

Prize distribution was organized in the afternoon in the gracious presence of Mr.Takanori Murase, General Manager, Toyo Tire Corporation, who had specially flown in from Japan for the occasion. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Kuldeep Lamba, Managing Director, AlMailem Group

thanked Toyo for their long and unwavering commitment for this Tournament over the past so many decades. He also thanked the players for their enthusiastic response, and complimented Sahara Club staff for their professional administration of the game.

## Lioness crowned champions of KCC T10 Women's Domestic Championship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Lioness were crowned champions of the KCC T10 Women's Domestic Championship, after defeating Dolphins by 59 runs at the Sulabiya Cricket Ground.

Led by an outstanding performance from Captain Maryam Omar, Lioness delivered a clinical all-round display to secure the title. Batting first, Lioness posted an imposing total, highlighted by a sensational innings from Maryam Omar, who smashed 73 runs off just 31 deliveries, setting the tone for the final.

Defending the target, Lioness maintained constant pressure with disciplined bowling and sharp fielding. Maryam Omar once again led from the front, producing a remarkable spell of three wickets for just seven runs to dismantle the Dolphins' chase.

Maryam Omar was deservedly named Player of the Match and capped off a stellar tournament by sweeping all three individual awards – Best Batter with 198 runs, Best Bowler with five wickets, and Best All-Rounder – in a truly memorable championship-winning campaign.



Champions



Runners up Dolphins.

## KCC Oasis Premier Cup and KCC Oasis Classic Cup conclude in thrilling fashion



The KCC Oasis Premier Cup winners, Al Mulla.



KCC Oasis Classic Cup champions, Rising Phoenix Stars.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The KCC Oasis Premier Cup, concluded with a gripping finale as Al Mulla Exchange edged Gujarat CC by five runs in a high-intensity contest. Vishal Kumar starred with a blistering 61 off 28 deliveries and returned figures of 0/29 in three overs to earn Player of the Match honours. Arun Raj of Cochin Hurricanes topped the run charts with

433 runs to claim Best Batsman, while Aromal Siva Kumar of GAT delivered an outstanding all-round display with 225 runs and 15 wickets, securing both Best All-Rounder and Best Bowler awards.

In the KCC Oasis Classic Cup, Rising Phoenix Stars sealed a commanding seven-wicket victory over Team XI. Raja Velayan's scintillating 84 off 42 balls earned him

Player of the Match. Sohail Ahmad Dar (Royal SC) was named Best Batsman (233 runs), Imran Mahadik (Khed XI) Best All-Rounder (168 runs, 10 wickets), and Reddy SKB (Reddy Riders) Best Bowler (13 wickets).

The presentation ceremony was graced by Robert, Melwyn , Naveen , Kabir Khan, Tahir Khan , Guruprasad , and Vipin Mathew

## Lens goes top, Marseille drops more points

PARIS, Feb 15, (AP): Marseille was widely expected to be Paris Saint-Germain's main challenger in Ligue 1 this season, but Lens is the team to be reckoned with.

Coach Pierre Sage's unassuming side moved one point ahead of PSG at the top after a crushing 5-0 win at struggling Paris FC, which was promoted last season but is in 16th spot despite big investment.

While Lens celebrated another clinical performance, Marseille's chaotic week continued with an equalizer conceded deep into stoppage time in 2-2 home draw with Strasbourg.

Marseille is 12 points behind Lens with 12 games left.

Unheralded Lens has won just one league title compared to nine for Marseille and a record 13 for PSG, and has no big-name stars.

Instead, Lens boasts efficient teamwork, self-sacrifice, slick counter-attacking and clinical finishing.

Wesley Saïd is not a household name, other than perhaps in the former coal-mining community of Lens, but the journeyman forward is peaking at the right time. He scored twice to reach 10 league goals for the first time in a season.

He opened the scoring from a cross in the 24th minute and then found the top-left corner with a firm shot from another cross in the 38th.

Said hit the post and Lens had two goals disallowed for offside in the first half. The domination continued after the break with France winger Florian Thauvin scoring a penalty

before substitute forward Rayan Fofana netted twice late on.

Marseille led 2-0 after Amine Gouiri created one goal and scored the other. But Marseille's feeble defense fell apart and striker Joaquin Panichelli's rescued a point with a 97th-minute penalty.

"Once again we conceded a late goal (and) we wasted everything at the end," Gouiri said. "When things happen a dozen times, it's not the (tactical) choices of the coach, it's on the field."

