



Kuwait's Prime Minister conducts field visit to food security facilities Page 5



## IRAN RETALIATION RATTLES REGION AFTER SUPREME LEADER SLAIN

# 1 dead, 32 hurt in aftermath as Kuwait repels Iran attack



### Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Iran harms friends instead of retaliating against foes

THE right path that a wise person strives to follow is to pursue good relations with neighbors rather than attacking them for the benefit of both one's own interests and those of others. This is what the leaders of the Iranian regime should have done from the very first day of their successful coup against the Shah.

However, arrogance and recklessness appear to have been fundamental to this large country, and not rationally.

Today, it is clear that an era has ended. The past 47 years can be seen as a closed chapter. Those remaining in the Iranian regime must adopt a rational approach if they truly seek the well-being of their people. For decades, Tehran has deliberately brought misery to its own citizens and has consistently severed ties with the Arabian Gulf states and the entire Arab world through acts of terrorism.

Despite this, wise Gulf leaders have consistently tried to bring Tehran to a point of understanding, warning it of the consequences of reckless actions that would not serve its own interests.

However, the opposite has occurred. The regime, entrenched in its outdated ways, has not learned its lesson. The recent Iranian aggression against the Gulf states over the past two days is the latest in a long series of crimes committed by the Iranian regime.

Instead of retaliating against the United States and Israel, which carried out attacks against it, the Iranian regime targeted civilian sites in the Gulf.

This is how the Iranian regime repaid kindness with harm, and this is how it responded to the ongoing efforts of Gulf governments, who have worked for months to prevent attacks against it.

This is not surprising from a regime that thrives on lies and delusions, which is evident in its attempts to alter the prevailing culture in the region or to influence the decisions of four countries through sectarian groups and mercenary proxies, including the so-called "Hezbollah" terrorist organization in Lebanon and sectarian enclaves in Iraq.

Iran has sought to change Syria's identity, using both enticement and coercion.

Through the Houthi group, Iran has dragged Yemen back into a state reminiscent of a pre-historic era.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have suffered greatly from the Iranian regime. This includes terrorist attacks on Mecca and Medina and attempts to bomb civilian buildings in Saudi Arabia.

The Tehran regime also enabled its Yemeni proxy to target oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. For over a decade, it orchestrated attacks on Bahrain through sabotage groups. These followed Iran's occupation of islands of the United Arab Emirates and the terrorist bombings that targeted Kuwait in the 1980s.

All of these acts of terrorism have deepened the rift between Iran and the Gulf states.

Despite this, the governments of the region spared no effort to de-escalate tensions and prevent attacks on Iran by the United States and Israel.

Moreover, the Gulf states have opened several channels of communication with Tehran and extended a hand of cooperation. Unfortunately, the Iranian response was further intransigence and arrogance. Our countries have patiently endured the harm to prevent the region from descending into a third regional war.

Indeed, Iran could have become a major economic power in the region, and its people could have enjoyed prosperity. Instead, the Iranian regime has squandered billions of dollars. Iran claimed to use these funds to support the resistance, but in reality, the money was diverted to drug trafficking, money laundering, running prostitution networks, and financing countless other nefarious activities.

Today, the Iranian people must have the power to free themselves from this terrorist regime.

For 47 years, the Iranian regime has sought to alter the identity of this great nation by practicing oppression, terrorism, and brutality against its own people.

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Crown Prince Diwan photo  
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 briefed on defense plans and strategies.



PM Diwan photos  
Left: HH the PM conducts an inspection tour of Kuwait International Airport. Right: HH the PM personally checks on citizens and residents injured in the attack on Kuwait International Airport.

## Amir receives regional, global support

By **Munif Naif, Marwa Al-Bahrawi and Fares Ghaleb**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1: In the aftermath of the heinous Iranian attacks on the country, the Ministry of Defense confirmed that it intercepted 97 Iranian ballistic missiles and 283 drones, which were dealt with according to the rules of engagement.**

Official spokesperson of the Defense Ministry Colonel Saud Al-Atwan said the Air Defense forces succeeded in intercepting and destroying a number of ballistic missiles and drones launched towards Kuwaiti territory since the beginning of the Iranian aggression.

He stressed that the effective interception of the missiles and drones resulted in some debris falling on facilities in various parts of the country, causing minor material damages.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health confirmed that the recent attacks resulted in 32 injuries – all are foreigners. Five were admitted for surgery to Adan Hospital, while one death was reported.

Official spokesperson of the Health Ministry Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad disclosed that 32 injured individuals were referred to the Emergency Department at Adan Hospital, indicating that 15 of these individuals were transferred to Jaber Hospital. He added that five were admitted to the Operating Room at Adan Hospital and one death was announced later.

He affirmed the ongoing full preparations in all hospitals, along with the implementation of emergency plans and coordination with the relevant authorities.

He urged the public to obtain information only from official sources and to remain calm, wishing everyone safety and speedy recovery for the injured.

Moreover, the ministry disclosed that the function of outpatient clinics in all hospitals on Sunday was limited to dispensing medications. It said the scheduled non-emergency surgeries were postponed, asserting that appointments will be rescheduled later and patients will be notified about their new appointments through the approved channels to organize workflow and ensure the safety of everyone.

The ministry confirmed that emergency surgeries continue without any changes, while the emergency departments and clinics operate round the clock, fully prepared to handle emergency cases and provide the necessary services without interruption.

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Residents watch as the flames and a black plume of smoke rises from a warehouse at the industrial area of Sharjah City in the United Arab Emirates following reports of Iranian strikes in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Sunday, March 1, 2026. (AP)

## Drone debris hits Dubai homes, injures 2 people

DUBAI, March 1, (KUNA): UAE authorities announced on Sunday that debris from drones fell in the yards of two houses in Dubai after they were intercepted by air defense systems, resulting in two injuries, who received the necessary medical treatment.

The Dubai Government Media Office stated that the sounds heard were the result of the successful interception operations.

Meanwhile, a hostile drone was intercepted and its wreckage caused a fire at one of the berths of Jebel Ali Port in the small hours of Sunday.

No casualties were reported as Dubai Civil Defense teams responded immediately to the incident.

They continue battling against the fire, WAM news agency reported, citing Dubai Government Media Office.

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### Ramadan Timings

Imsak .....	Monday .....	04:54
Iftar .....	Monday .....	17:48
Imsak .....	Tuesday .....	04:53

## Consulate 'ready' to assist Kuwaitis

JEDDAH, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's General Consulate in Jeddah called on citizens in Saudi Arabia's western area and wishing to return home via land to contact the consulate via the following numbers: (+966535571133); (+9652225504); (965159+)

The consulate underlined in a statement necessity of adhering to official guidelines and instructions issued by Saudi Arabia to guarantee safety of passage.

Kuwait's Consul General in Jeddah and Permanent Delegate to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Youssef Al-Tenib called on his compatriots to follow the safety instructions of competent authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Consulate in Jeddah is following up the affairs of its nationals to make sure of their safety and offer the necessary help, if need be, he said in statements to KUNA on Saturday evening.

He advised the Kuwaiti nationals who might face any eventuality to contact the Consulate via the phone No. 966535571133+.

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**8** **Bursa suspends trading as precautionary measure for market safety**



**8** **Kamco Invest reports net profit of KD 9.2 million in 2025**



**9** **NBK wins first place in the 2026 Corporate Olympics**

## Tehran trades strikes with Israel

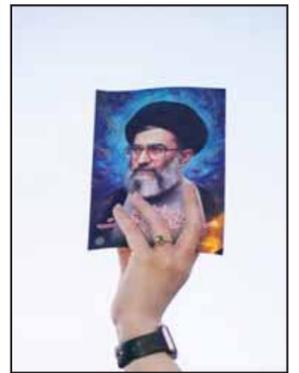
DUBAI, March 1, (AP): Iran vowed revenge Sunday after the killing of its supreme leader and traded strikes with Israel as part of a widening war prompted by a surprise U.S. and Israeli bombardment a day earlier. The U.S. military said three service members have been killed, the first known American casualties from the conflict.

Blasts in Tehran sent a huge plume of smoke into the sky in an area where there are government buildings. Iranian authorities say more than 200 people have been killed since the start of the U.S. and Israeli strikes that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior leaders. Earlier, Iran fired missiles at an ever-widening list of targets in Israel and Gulf Arab states in retaliation while Israel pledged "non-stop" strikes against Iran's leaders and military.