Fourth-placed Marseille is two points behind Lyon in third, having played one game more.

Fifth-placed Lille missed the chance to close the gap on Marseille after drawing 1-1 with Brest. Lille still has not won a league game in 2026. Marseille's players were reeling from Roberto De Zerbi's departure on Wednesday, just days after a humiliating 5-0 loss at PSG.

The atmosphere was tense at Stade Vélodrome.

Both stands behind the goal were empty except for angry banners, with one urging American owner Frank McCourt and president Pablo Longoria in blunt terms to leave, along with the words "all of your projects go up in smoke! After all these wasted years."

Nine-time French champion Marseille has not won a trophy since the now-defunct League Cup in 2012.

The fans who did turn up on Saturday booted the players onto the field.

## Ike powers Gonzaga past Santa Clara into first place

SANTA CLARA, Calif., Feb 15, (AP): Graham Ike had 21 points and a season-high 15 rebounds as No. 12 Gonzaga held off Santa Clara 94-86.

Ike shot 7 of 12 and had four assists to help the Bulldogs move a half-game ahead of the Broncos for first place in the West Coast Conference. It's Ike's seventh consecutive game with 20 points, matching a similar streak he had in 2024.

Gonzaga (25-2, 13-1) has won 25 games or more in 19 consecutive seasons under coach Mark Few. Few was recently named a finalist for the Naismith Memorial Hall of Fame. Adam Miller scored 20 points, Tyon Grant-Foster added 20, and Emmanuel Innocenti had 16 points and six rebounds for the Bulldogs.

As good as Ike's was, the Bulldogs had to do without their star forward for three minutes late in the second half while he was in foul trouble.

Christian Hammond scored 16 points for Santa Clara (22-6, 13-2).

The Broncos forced the Bulldogs into several hurried possessions that had the sold-out crowd at Leavey Center roaring early.

Gonzaga missed seven of its first 10 shots and trailed by eight before going on a 15-7 run midway through the first half. Ike later powered his way past two defenders in the key to score and give the Bulldogs their first lead at 31-29.

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Encouraging sports participation key to boosting employee engagement

## ABK bowling team achieves exceptional success at the Banks Bowling Championship



Celebrating the team's achievements during the sports season.



ABK bowling team.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: At the conclusion of the Banks Bowling Championship for the 2025–2026 season, Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) proudly announced the outstanding performance of its bowling team, which achieved remarkable success by winning both the League Championship and the Cup Championship, further reinforcing ABK's strong sporting presence within the Kuwait Banks Club.

The ABK bowling team secured the Team League Champion (gold prize), in addition to the Team Cup Champion (gold prize), the Singles High Game award, and Perfect Game performance. In the Masters Event, ABK secured the gold and silver, as well as the silver prize in the Doubles Event, and the bronze prize in the Trio Event.



Ms. Afrah Al Arbash, GM of Human Resources at ABK



Trophies and medals of the 2025–2026 sports season.

These impressive accomplishments reflect the team's continuous dedication, discipline, and commitment to excellence, as well as their strong teamwork and perseverance. The success highlights ABK's commitment to promoting a healthy balance between professional achievement and extracurricular engagement.

Commenting on the achievement, Afrah Al Arbash, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK, expressed her pride in the team's performance, stating, "The bowling team's achievements are a clear reflection of the passion, teamwork, and determination that characterize ABK employees. We strongly believe that encouraging participation in sports activities plays a vital role in strengthening employee engagement and fostering a positive workplace culture."

Al Arbash further added that ABK's continued support for sports initiatives organized by the Kuwait Banks Club stems from the Bank's belief in developing well-rounded employees and nurturing a spirit of collaboration and excellence beyond the workplace. She concluded, "Such achievements not only enhance employee morale but also reinforce ABK's values of unity, commitment, and high performance."

ABK extends its sincere appreciation to all employees for their ongoing support and encouragement, which helps empower to excel both professionally and personally, and continue to strive to proudly represent the Bank in various sporting competitions.

### Event grown into a cultural and sporting heritage festival

## Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship concludes successfully

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: The 24th Annual Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship concluded successfully at the Martyr Fahad Al-Ahmad Racetrack, under the patronage of the Minister of Youth and Sports, Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma, represented by Mr. Jarrah Al-Saeedi. The event was attended by leaders from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as representatives from Africa, Asia, and Europe.