In Tehran, there was little sign that Iranians had heeded Trump's call to overthrow their government. The streets were largely deserted as people sheltered during heavy airstrikes, witnesses told The Associated Press, speaking anonymously for fear of retribution. The paramilitary Basij, which has played a central role in crushing protests, has set up checkpoints across the city, they said.

The U.S. military said three service members were killed and five others seriously wounded, without providing further details. It said several others "sustained minor shrapnel injuries and concussions - and are in the process of being returned to duty."

In Israel, loud explosions caused by missile impacts or interceptions could



A government supporter holds up a picture of the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during a gathering after state TV officially announced the death of Khamenei, in Tehran, Iran, Sunday, March 1, 2026. (AP)

be heard in Tel Aviv. Israel's rescue services said eight people were killed and 28 wounded in a strike that hit a synagogue in the central town of Beit Shemesh, bringing the overall death toll in the country to 10.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, said in a pre-recorded message that a new leadership council had begun its work, and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said a new supreme leader would be chosen in "one or two days."

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## Prayer Timings

Fajr ..... 04:55 Asr ..... 15:19  
 Sunrise... 06:15 Maghrib .. 17:46  
 Zohr ..... 12:00 Isha ..... 19:03

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Warm with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 12-40 km/h and some scat-

## Weather

tered clouds will appear.

**By Night:** Rather cold with light to moderate freshening at times over areas northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 15-50 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	25	14
Abdaly	24	12
Jahra	25	15
Salmiyah	22	17
Jalaliyah	23	11
Nuwaisib	22	15
Wafra	24	14



Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi visits an injured serviceman. Jahra Governorate photo

## Jahra Gov. visits gov't agencies, reviews operational readiness

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: In line with efforts to monitor the readiness of government agencies and enhance field coordination, Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi conducted inspection tours of several government and service agencies in Jahra Governorate to assess their preparedness and operational readiness under the current circumstances.

According to a press release issued by Jahra Governorate, the tours included visits to some of those injured in the Iranian attack, during which the governor ensured the quality of care provided and directed that all necessary support be offered.

He reviewed operational plans, precautionary measures, and mechanisms for responding to any developments, emphasizing

the importance of raising level of preparedness and strengthening coordination among various agencies to ensure the continuity of services with high efficiency.

Governor Al-Habashi also stressed the need for field readiness and provision of adequate technical and human resources.

He directed relevant authorities to intensify daily monitoring and fully activate emergency plans.

The governor affirmed that Jahra Governorate continues to perform its coordinating and oversight role in cooperation with the relevant authorities to ensure rapid response, maintain public safety, and enhance the efficiency of government operations.

## Spain, India condemn

## Follow UAE orders, Kuwaitis told

ABU DHABI, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's Embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), along with the Consulate General in Dubai, called on Saturday Kuwaiti citizens in the UAE to follow the instructions issued by the official authorities in light of the geopolitical situation and developments in the region.

In a statement to KUNA, Kuwait's Ambassador to the UAE Jamal Al-Ghunaim affirmed that the embassy is monitoring the conditions and the safety of Kuwaiti citizens and ensuring that support is available to them when needed.

Ambassador Al-Ghunaim stressed the importance of adhering to the instructions issued by the relevant authorities.

For his part, Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai and the Northern Emirates Khaled Al-Zaabi told KUNA that the consulate remains in continuous contact with members of the Kuwaiti community within its jurisdiction.

Furthermore, Al-Zaabi urged citizens to remain vigilant and to communicate immediately through emergency channels when necessary.

The two missions clarified that the emergency number designated for Kuwaiti citizens in Abu Dhabi is (+97150 681 7788), while the Consulate General in Dubai has designated the emergency

number (+971 56 365 1212), urging everyone to keep these numbers on hand and to contact them when needed.

### Spain condemns

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a phone call on Saturday from Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation Jose Manuel Albares.

During the call, the Spanish minister reaffirmed Spain's condemnation of the Iranian aggression targeting the State of Kuwait and other countries in the region, stressing the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### India affirms solidarity

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a phone call on Saturday from India's Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Subrahmanyan Jaishankar.

During the call, Dr. Jaishankar expressed the Republic of India's solidarity with the State of Kuwait in light of the Iranian attack that targeted the country, reaffirming the importance of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

# No hiccups as industrial output is on track – PAI

## MoH limits medicines dispensation

By Marwa Al-Bahawi  
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
 and Agencies

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced the activation of its emergency plan in the Shuaiba Industrial Area and raised the level of preparedness across its sectors, in light of current regional circumstances and in coordination with local authorities and security agencies.**

In an official statement, PAI highlighted that it is continuing to monitor the security situation in the area and is prepared for any developments.

The authority reassured citizens and residents that the situation is currently stable and that production operations at industrial facilities are proceeding as usual.

It urged everyone to rely on official sources for information, emphasizing that the safety of

facilities and workers is a top priority.

PAI confirmed that its emergency teams are working around the clock to ensure the continuity of production, the stability of supplies, and the smooth operation of exports.

**Cut in meds dispensation:** The Ministry of Health announced on Saturday evening that outpatient clinics in all hospitals will be limited to dispensing medications for one day, in order to manage resources and focus efforts in light of the regional situation, as part of temporary organizational measures for Monday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry explained that all scheduled non-emergency surgeries have been postponed for Monday. Appointments will be rescheduled, and patients will be notified of alternative times as soon as possible. Emergency surgeries will continue without interruption. Emergency departments and clinics are operating at full capacity 24/7 to receive urgent cases.

The operating hours of primary healthcare centers will remain unchanged. Approximate-

ly 30 percent of the health centers operate 24 hours a day.

**Exam dates announced:** As part of the procedures for supervisory job examinations, the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Education, Hamad Al-Hamad, has announced the dates for the postponed exams for the 2025/2026 academic year, for candidates who were unable to attend the original exam due to medical reasons, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Hamad explained that the postponed electronic exams for supervisory positions will take place on Tuesday, March 3 and Wednesday, March 4 at the Jabriya Training Center.

The practical exam for Interior Design (Engineering Drawing) for the position of Technical Supervisor - Head of Department will be held on March 2 at Al-Faiha Intermediate School for Girls in Faiha. The practical exam for Computer Science for the position of Technical Supervisor - Head of Department will be conducted at the Jabriya Training Center.

## France, Kuwait mark 35th 'versary of 'Desert Storm'

PARIS, March 1, (KUNA): The French and Kuwait armed forces commemorated the 35th anniversary of "Operation Desert Storm" at Parc Andre Citroen city park in Paris on Sunday.

Attending the ceremony were senior military officers and diplomats from both sides, as well as US diplomats and the National President of the Gulf War Veterans Association Christophe Louvet.

Along with young French military cadets, the French veterans of the Gulf war also attended the ceremony.

Speeches were delivered by various officials, marking the occasion of the first Gulf war, known as Desert Storm. After the ceremony both sides exchanged souvenirs and put flowers to remember falling heroes.

The monument took place for those who died for France in external operations, with Kuwaiti and French flags hoisted at the ceremony.

The speeches highlighted the heroic operation of French troops in securing various areas during the war, and crucial military aid operations that resulted in eliminating the enemy.

The attendance included Mr. Olivier Maigne, Inspector General of the Armed Forces, representing Ms. Alice RUFO, Minister Delegate for Veterans and Remembrance.

Omar AL-Duwaisan, First Secretary, representing His Excellency Abdullah Al-Shaheen, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait. \*Ms. Ashley SAMPSON, Vice Consul, representing His Excellency Charles Kushner, Ambassador of the United States.

Pierre Henriot, Member of Parliament for Vendee. Admiral Osama Hasan, Defense Attaché, State of Kuwait.

Jean Baptiste Romain, Director of the National Office for Veterans and Victims of War (ONACVG), Paris.

Laurent Veysiere, Director of the ECPAD (Audiovisual Production and Communication Establishment for the Armed Forces).

Jacky Gavard, President of the National Order of Merit, Meuse Section.



Kuwait University photo  
 Kuwait University Director Prof. Dr. Dina Musaead Al-Mailam speaking to the female international students.

## International students safety priority in prevailing situation

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Kuwait University Director Prof. Dr. Dina Musaead Al-Mailam conducted an inspection visit to the male and female international student dormitories on the Sabah Al-Salem University City campus on Friday evening, February 28.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, the visit aimed to check on the students' well-being, identify their needs, and monitor the services provided, given the current circumstances in the re-

gion. Dr. Al-Mailam emphasized that the safety of all students is a top priority for the university administration, noting that the university is continuously monitoring developments and coordinating with relevant authorities to take all necessary measures.

During the visit, the director listened to students' feedback, stressing the importance of direct communication and enhancing support to ensure a safe and stable environment for all students.

## Contingency Plan

### Ban on distribution of 'Iftar' meals

## Can pray 'Isha,' but not 'taraweeh' in mosques

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: To prevent gatherings amid the impact of current regional events, the Ministry of Social Affairs, through the Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations, has issued a circular to all heads of boards of registered charitable organizations in the country to declare the ban on the distribution of Iftar meals, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The circular allows an exception for meals served inside mosques. The measure is part of necessary safety procedures and will remain in effect until further notice.

### Bottled water

Based on the directives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the purchase of mineral drinking water has been limited to a maximum of five cartons per person at both central markets and cooperative society branches due to the exceptional circumstances currently affecting the country, re-

ports Al-Jarida daily quoting sources from the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS).

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry also announced an adjustment to the working hours of all food distribution branches, effective March 1, 2026, to ensure the continued availability of essential goods and facilitate access to food supplies for beneficiaries.

The ministry confirmed that this measure aims to enhance preparedness and streamline services, noting that food distribution branches will operate daily from 11:00 am to 11:00 pm until further notice.

### Taraweeh prayer

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced on Saturday that it will perform only the Isha prayer and will cancel the Taraweeh prayer in all mosques in Kuwait until further notice, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It highlighted that this decision

comes in light of the current developments in the region.

### Air pollution

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) says it is closely monitoring current developments around the clock through an activated emergency plan, which includes continuous monitoring of air pollutant levels in all stations nationwide, with immediate announcements of any abnormal increases in gaseous pollutants, reports Al-Anba daily.

The acting Director General of EPA, Nouf Behbehani, told KUNA that, "So far, no abnormal increase in air pollutant concentrations has been detected as a result of recent events. Ballistic missile interception operations are carried out at high altitudes. Intercepting missiles at high altitudes disperses any potential byproducts and does not affect air quality in populated residential areas."

nuity of the educational process.

The university said in a statement that updates or new decisions will be communicated promptly through official channels, urging everyone to rely on verified sources and avoid circulating rumors or unverified information.

Abdullah Al-Salem University announced Sunday the extension of remote learning and suspension of in-person attendance on Monday, March 2, until further notice, citing current national circumstances and prioritizing student safety.

to guarantee the safety and security of everyone, adding that decisions or measures are announced only through the official channels and websites of academic institutions as they occur.

It urged everyone to obtain accurate information from official sources and avoid being swayed by rumors or unreliable news.

Kuwait University announced Sunday that classes will continue via remote learning until further notice, prioritizing the safety of students and university staff while ensuring conti-

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari  
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff  
 and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research confirmed in an official statement that the minister is closely and continuously monitoring the current situation in coordination with the public and private academic institutions and relevant authorities in the country.

The ministry emphasized that all decisions and measures being taken aim

## Other Voices

## The most expensive things we eat

By Ahmad alsarraf

THE renowned researcher and author B. Lovejoy recently published an intriguing study in History magazine on the most expensive and valuable foods, concluding the following:

"Throughout history, some foods have commanded astronomical prices. Certain foods were costly due to the difficulty of cultivating or finding them, or because they were far from markets, while others were valued for their mythical or symbolic significance.

Spices were once more valuable than gold, and several wars were fought over them.

Saffron, known as "red gold," has been highly prized for thousands of years. Today, it is the most expensive spice, with prices ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per kilogram due to the labor-intensive harvesting process. The high demand has also led some people to flood the market with counterfeit saffron.

Truffles have commanded exorbitant prices for centuries, even before becoming a luxury item in the modern era. Their mysterious nature added to their value, as no one knew exactly how they were formed. Truffles could be located using trained dogs, and white truffles can fetch around \$4,000 per pound.

For years, pineapple was considered a symbol of luxury, gracing the tables of royalty and the elite before becoming widely available.

Caviar, particularly Beluga from Caspian Sea sturgeon, became a luxury commodity in 19th-century Europe. The decline in wild sturgeon populations, combined with soaring demand, transformed caviar into a delicacy reserved for the elite.

The high price of caviar is due to the long maturation period of sturgeon, which can take more than a

decade to produce eggs, as well as the meticulous processing required to salt and grade each batch.

Albino Beluga caviar can exceed \$35,000 per kilogram, and its declining numbers from overfishing and habitat loss have cemented its status as a symbol of wealth and exclusivity.

Today, even with aquaculture, high-quality wild caviar remains one of the most expensive foods available.

Bird's nest soup has been a delicacy in Chinese cuisine for centuries. It is a delicacy made from the hardened resin of swallows' nests made from their saliva and clings to the high walls of caves. Collecting these nests was once a perilous task, requiring skilled climbers, which contributed to their rarity and high price.

Ambergrisine is a waxy, gray substance secreted by sperm whales and is considered one of the most unusual and valuable delicacies in history. It has been called "sea treasure" or "whale vomit," even though it actually originates in the whale's rectum. The substance forms in the whale's intestines, beginning as a protective secretion, and then hardens in the sea into a pale, rock-like mass that eventually washes ashore.

Ambergrisine can fetch thousands of dollars, not for its appearance, but for its exceptional aroma, often described as a mixture of fallen leaves on a forest floor. While it was once used in cooking, today ambergris is prized primarily for perfumery, with a large piece costing around \$100,000.

A joke goes that a lecturer at a weight-loss health event asked attendees what the most expensive thing they had ever eaten was. The answers included all the items mentioned above.

However, the lecturer rejected all the answers, saying that for most people, the most expensive thing they had ever eaten was a slice of their wedding cake.

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## High time satellite channels respect month of Ramadan

"WITH the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan each year, the media compass should ideally align with the spirit and sanctity of the season. Yet what we witness on some satellite channels suggests otherwise. The blessed month turns into a frenzied race for ratings, where commercial interests often eclipse professional standards and the true journalistic mission," Imam and preacher **Mohammad Al-Fouzan** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.



Mohammad Al-Fouzan

"For Muslims, Ramadan is a time of worship, reflection, and spiritual elevation. It is an occasion when families gather around one table and, often, one screen. The responsibility of satellite channels therefore becomes even greater in terms of curating content that respects the viewer's intellect and taste, and that harmonizes with the reverent atmosphere of this holy month.

"We are not against permissible entertainment, serious dramas or purposeful variety programs. The recurring concern, however, lies in content that veers towards cheap sensationalism or presents material ill-suited to the sanctity of the month. Regrettably, some channels continue to treat Ramadan as an "advertising harvest season," flooding schedules with programs while giving insufficient thought to quality or appropriateness of the content.

"The result is a glut of repetitive shows, media noise, and an unnecessary squandering of viewers' time, at a time when the media should serve as a partner in promoting positive values and strengthening family bonds. Responsibility here is shared. Channels must demonstrate greater professional awareness, producers should strive to create work that elevates public taste, and viewers, too, play a vital role through discerning choices and by withholding ratings from content that does not merit their support.

"Experience has shown that high-quality, conservative programming can achieve widespread popularity when delivered with professionalism and excellence. The call is not for restrictions or censorship, but for balance, and respect for the sanctity of the month.

"Ramadan is a precious annual opportunity for the media to present content that is both enriching and engaging, and to reaffirm that true success is not built on fleeting sensationalism, but on meaningful material that respects the viewer's intellect and reflects society's values.

"The question that resurfaces each year is - isn't it time for some satellite channels to realize that respecting Ramadan does not stand in opposition to success, but rather is a pathway to it?"

### Also:

"It is truly shameful for a writer to continue writing articles simply for the sake of publication," Kuwaiti writer **Hussein Al-Rawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"One day, my twelve-year-old nephew, Ghanem, came to me with a spark of childlike confidence in his eyes and said, "Uncle, I can be a writer like you! I can write and publish articles!" I looked at him with endearing surprise, then smiled and asked him how. He confidently replied that he could write an article about US President Donald Trump in less than a minute using ChatGPT.

"Before I could even grasp his enthusiasm, he had already given his command to ChatGPT. A few seconds later, several lines appeared before him, containing some information and some description. Ghanem turned to me, as if declaring victory.

"That was when I understood that the new generation has begun to treat writing like a keyboard. One click and it's over. However, the reality is far more complex.