The championship brought together participants from GCC and Arab nations, alongside friends from European countries, all competing for the coveted golden and silver swords and daggers awarded by the championship's sponsors.

Speaking at the event, the Minister's representative expressed his delight at attending the final festival, highlighting the participation of both sister and friendly countries. Salem Abu Laghad, President of the Palestinian Federation, also praised Kuwait's leadership for their dedication to preserving the heritage



Camels compete in Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship.

the event has grown into a cultural and sporting heritage festival with significant humanitarian, cultural, and civilizational value. According to Al-Dawas, the championship provided a unique opportunity for participants from the GCC, Arab nations, and Europe to experience the traditional sports of forefathers and appreciate the values that have contributed to the country's progress and strengthened regional ties.

Al-Dawas also praised the strong support of the Minister of Youth and Sports and the General Authority for Sports, as well as the organizing committees for their efforts in providing all necessary facilities to ensure the event's success. He emphasized the ongoing commitment to preserving and promoting the heritage sport of camel racing.

In conclusion, Al-Dawas thanked the GCC countries and Arab nations for their continued support, which has been instrumental in elevating the Kuwait International Camel Racing Championship to a premier cultural and sporting event.

Hussein Al-Dawas, President of the Kuwait Camel Racing Club, hailed the championship as a resounding success. He noted that

## Kuwait's Al-Shatti finishes third in 2nd round of FIM Baja World Cup in Jordan

AQABA, Jordan, Feb 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's rally racer Abdullah Al-Shatti claimed third place in the motorbike category during the second round of the FIM Baja World Cup, held in Aqaba, Jordan.

Al-Shatti delivered a consistent and strong performance, completing the grueling race in approximately 7 hours and 17 minutes.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Shatti dedicated his achievement to Kuwait and its sports officials, emphasizing that the podium finish provides a significant morale boost and inspires him to maintain strong performances in the upcoming rounds of the championship.

The event drew a highly competitive field of professional rally racers from around the world, showcasing skill and endurance across the challenging desert terrain.

KUNA photo  
Kuwaiti racer Abdullah Al-Shatti.

## 'Kuwait Sports Day delivers strong sporting message'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Faisal Al-Muqseed, President of the Kuwait Sports for All Federation, praised the large turnout at Kuwait Sports Day, which saw participation from over 21,000 people of all age groups. He said the numbers reflect the public's confidence in the event's organization and the important sporting message it conveys.

In a press statement, Al-Muqseed extended his congratulations to Kuwait's political leadership and the government on the success of the third edition of Kuwait Sports Day, held on Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge under the patronage and presence of the Minister of State for Youth and Sports, Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma.

He emphasized that the event's success motivates the Kuwait Sports for All Federation to continue developing community sports programs and promoting a culture of sports for everyone. Al-Muqseed highlighted the collaboration between government bodies, sports federations, and



Faisal Al-Muqseed, President of the Kuwait Sports for All Federation

security and medical institutions, media, the private sector, and volunteers as a model of Kuwait's excellence in managing major events.

## Al-Nahda edges Oman Club for Sultan Cup



Al-Nahda Club celebrates with the Sultan Qaboos Cup.

MUSCAT, Feb 15: Al-Nahda Club secured the 2025-2026 Sultan Qaboos Cup title, defeating Oman Club 2-0 in a thrilling final.

This triumph marks Al-Nahda's second victory in the competition after six previous attempts, where they had reached the final and finished as runners-up. The final was held at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, attended by the Sultan's representative, Minister of State and Governor of Muscat, Belarab bin Haitham.

Oman Club dominated the early stages of the match, controlling possession in the first half. However, the game turned in the 35th minute when referee issued a red card to Oman player Mohammed

Al-Maashari for a harsh tackle on Intres Ji, reducing Oman to ten men.

Al-Nahda quickly capitalized on the numerical advantage, controlling the closing minutes of the first half. In stoppage time, full-back Ahmed Al-Kaabi delivered a cross that deflected off Oman defender Basel Al-Rawahi and into the net, giving Al-Nahda the lead.

In the second half, Al-Nahda maintained high pressure and secured the win with a second goal.

Substitute Mohammed Al-Ghaifi converted a cross from a teammate late in the match, sealing the 2-0 victory and the coveted cup for Al-Nahda.