"Those who rely heavily, or almost entirely, on ChatGPT to write their articles can hardly be called "writers." Writing is not merely stringing together lines or arranging information. It involves spirit, thought, and a unique touch that cannot be borrowed from any machine, no matter how powerful.

"Articles produced by ChatGPT always come out lifeless, devoid of warmth, pulse, and the familiar feel of a real writer. A machine can arrange sentences, but it cannot provide the "magic plot" that brings an article to life, the spirit

that makes a text fluid and emotionally resonant, or the ability to capture subtle details. This is a skill possessed only by someone with experience.

"I once browsed a local newspaper and found many articles that seemed like identical copies, all produced by the same machine. Their style was flat, their numbering odd, and even their titles nearly identical, revealing beyond any doubt that they were not written by their authors, but by the fingers of a specific app.

"The strange thing is that some writers do not realize that ChatGPT has a distinct, easily recognizable tone. Technology is not the enemy, but it can never replace a human columnist. A true columnist writes with their soul, not with an AI platform. A true writer infuses their experience into their sentences, giving their text a life that no machine can replicate. This is something Ghanem has not yet grasped, and perhaps he will understand it when he grows older, when he realizes that it takes more than the press of a button to become a good writer."

"Joint ownership is one of the most common forms of ownership in society, especially with inherited real estate or assets shared by more than one person," Kuwaiti writer **Sarah Al-Jassem** for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Despite the apparent ease of transferring or dividing such properties, joint ownership often leads to numerous disputes. For this reason, the separation and allocation of joint shares is considered the fairest legal mechanism for ending joint ownership and guaranteeing the rights of all parties.

"Separation and allocation involve determining each partner's share in the jointly owned property, enabling each party to manage their share independently. This mechanism is based on the legal principle that no one can be forced to remain in joint ownership unless there is a legal provision or an agreement to the contrary.

"Kuwaiti law governs the separation and allocation of shares among jointly owned parties, ensuring the protection of rights and the achievement of justice. This can be done either through amicable division or by resorting to the courts to resolve the dispute when an agreement cannot be reached.

"This mechanism ensures fairness and prevents harm to any party, allowing each partner to use or dispose of their share independently.

"Legal awareness plays a vital role in such cases, extending beyond litigation to include educating partners about their rights, verifying the validity of documents, and refraining from disposing of jointly owned shares before examining the legal status and properly documenting ownership, especially in cases of inheritance or joint purchase.

"Seeking amicable solutions whenever possible is the best approach, provided there is mutual agreement among the parties and it does not violate public order or cause harm to any partner.

"Legal procedures protect partners from unfair division or harm to their share. The separation and specification of jointly owned shares is not merely a legal formality, but a legal guarantee for property rights and a means of resolving disputes to achieve justice.

"If an agreement cannot be reached, any partner has the right to resort to the courts, where a specialized expert in property division is appointed. The expert determines each partner's share based on the nature of the jointly owned property and its divisibility.

"If it is determined that a physical division can be made without causing harm, the court orders the separation and allocation of the shares. However, if dividing the property would cause significant damage, the court may order it to be sold at public auction, with the proceeds distributed among the partners.

"Under Kuwaiti law, the separation and allocation of undivided shares is a fundamental legal tool for ensuring stability and protecting private property. Legal awareness and expert advice are essential to achieving a fair and secure division."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

## Defense Minister takes stock of situation

# 'Security heads must lead patrolling'

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah chaired on Saturday a meeting with security leaders, in the presence of Undersecretary Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, in light of the current escalations in the region and to review the readiness of the security sectors in dealing with various developments.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yusuf stressed the necessity of the continuous field presence of all security leaders and the close monitoring of the situation, Ministry of Interior said in a statement.

He directed the reinforcement of security patrol deployments and the securing of vital sites, key facilities, and essential services in the country to ensure the maintenance of a stable security situation, statement added.



Sheikh Abdullah



Sheikh Fahad

Furthermore, he also emphasized the importance of full coordination with all relevant state agencies to ensure rapid response and immediate handling of any emergency, affirming that the security agencies are fully prepared to receive any reports via the Emergency No. (112) and to deal with them efficiently.

The Ministry of Interior renewed its call for everyone to exercise accuracy and obtain information from official approved sources, and not to follow rumors that may affect societal security.

The Ministry of Interior also affirmed that all state sectors are working in full harmony to preserve the security and safety of the country and the reassurance of citizens and residents.

Kuwait's Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Saturday was briefed on the events and field updates, in the presence of Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Sharian and the Ministry's Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah.

In a news statement, the ministry said that the minister and the Chief of Staff were told about measures taken and the Armed Forces' operational preparedness.



Kuwait Airways photo

Chairman of the Board Captain Abdulmohsen Salem Al-Fuqaan, accompanied by the acting CEO Captain Abdulwahab Ibrahim Al-Shatti.

## Kuwait Airways Chairman visits T4 on National Days

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: As part of Kuwait Airways' commitment to strengthening direct communication with its employees, Chairman of the Board Captain Abdulmohsen Salem Al-Fuqaan, accompanied by the acting CEO Captain Abdulwahab Ibrahim Al-Shatti and other company leaders, conducted a field visit to Terminal 4 of Kuwait International Airport.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Airways, the visit coincided with Kuwait's National Day celebrations, during which Captain Al-Fuqaan met employees from various operational and ground services departments.

He shared Iftar with the employees in a warm and friendly atmosphere, and expressed appreciation for their continuous efforts and professional dedication, which contribute to providing an exceptional travel experience.

During the tour, Captain Al-Fuqaan reviewed workflow and daily operational procedures, and commended the vital role of ground services staff.

He emphasized that these field visits reflect management's belief in the importance of direct communication with employees and listening to their feedback, which helps develop the work environment and create a culture of appreciation and institutional excellence.

Captain Al-Fuqaan concluded by extending his congratulations to the political leadership and the people of Kuwait on the occasion of the national holidays.

## Mol declares readiness for secure Girgean fest

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Ministry of Interior affirmed its full readiness to ensure smooth traffic flow and enhance security and safety in all residential areas as the Girgean celebration approaches, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It is worth highlighting that the Girgean festival is held from 12-15 of Ramadan when children go from house to house, and people distribute sweets and nuts.

The ministry urged citizens and residents to follow traffic and security regulations and organizational instructions.

It stressed that those planning events associated with the celebration, such as bringing amusement vehicles, mobile food trucks, bicycles, or performances outside their homes, were advised to contact their local police station in advance to coordinate and take necessary safety measures for all participants.

The ministry emphasized that these procedures aim to regulate celebration activities without disrupting traffic flow, ensuring public safety.

It urged parents to supervise and accompany their children while visiting homes and to educate them on safety guidelines.

The ministry called on drivers to adhere to speed limits and exercise extra caution, especially on internal roads where children are more active during the celebration.

The statement noted that the ministry has prepared a comprehensive security and traffic plan for the holy month of Ramadan, including a strategic deployment of security and traffic patrols across governorates to strengthen preventive measures and support public safety.

## Declare cash via 'Sahel' on arrival & departure

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The General Administration of Customs (GAC) announced the launch of a new electronic service for cash declaration through the "Sahel" application, which aims to simplify procedures for arrivals and departures at customs ports and improve compliance with regulations, reports Al-Rai daily.

GAC explained that the service allows travelers to electronically declare any cash exceeding 3,000 Kuwaiti dinars or its equivalent in foreign currencies, either before or during transit through the ports. This process saves time and reduces paperwork.

The system also issues an electronic declaration notice that can be verified by relevant authorities at the ports, enhancing transparency and improving the efficiency of control procedures. The initiative is part of Kuwait's ongoing efforts toward digital transformation and the development of government services.

# 6 out on bail in land grab case

Man caught with gun, ammo

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Detention Renewal Judge has released six defendants on bail in the agricultural land allocation case, while a senior employee and former directors of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) remain in custody pending further investigation.

The release order applies to citizens who, according to the investigation, had lent their civil identification cards to others to obtain agricultural land in their names in exchange for money.

The prosecution has charged the senior employee, former directors, several other employees, and additional individuals with bribery, intentional damage to state property, facilitating the misappropriation of subsidies allocated for agricultural land, forgery of official documents, and money laundering related to the sale of these farms.

Investigators revealed an organized network suspected of exploiting agricultural land allocation systems and regulations for illicit gain. This network enabled individuals to acquire farms illegally, sell them, and benefit from government subsidies intended for lawful recipients. The investigation is ongoing, with the possibility of additional defendants being added in the coming period.

**Gun, ammo seized:** The General Department of Criminal Investigations arrested a man found in possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Ministry of Interior explained that a search of the suspect's residence, carried out after obtaining legal authorization from the Public Prosecution in accordance with established procedures, led to the discovery of the unlicensed firearm and a quantity of ammunition, confirming a violation of the law.

The suspect and the seized items were taken into custody, and legal proceedings have been initiated in preparation for referring the case to the competent authority.

The ministry emphasized that possessing weapons and ammunition without a license is a punishable crime, affirming that security agencies continue to monitor and pursue activities that threaten public safety, and take deterrent measures against offenders.

**Stealing 'ration' food:** A government employee was arrested for stealing subsidized food items, chicken, and a wallet from an expatriate's vehicle in Hawally, reports Al-Anba daily.

The Criminal Security Sector explained that the theft case, initially filed against an unknown suspect, was closed after the employee was identified and apprehended. The suspect admitted giving the stolen food items to his family. His use of the victim's bank card helped expedite the investigation, as surveillance cameras captured him withdrawing money.

According to the case report, an expatriate went to the Hawally Police Station to report that his vehicle had been broken into. The stolen items included a wallet containing KD 90, civil ID cards for him and his family, a bank card with the PIN written on the back, and food items he had received from a Kuwaiti friend, such as rice, oil, milk, and chicken.

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# Kuwait receives 'solidarity' calls condemning Iranian aggression

Foreign leaders vow support for defense measures

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received phone calls from Qatari and Italian counterparts on Saturday, condemning the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait and other countries in the region.

Both Sheikh Mohammad Al-Thani, Qatari premier and foreign minister, and Italy's Antonio Tajani, along with Kaja Kallas, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, emphasized the right of the affected nations to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call Sunday from his Uzbek counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs Bakhtiyor Saidov, to discuss regional security and bilateral concerns.

According to a statement issued



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

by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the call emphasized condemnation and strong denunciation of the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait and other regional countries, reaffirming the right of affected nations to take all necessary measures to protect sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Saturday a telephone call from Palestinian Vice

President Hussein Al-Sheikh.

During the call, Al-Sheikh condemned Iran's attack that targeted Kuwait and the region's states, affirming the rights of the countries targeted by Iran to take all required measures to protect their sovereignty and territories, the ministry said in a statement.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a phone call on Saturday from Canada's Foreign Minister, Anita Anand.

During the call, both sides reaffirmed their condemnation of the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait and other countries in the region.

The ministers emphasized the right of the affected nations to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a phone call on Saturday from UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed.

During the conversation, both officials strongly condemned the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait, the

UAE, and other regional countries.

They emphasized the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, held a phone call with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, Ayman Safadi.

During the call, both officials strongly condemned the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait, Jordan, and other regional countries.

They reaffirmed the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, held a phone call on Saturday with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Abdulatif Al-Zayani.

During the call, both officials strongly condemned the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait, Bahrain, and other regional countries.

They reaffirmed the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

## 900-day rollout in housing cities

PAHW advances service hubs

By Mohammad Al-Enezi  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** Deputy Director General for Control and Information Systems at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) Amina Al-Awadhi confirmed the launching of the first tenders for the establishment of suburban centers in South Sabah Al-Ahmad City.

This is in line with the directive of the Cabinet to expedite the implementation of vital projects, which complement the plan of PAHW to complete the infrastructure of public services and facilities in new residential cities.

Al-Awadhi disclosed that the Authority issued two tenders for suburban centers (N2 and N6). Each tender is for the construction of a suburban center that will consist of a variety of public and service buildings -- central market and shops, a community development center, a social unit, a children's club, a citizen service building, a police station, a Kuwait Municipality building, a mosque, residences for the imam and muezzin, a health center, an ambulance center, buildings designated for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a library, a post office, and a gas branch. The implementation period for each of these tenders is set at 900 days.

She added that the institution is moving forward with key projects

in Al-Mutlaa City, specifically by issuing two separate tenders for the development of the N1 and N3 district centers. Each of these tenders involves the construction of a comprehensive district center, which will house numerous public services and facilities, including the main central market with shops, a community development center, a social services unit, a citizen services building, a police station, a Municipality building, and a mosque complex (complete with residences for the imam and muezzin).

Each center will consist of the main health center, an ambulance center, buildings for the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, a library, a post office and a gas station. The completion timeframe for the implementation of each tender is set at 900 days.

Al-Awadhi also confirmed that a separate tender was issued for the construction of 12 underground irrigation tanks to complete the integrated infrastructure works in Al-Mutlaa City, while enhancing the city's readiness and the sustainability of its service facilities.

She asserted that these projects are part of the strategic plan aimed at accelerating the pace of completing service projects, providing an integrated residential environment that meets the needs of citizens, and consolidating the foundations of the quality of life in new housing cities.

## Technical panel OK's key infrastructure requests

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1:** The Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, met on Tuesday, during which it approved the following:

■ Request of the Ministry of Public Works to allocate a route connecting the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City exit (N1-N10) to the South Sabah

Al-Ahmad City wastewater treatment plant,

■ Request of the same ministry to allocate a route for the proposed sewage line connecting South Saad Al-Abdullah City to the water treatment plant,

■ Annexation of a portion of the state-owned land adjacent to Plot 30 in Kuwait City (Qibla),

■ Annexation of East Taima to Taima,

■ Renumbering the plots in Jahra Governorate,

■ Request of the Ministry of Interior to amend the decision that the Council issued in 2006 in order to designate the site in Ardiya for government use as the permanent headquarters of the Maritime Transport Department of the General Directorate of the Coast Guard, replacing the Police Union headquarters,

■ Proposal of Council member Abdullah Al-Enezi to allocate a site for the construction of a tall flagpole for the flag of Kuwait.

Continued from Page 1

## Tehran trades

The strikes and counterattacks underscored how the killing of Khamenei, and U.S. President Donald Trump's calls for the overthrow of the decades-old Islamic Republic, carried the potential for a prolonged conflict that could envelop the Middle East. It's the second time in eight months that the U.S. and Israel have teamed up to use military force against Iran, and a startling show of military might for an American president who swept into office on an "America First" platform and vowed to keep out of "forever wars."

In the 12-day war in June, Israeli and American strikes greatly weakened Iran's air defenses, military leadership and nuclear program. But the killing of Khamenei, who had ruled Iran for more than three decades, creates a leadership vacuum, increasing the risk of regional instability.

As word spread of Khamenei's death, some people in Tehran could be seen cheering from rooftops, witnesses said. Others mourned, as a black flag was raised over the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad.

"You have crossed our red line and must pay the price," Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said in a televised address Sunday. "We will deliver such devastating blows that you yourselves will be driven to beg."

Trump warned that any retaliation would only lead to further escalation.

"THEY BETTER NOT DO THAT," Trump fired back in a social media post. "IF THEY DO, WE WILL HIT THEM WITH A FORCE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE!"

In a sign of how the attack could stoke regional unrest, hundreds of people stormed the U.S. Consulate in Pakistan's port city of Karachi on Sunday. Police and paramilitary forces used batons and fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, and at least nine people were killed in the clashes, authorities said.

As U.S. and Israeli strikes have pounded Iran, the Islamic Republic has retaliated with missiles and drone attacks on Israel and nearby Arab Gulf countries hosting U.S. forces.

The air war could rattle global markets, particularly if Iran makes the Strait of Hormuz unsafe for commercial traffic. Around 20% of the world's traded oil passes through the vital waterway, and oil prices are already set for swings.

While Iran struck U.S. bases in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, the attacks have also hit outside of military installations, including a hotel in the Emirati city of Dubai, and Kuwait's international airport. Oman, which has negotiated nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington, said it intercepted projectiles that appeared to target one of its seaports.

Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, blamed such strikes on the U.S. and Israel for starting the war. He said Iran's military units are "somehow isolated" and acting on orders given in advance. He said he had spoken to his counterparts in the Gulf countries and urged them to pressure the U.S. and Israel to end the war.

In repeated barrages across Israel, at least 10 people were killed and more than 120 injured, according to authorities. Many missiles were intercepted, the military said.

Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said Sunday that Israel will have "a non-stop air train" of strikes against military and leadership targets in Iran.

Flights across the Middle East were disrupted, and air defense fire thudded over Dubai. The United Arab Emirates' commercial capital has long drawn business and expatriates by billing itself as a safe haven in a volatile region.

As supreme leader, Khamenei had final say on all major policies since 1989. He led Iran's clerical establishment and the Revolutionary Guard, the two main centers of power in the governing theocracy.