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# Sports

## Maaloul praises Al-Qadsia progress, vows to fix minor errors before crucial clash

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

ABU DHABI, Feb 15: Al-Qadsia conducted its first training session at Al-Qatara Stadium in the UAE, preparing for their upcoming match against Al-Ain in the sixth and final round of Group A in the Gulf Clubs Champions League, following the team's arrival on Saturday evening.

The third-placed Al-Qadsia, with 7 points, must win to secure a spot in the semifinals, while second-placed Al-Ain, with 9 points, only needs a draw to advance. Iraqi side Zakhro has already qualified, leading the group with 10 points.

Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul expressed satisfaction with the team's recent progress, noting steady performance improvement. He added, "We need to correct a few minor errors, which we will address in the coming days Maaloul

Udinese's Nicolo Zaniolo, left, fights for the ball with Sassuolo's Luca Lipani during the Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Sassuolo in Udine, Italy. (AP)



also highlighted that Al-Qadsia is competing for three remaining trophies this season and assured that the team will give its all to contend

for these titles.

Bahraini midfielder Mahdi Hamidan urged the "Yellow" fans to rally behind the team, emphasizing that

their support is crucial in achieving the desired results.

Promising young player Abdullah Al-Ghanimah pledged both a strong

performance and a positive result, hoping to help the team reach the semifinals.

Meanwhile, professional player

Nyscans Kipano expressed his pride in playing for Al-Qadsia in front of what he described as the best fans in Kuwait.

### Al-Arabi defeats Al-Qadsia

## Kuwait Club to host 28th Asian Men's Handball Club Championship in April

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 15: Kuwait Club has been officially awarded the hosting rights for the 28th Asian Men's Club League Championship for the 2024-2025 season, which also serves as the 2026 World Club Championship Qualifiers in Egypt. The tournament is scheduled to run from April 6 to 16, 2026.

Teams are set to arrive in Kuwait on April 4 and 5, with the technical meeting scheduled for April 5 and the tournament kickoff on April 6. The final is slated for April 16.

The championship was initially planned for November 2025 but was postponed due to the Asian Youth Games in Bahrain and the Islamic Solidarity Games in Saudi Arabia. Kuwait also hosted the Asian Men's National Teams Championship (2027 World Cup Qualifiers) in January. Meanwhile, the Gulf Handball Cup Winners' Championship will be held in Manama from March 25 to April 1.

Samah Al-Hajri, Director of Handball at Kuwait Club, expressed pride in the club's selection, citing its successful history in organizing international tournaments and the presence of experienced national staff capable of delivering a world-class event.

Al-Hajri emphasized, "Kuwait Club competes in every local and international competition with one goal: victory. This will apply both in the Gulf Club Championship in Manama and the Asian tournament here



Al Arabi players sandwiched by rivals.

in Kuwait." He added that while the packed schedule puts a heavy strain on players, he has full confidence in the "White" stars.

For the Gulf Club Championship, Kuwait Club will rely on three professional players: Francis Marzo, Vladan Lipova, and Victor Ituriza, while the team is searching for a fourth professional to join the Asian tournament roster.

Elsewhere in the Premier League, Al-Arabi defeated Al-Qadsia 26-20 in the 10th round at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, while Al-Salmiya beat Al-Nasr 28-21. With these results, Al-Qadsia moved to 12 points in fourth place, overtaking Al-Nasr, which remains in fifth with 10 points. Al-Salmiya sits sixth with 8 points, and Al-Nasr remains eighth with 2 points.

## Norway's Klaebo wins 9th gold to set Winter Olympics record

MUMBAI, Feb 15, (AP): West Indies notched its third T20 Cricket World Cup successive win in Group C when it thumped Nepal by nine wickets and qualified for the Super 8 stage of the tournament.

West Indies had already beat Scotland and England to take command of Group C.

Nepal showed plenty of promise in its first game when it lost narrowly to England, but then two heavy defeats against first-timer Italy and Sunday against West Indies saw it eliminated.

Fast bowler Jason Holder grabbed 4-27 and restricted Nepal to 133-8 after captain Shai Hope won the toss and elected to field. Hope then smashed an unbeaten 61 off 44 balls and Shimron Hetmyer scored 46 off 32 balls as West Indies cruised to 134-1 in 15.2 overs.

Nepal had stuttered to 6-73 in 15 overs but Dipendra Singh Airee (58) and Sompal Kami (26 not out) contributed a 54-run stand in the death overs to give the team some respectability.