Though Trump called on Saturday for the Iranian people to "take over" their government, there was no sign in Tehran or elsewhere of unrest.

In southern Iran, at least 115 people were reported killed when a girls' school was struck, and dozens more were wounded, the local governor told Iranian state TV.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesperson, said he was not aware of any Israeli or American strikes in the area of the school. U.S. Central Command spokesperson Capt. Tim Hawkins said he was aware of those reports and that officials were looking into them.

Iran's state news agency IRNA said at least 15 people were killed in the southwest, quoting the governor of the Lamer region, Ali Alizadeh, as saying a sports hall, two residential areas and a hall near a school were hit.

Tensions have soared in recent weeks as the Trump administration built up the largest force of American warships and aircraft in the Middle East in decades. The president insisted he wanted a deal to constrain Iran's nuclear program while the country struggled with growing dissent following nationwide protests.

Democrats decried that Trump had taken action without congressional authorization. The White House said it had briefed several Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress in advance.

Though Trump had pronounced the Iranian nuclear program obliterated in strikes last year, the country was rebuilding infrastructure that it had lost, according to a senior U.S. official who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss Trump's decision-making process. The official said intelligence showed that Iran had developed the capability to produce its own high-quality centrifuges, an important step in developing the highly enriched uranium needed for weapons.

## Consulate 'ready'

Meanwhile, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman discussed with Arab leaders on Saturday night the military escalation in the region.

Prince Mohammad, also Prime Minister, and Syrian president Ahmad Al-Sharaa discussed the situation in the region and Al-Sharaa voiced solidarity with Saudi Arabia, official SPA news agency reported.

He expressed Syria's rejection to violations of Saudi Arabia's sovereignty, security and stability.

Prince Mohammad received a phone call from Sultan Haitham bin Tareq, of Oman, who stressed the importance of respecting sovereignty of nations and their territorial integrity.

The Saudi Crown prince also received a call from Lebanese President Joseph Aoun who condemned the Iranian attacks on the Kingdom and voiced solidarity with Saudi Arabia.

## Drone debris

Dubai Civil Defense teams have brought under control a minor fire on the exterior facade of the Burj Al Arab hotel, with no injuries being reported.

The incident resulted from wreckage from a hostile drone that had been intercepted, WAM news agency reported in the small hours of Sunday, citing Dubai Government Media Office.

Elswhere, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Aboul-Gheit condemned on Saturday the Iranian attacks that targeted Kuwait International Airport, and Riyadh and the Eastern region in Saudi Arabia, along with facilities in Dubai.

In a statement, the spokesman for Secretary General Jamal Roshdi said that Aboul-Gheit affirmed that any aggression on the Arab countries' sovereignty is an 'unacceptable and condemned act'.

Aboul-Gheit also condemned the attack on Iraq either the Iranian attacks in Irbil or the Israeli-US aggression in Babylon, stressing that any attack on the sovereignty of Arab countries is a violation of international law.

He expressed full solidarity with Arab countries in the face of these attacks.



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One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 119.173 / Net

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## LOCAL



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, Prime Minister, paid an inspection visit today to the Kuwait Supply Company and the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company.

## Kuwait's Prime Minister conducts field visit to food security facilities

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah conducted an inspection visit Sunday to the Kuwait Supply Company and the Kuwait Flour Mills & Bakeries Company.

During his visit to Kuwait Supply Company, he reviewed the state's strategic stock of essential food items, examining plans for ensuring the availability of various food supplies, the smooth operation of supply chains, and delivery and distribution processes.

At Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, the Prime Minister was briefed by officials on measures to enhance production and bakery operations in line with approved food security plans to meet the needs of citizens and residents.

## Municipality to consider urban planning and signage overhaul

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Municipal Council member Alia Al-Farsi submitted two proposals: first is the adoption of a general site planning code for residential areas to support the implementation of walkable cities, while the second is on the regulation of informational signage on investment residential buildings.

The first proposal of Al-Farsi includes the development of a comprehensive building code (general site planning) for residential areas, suburbs and cities.

The proposed code establishes mandatory requirements for the design and implementation of pedestrian spaces and walkways within urban development projects. It will apply to all residential areas – whether governed by the development regulations and specifications of

Kuwait Municipality or the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) – in line with internationally recognized best practices in sustainable urban planning.

The proposal also calls for the formulation of coordinated regulations and legislation between the Municipality and the General Traffic Department under the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Public Works to regulate pedestrian movement on roads in existing residential areas and neighborhoods that lack walkable infrastructure, including road markings, warning signage, and vehicle speed reduction measures.

Regarding her second proposal, Al-Farsi explained that the objectives are to develop the urban landscape, organize architectural facades, and reduce visual distortion caused by the widespread placement of signs and advertisements in varying shapes, sizes and colors on residential investment buildings.

She said the licensing of advertisements covered by the proposal falls within the jurisdiction of the Municipality, with a grace period to correct the current unregulated situation beginning after the completion of signage licensing procedures and the issuance and installation of the Building Activities Guide.



Al-Farsi

# MEWRE temporarily shuts down power lines after drone incident

Al-Mashaan inspects National Control Center

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Fatima Hayat announced that the overhead power lines in the southern region, in addition to those adjacent to the

Sixth Ring Road, were temporarily shut down due to falling debris from the intercepted drones.

In a press statement, Hayat explained this measure led to a temporary disruption in the electrical grid and partial power outage in different areas. She affirmed that the emergency teams started addressing the issue immediately after the incident, indicating that these teams are

currently assessing the damage and carrying out the necessary repairs to restore power to the affected areas as quickly as possible.

She asserted that the electricity and water situation is under control, and that the electricity generation and water desalination systems are operating at high efficiency. "Monitoring and surveillance are ongoing to ensure the stability and continuity of services," she added.

The ministry advised the public to obtain information only from official sources, while reaffirming its com-

mitment to keep the public informed about the developments as they occur. It implored Almighty Allah to protect the country and its people and to perpetuate the blessings of security, safety and stability upon the dear homeland.

Minister of Public Works and Acting Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Nora Al-Mashaan visited the National Control Center Sunday to check on the stability of the power grid following the outage of several overhead lines caused by shrapnel from intercepted drones.



KRCS photo  
The Board of Directors of the Red Crescent during the emergency meeting at the Society's headquarters.

## Volunteers and logistics on alert

# KRCS boosts emergency readiness

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society held an emergency meeting Sunday under Chairman Khaled Al-Mughames to follow up on current regional developments and enhance logistical readiness.

The board reviewed the results of the Operations and Emergency Committee meeting held Saturday, including approved emergency plans, raised readiness levels for staff and volunteers, and updated operational procedures and field response plans.

It reaffirmed full support for the committee, stressing con-

tinued high readiness and coordination with official agencies to ensure rapid and efficient response when needed.

The meeting also assessed logistical preparedness, confirmed the availability of essential supplies, and assigned volunteers to remain on duty around the clock at the headquarters to respond to any requests.

KRCS reiterated its commitment to its national and humanitarian role, working alongside state institutions and supporting their efforts in emergencies, reflecting its social responsibility and the trust of the Kuwaiti leadership and community.

## MoSA opens tender for 6 wedding halls

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Chairman of the National Cooperative Projects Committee, Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, has announced the launch of a tender for the construction of six wedding halls in several new residential areas.

Al-Ajmi explained that the initiative comes in implementation of the directives of the Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs, Dr. Amthar Al-Huwaila, who called for expediting the completion of community facilities in new housing areas to support family stability.

He explained that the project includes the construction of one wedding hall each in Sabah Al-Ahmad, West Abdullah Al-Mubarak, South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and Jaber Al-Ahmad, in addition to two halls in Al-Mutlaa. The locations were chosen based on urban expansion and rising population density, in order to meet the actual needs of residents in these areas.

Continued from Page 1

## 1 dead,

It added that primary healthcare centers are operating as usual, stating that around 30 percent of these centers operate 24 hours a day to meet the patients' needs.

In other news, the ministry said 34 primary healthcare centers (clinics) in the six governorates are operating 24 hours a day to support healthcare preparedness efforts and ensure the continuity of the provision of services.

The ministry announced that six of these centers are in the Capital Governorate, four in Hawally Governorate, six in Farwaniya Governorate, seven in Jahra Governorate, six in Ahmedi Governorate and five in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate.

### Amir receives calls

On Saturday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a telephone call from Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, during which the latter inquired about the well-being of the State of Kuwait, its leadership, and people.

An Amiri Diwan statement read that this came following the heinous Iranian attack that targeted Kuwaiti and Qatari territories.

Both sides expressed their strong condemnation of this blatant aggression, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of both countries, international law, and the Charter of the United Nations.

Their Highnesses affirmed that this flagrant attack on both countries and several other brotherly nations represents a dangerous escalation that threatens the security and stability of the region. They also emphasized their commitment to utilizing all their resources to support the region's security and maintain its stability, and stressed the necessity of an immediate cessation of escalatory actions and a return to dialogue and diplomatic solutions.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received on Saturday a telephone call from Egypt's AbdelFattah El-Sisi to reassure about Kuwait's state, its leadership and people after the heinous Iranian attack on Kuwait's territories.

During the call, El-Sisi expressed Egypt's strong condemnation and denunciation of this blatant attack which is a violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, international law and the UN Charter.

President El-Sisi affirmed Egypt's standing with, and support for, the sisterly state of Kuwait in all measures taken to maintain its sovereignty, security and stability.

He confirmed harnessing Egypt's potential to back Kuwait, praying to Allah to protect Kuwait, its people from any evil.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir expressed thanks and appreciation to President El-Sisi, wishing him everlasting well-being.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call from Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni Saturday who inquired

about the State of Kuwait, leadership and people following Iran's blatant attacks on Kuwait.

Meloni strongly condemned this "blatant violation" of Kuwait's sovereignty, international law and UN Charter.

Meloni reaffirmed Italy's support to the State of Kuwait and its people, as well as backing to all measures taken to safeguard Kuwait's sovereignty, security and stability.

His Highness the Amir expressed gratitude for Prime Minister Meloni, wishing her good health.

On Sunday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call from Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who expressed reassurance regarding the State of Kuwait, its leadership and people following the Iranian attack on its territory.

President Aoun expressed Lebanon's strong condemnation and denunciation of this blatant aggression, describing it as a violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

He affirmed Lebanon's full solidarity with Kuwait and support for all measures to safeguard its sovereignty, security and stability, stressing readiness to mobilize all capabilities and resources to support Kuwait and its people from all harm.

For his part, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere appreciation to President Aoun, wishing him continued good health and well being.

### Crown Prince, PM briefed

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 on Saturday visited the Ministry of Defense's Joint Operations Center and Air Force Operations Center.

They were received by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullh Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Kuwait Army Chief of Staff General Khaled Daraj Al-Shuraian, and his deputy Major-General Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

During the visit, Their Highnesses were briefed on defense plans and strategies, as well as the latest developments following the Iranian attack and measures taken to confront such threats. They were accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Head of the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Earlier, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister visited the Interior Ministry headquarters, where they were received by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

They were briefed on the nationwide deployment of police forces, as well as efforts to enhance public awareness and ensure the circulation of accurate information across social media platforms.

Their Highnesses were accompanied by Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In a separate visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters in Mishref,

Their Highnesses reviewed the latest regional developments in the wake of the Iranian attacks on Kuwait and several sisterly countries.

Upon arrival, they were received by Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and senior ministry officials. They were again accompanied by Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

### Trump, UK PM phone Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Saturday a telephone call from US President Donald Trump who reassured about the State of Kuwait, its leadership and people after the blatant Iranian attack which targeted Kuwait's territory.

During the call, President Trump expressed his country's strong condemnation and denunciation of this heinous attack which is a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, its airspace, and international law and the UN Charter.

President Trump affirmed the United States' standing with Kuwait, its leadership, government and people and support for all measures and decisions taken to maintain the country's sovereignty, stability and security.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the great greetings and appreciation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Trump for the unwavering stance and support for Kuwait, its leadership and people.

His Highness voiced his sincere thanks to President Trump for this call, wishing him everlasting well-being.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call Sunday from UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who strongly condemned the blatant Iranian attack on the territory of the State of Kuwait.

During the call, the British Prime Minister expressed the United Kingdom's firm denunciation of the assault, describing it as a flagrant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, security and airspace, as well as international law and the UN Charter.

He also condemned attacks that targeted civilian facilities, affirming the United Kingdom's rejection of such aggression.

Prime Minister Starmer underscored his country's solidarity with Kuwait's leadership, government and people, supporting all measures taken to preserve its sovereignty and security, and expressing readiness to extend all possible support.

His Highness conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to His Majesty Charles III, voicing appreciation for the United Kingdom's steadfast stance.

His Highness also expressed sincere thanks to the British Prime Minister for his initiative and supportive position.

### PM visits injured, inspects T1

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Saturday visited Farwaniya Hospital to personally check on citizens and residents injured in the attack on Ku-

wait International Airport.

He was briefed by medical staff on the condition of the injured and expressed his wishes for their swift recovery.

Earlier in the day, His Highness conducted an inspection tour of Kuwait International Airport, accompanied by President of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

During the visit, he reviewed measures taken by PACA, in coordination with relevant government bodies, to address the damage sustained by the Terminal One (T1) at Kuwait International Airport and to ensure immediate repairs and the restoration of operations.

His Highness praised the efforts and coordination among authorities operating at the airport, underscoring the importance of handling the situation with a strong sense of responsibility.

Immediately after the drone attack on Terminal One (T1) two days ago that caused minor damage to airport facilities, the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) confirmed that all the relevant State agencies were mobilized to deal with the incident and ensure the safety of airport staff and visitors.

The PACA stressed that the efforts of various ministries, security, military and administrative bodies were coordinated and in full force. It said the airport was completely evacuated as per the emergency procedures, while meticulous plans were implemented to secure the site.

As part of these coordinated efforts, army units arrived at the site and thoroughly searched the area to guarantee its safety, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and PACA. This joint operation proved the high level of preparedness and professionalism of the security and military forces in handling emergencies.

The concerned authorities immediately implemented the emergency procedures, such as securing the site, assessing the damage, identifying material losses and restructuring operations as per the safety and quality standards.

The concerned agencies worked continuously to mitigate the damage, repair what was damaged, and clear debris to ensure the airport's reopening and normal operation as quickly as possible.

This is in line with the ongoing preparedness efforts and enhanced coordination among various agencies to ensure the protection of vital facilities and the safety of the public.

The incident reaffirmed the professionalism, precision and efficiency of State agencies in handling any emergency, proving the ability of Kuwait to maintain its security and stability under all circumstances.

### Emergency plan in full force

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah stated "praise Allah as efforts are intensified to implement the emergency plan under the current circumstances."

The minister made the statement when he visited those confined at Jaber Hospital – who were wounded in the recent attacks. He disclosed "I visited the patients individually, checked on them and lis-

tened to their concerns. They praised the Ministry of Health for providing medical care. Most of them are in excellent condition."

He added that after Jaber Hospital, he will visit Jahra and Adan Hospitals, stating "this is our duty to check on all the injured who served Kuwait."

He affirmed "we receive instructions from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We hold continuous meetings chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to implement the emergency plan."

He said each minister is carrying out the tasks assigned to them within their ministry. He expressed his gratitude for all the efforts being made at all levels, adding "praise Allah, we lack nothing in Kuwait."

He emphasized that the government is providing more than ever before, and that no one living in Kuwait will experience shortages.

He pointed out that "the crisis will not last long. It will end. We will return to our previous situation, or even better. I urge all citizens and residents not to film things they are unaware of, as this spreads fear among the public. Those who film should keep their filming to themselves."

He confirmed that the Civil Defense Department receives all reports about anything that happens to anyone in Kuwait, and that they are being transparent and providing information to the public about the reality.

He added "I hope the fear and panic will dissipate. I visited the cooperative societies and the flour mills yesterday and saw the people queuing. The quantities produced by the mills are more than usual, if not double, then triple. Water supplies are available and things are fine. I hope you remove the fear from your hearts."

### KNG Deputy Chief visits Operations Center

Deputy Chief of the National Guard (KNG), Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, visited the Operations Center, security systems, and Crisis Management Directorate at KNG headquarters, where he was welcomed by senior leaders and officials.

According to a press statement Sunday, Sheikh Faisal conveyed the greetings and appreciation of KNG Chief, Sheikh Mubarak Hamoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the commanders, while listening to a briefing on the Guard's readiness and the competence of its personnel.

The statement added that Sheikh Faisal emphasized the importance of continuously enhancing operational readiness, strengthening coordination and integration with relevant authorities, and maintaining internal front protection to ensure the nation's security, stability, and overall safety under wise leadership and guidance.