Sanjay Krishnamurthi kept America's slender hopes of Super 8 qualification alive with a maiden T20 half-century - 68 not out off 33 balls - against Namibia in their Group A clash.

Skipper Monank Patel also scored 52 off 30 balls as the U.S. notched up its tournament highest score - 199-4 in 20 overs.

Patel was second out just past half-way, and then the U.S. was down to 103-3. Krishnamurthi then put up 87 off 46 balls with Milind Kumar (28), en route to his first T20 World Cup half-century off 23 balls. He hit six sixes.

In reply, Namibia was restricted to 168-6, losing its third game and is now eliminated from the competition. Opener Louren Steenkamp scored 58 off 39 balls, but the target proved too far off.

Medium-pacer Shadley Van Schalkwyk picked up 2-30 to take his tally to 13 wickets - highest in the tournament. The U.S. won its final game by 31 runs, and now awaits the result in Colombo, depending on other results for any hope of progression.

Tom Banton hit an unbeaten 63 off 41 balls and Jofra Archer returned to form in England's five-wicket win over Scotland.

England, desperately needing the victory following an unconvincing four-run win over Nepal and a loss to the West Indies, made 155-5 in 18.2 overs after the Scots were bowled out for just 152 in Kolkata.

Scotland wasted an ideal platform after getting to 90-3 in 10 overs, with the batters failing to mistimed sweep shots against the spinners.

England's top-order batters Phil Salt, Jos Buttler and captain Harry Brook fell for single digits, but Banton put on 66 with Jacob Bethell (32) and 46 with Sam Curran (28) to lift the team to second in Group C behind West Indies. It next plays Italy on Monday.

Salt drove loosely at Brandon Mc-Mullen and was caught at point before the pace bowler then took a smart catch over his shoulder at mid-off to dismiss Buttler as England slipped to 13-2.

Banton and Bethell then dug in well before Scotland hit back with two wickets in eight balls. Bethell's slog sweep was caught at fine leg while Brook top-edged a scoop to fine leg.

Earlier, England hit back in the closing overs after Scotland had looked poised to set a challenging target when 113-3 midway through the 13th over.

The dismissal of captain Richie Berrington, who made 49, and Tom Bruce (24) in the space of four balls left Scotland struggling to accelerate late on.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka, Feb 15, (Agencies): India delivered a commanding performance to defeat Pakistan by 61 runs, extending its dominance in T20 World Cup history and becoming the first team to secure a spot in the Super 8 stage.

Chasing a target of 176, Pakistan never found momentum and were bowled out for 114 in 18 overs.

India's bowling unit shared the spoils, with Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Axar Patel and Varun Chakaravarthy claiming two wickets each to dismantle the batting lineup.

Pakistan's troubles began early as they lost four wickets inside the Powerplay

play with barely any runs on the board. Salman Ali Agha struck a boundary but the side in deep trouble at 13/3.

Axar Patel further dented Pakistan's hopes by dismissing the dangerous Usman Khan, who was closing in on a half-century before being stumped just six runs short. Mohammad Nawaz briefly counterattacked with a boundary but soon holed out in the deep as wickets continued to tumble.

Shadab Khan attempted to revive the innings with a fighting effort, and a few boundaries followed, but the required run rate hovered near double digits, keeping the pressure firmly on Pakistan.

By the end, India were cruising toward another comprehensive win over their arch-rivals, strengthening their head-to-head edge and underlining their status as one of the tournament favorites.

Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha has won the toss and elected to field in the most-anticipated game of the Twenty20 World Cup on Sunday as the two captains refrained from shaking hands because of military and diplomatic tensions between the two neighbors.

Political tensions between the two nations have often boiled over on to the cricket field. Sunday's game is the first time the teams have met since last year's acrimonious Asia Cup tournament in the United Arab Emirates that was won by India and where players refused to shake hands.

Since the Asia Cup where Suryakumar Yadav refused to shake hands with his Pakistani counterpart Agha, the practice has been followed in the subsequent women's and Under 19 world cups.

There was speculation earlier that the International Cricket Council may have resolved the conflict when it per-

suaded Pakistan to play the India game after it had threatened a boycott earlier this month.

At Mumbai, West Indies notched its third successive win in Group C when it thumped Nepal by nine wickets and qualified for the Super 8 stage of the tournament.

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## India dominates Pakistan to reach T20 World Cup Super 8

Unbeaten West Indies book spot



India's Ishan Kishan plays a shot during the T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka. (AP)