### Defense Minister checks on injured

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullh Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital of the Armed Forces on Sunday, personally checking on the health and recovery of individuals who had been injured due to falling debris during Air Defense operations.

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullh Al-Salem Al-Sabah visited Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital of the Armed Forces on Sunday, personally checking on the health and recovery of individuals who had been injured due to falling debris during Air Defense operations.

## INTERNATIONAL

# United States Senate candidates in Texas make final pitches to voters ahead of Tuesday's primary

AUSTIN, Texas, March 1, (AP): A heated US Senate race in Texas entered its final stretch on Sunday with candidates on both sides of the aisle making final pitches to voters ahead of Tuesday's primary, the nation's first big contest of the 2026 midterm elections.

Incumbent Republican US Sen John Cornyn is trying to hold on to the seat he has held since first being elected in 2002, but finds himself in the toughest race of his long career against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and US Rep Wesley Hunt.

"Complacency is a killer," Cornyn told voters Saturday at a seafood restaurant in The Woodlands, a Houston suburb. "It kills relationships. It kills careers."

Democrats haven't won a Senate race in Texas since 1988, but they see an opening this year to help boost their long-shot hopes of recapturing a Senate majority, especially if Republicans nominate Paxton, who is popular with MAGA voters but has had years of legal problems.

On the Democratic side, state Rep

James Talarico, a self-described policy wonk who emphasizes his crossover appeal to Republicans, faces US Rep Jasmine Crockett, a rhetorical brawler on Capitol Hill.

Candidates and political groups are pouring money into the race at a record pace, partly fueled by Talarico's fundraising and allies of Cornyn trying to save his long career.

Heading into Tuesday's primary elections, the cost of advertising and reserved advertising time had topped \$110 million, the most ever for a Senate primary, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact.

A late visit to Texas on Friday by US President Donald Trump, who used the Port of Corpus Christi as a backdrop for a speech highlighting energy production, drew all of the top Republican US Senate candidates. And while Trump said Friday he's "pretty much" decided whom to endorse, he declined to name who he'll actually support.

"We have a great attorney general, Ken Paxton. Where's the Ken? Hi, Ken," Trump said. He continued, "And we

have a great senator, John Cornyn. Hi, John."

Noting that they're in a "little bit of a race," Trump added: "It's going to be an interesting one, right? They're both great people."

Despite his long career in Texas politics, Paxton has painted himself as a Washington outsider and a staunch supporter of Trump.

"I'm not going up to Washington, D.C., to join the swamp club," Paxton said at a campaign event in Fort Worth. "I will go up there and fight for you."

Former US vice president Kamala Harris on Friday endorsed Crockett in Texas' Democratic primary for US Senate, a notable stamp of approval from a major establishment figure as Crockett fights fears that she's seen as too controversial to win a general election.

Harris recorded a robocall with her endorsement, a spokesperson for Crockett's campaign confirmed Friday.

Crockett has built a national profile as a fierce rhetorical brawler on Capitol Hill and has energized some voters hungry for leaders willing to take on

Trump and his allies on the right.

Tuesday's primary in Texas is the nation's first big contest of the 2026 midterm elections.

Harris' endorsement came on the same day Trump visited Corpus Christi, Texas.

The Texas seat is a long shot for Democrats but some party members hope the stars align in the November general election.

The Harris endorsement was first reported by the Texas Tribune.

Meanwhile, Latin Grammy winner Bobby Pulido's music fills the air well before he walks into an adult day care center to round up support for his congressional campaign, his voice crooning in Spanish from a speaker in the corner.

A few of the people playing cards and bantering playfully at the South Texas center ask about the man in cowboy boots, dark jeans, leather jacket and an ivory cowboy hat as the Democrat makes his entrance, but most barely notice. Then the music fades, and Pulido takes a microphone.



Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate, speaks during a campaign event on Feb 16, in Tyler, Texas. (AP)

## Many Republicans quick to line up behind president

# Trump's 'America First' campaign battle cry gives way to military strikes abroad

WASHINGTON, March 1, (AP): US President Donald Trump, whose fierce denunciation of military adventurism abroad fueled his unlikely rise to the top of the Republican Party, risks becoming ensnared by that very type of conflict.

The US and Israeli attack on Iran Saturday cemented Trump's decade-long transformation from a candidate who in 2016 called the Iraq War a "big, fat mistake" to a president warning Americans to prepare for potential casualties overseas and encouraging Iranians to "seize control of your destiny." The strikes were also at odds with Trump's warnings during the 2024 campaign that his Democratic rival, Kamala Harris, was surrounded by "war hawks" eager to send troops overseas.

Trump justified the action as necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons or developing missiles capable of reaching the US, less than a year after he said airstrikes "obliterated" their capability. US intelligence has also said Iran's weapons capability was substantially degraded.

For Trump, memories of the false pretenses underlying the Iraq War could lead to pressure to prove his assertion that Iran's weapons production posed an imminent threat to Ameri-

cans. And for Republicans already facing a challenging election year weighed down by economic anxiety, the shift could force a reassessment of how the attacks fit into the "America First," isolationist-leaning movement the party has embraced during the Trump era.

While Trump might benefit from an early rally-around-the-flag effect, that could be hard to sustain for weeks and months, if not longer, a far different scenario from the swift effort to remove Nicolás Maduro from power earlier this year in Venezuela.

Success on day one is one thing. The days after are inherently unpredictable.

"The question is whether Iran's goal is simply to outlast America and whether Trump has strategic attention deficit disorder, which will allow the Iranians to rise from the ashes and claim victory," said Michael Rubin, a historian at the American Enterprise Institute who worked as a staff adviser on Iran and Iraq at the Pentagon from 2002 to 2004.

Many Republicans were quick to line up behind the president, including Texas Sen John Cornyn and state attorney general Ken Paxton, who are fighting a competitive Senate primary election on Tuesday.

"Hopefully lives will not be lost needlessly, but this always entails



US President Donald Trump speaks at the Port of Corpus Christi in Corpus Christi, Texas on Feb 27. (AP)

risk," Cornyn said Saturday at a campaign stop near Houston. "But we know that Iran will not stop unless the United States and our allies stop them."

Others, like Sen Todd Young of Indiana, praised the military and were critical of Iran while noting that Americans will have questions that "must be answered."

And there was outright opposition from some who have long criticized

overseas entanglements, including Sen. Rand Paul, the Republican of Kentucky, who lamented the start of "another preemptive war."

Former Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia Republican who was once a close Trump ally, rejected the president's warning of Iran's nuclear capabilities.

"It's always a lie and it's always America Last," she wrote online. "But it feels like the worst betrayal this time

because it comes from the very man and the admin who we all believed was different."

The administration did little in advance to prepare Americans for such a dramatic action.

Vice President JD Vance told The Washington Post this week there was "no chance" that the US would become involved in a drawn-out war as it did in Iraq. During his State of the Union speech on Tuesday, Trump dedicated just a few lines to Iran, arguing the country and its proxies have "spread nothing but terrorism, death and hate."

That stands in stark contrast to the lengthy runup to the Iraq War.

President George W. Bush, for example, named Iraq as a member of the so-called axis of evil in January 2002. Then-Secretary of State Colin Powell delivered a now-infamous speech to the United Nations in February 2003, making the case for war based on the inaccurate assertion that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. The invasion, which ultimately dominated Bush's second term, didn't begin until March 2003.

"We just have to be honest that there is a sense that this was not sold to the American public sufficiently," Andrew Kolvet said Saturday on "The Charlie Kirk Show," an online program

founded by the late conservative activist who was close to Trump. "Perhaps there will be an opportunity on the backend of this."

Kolvet was willing, however, to give Trump leeway, noting these are the types of challenging decisions presidents are entrusted with.

"President Trump has earned a big, long leash," he said. "Not an unlimited one. But a very long one to make tough decisions."

Polling suggests that many Americans share Trump's concerns about Iran's nuclear capabilities, even if they're less confident in the president's response. About half of US adults were "extremely" or "very" concerned that Iran's nuclear program poses a direct threat to the US, according to a poll this month from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Most Americans, 61%, said Iran is an "enemy" of the US, which is up slightly from a Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted in September 2023. But their confidence in the president's judgment when it comes to relationships with adversaries and the use of military force abroad is low, the new poll shows, with only about 3 in 10 Americans saying they have "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of trust in Trump.

# France's nukes, Europe's worries about Trump in spotlight as Macron heads to top-secret sub base

PARIS, March 1, (AP): They lurk in the oceans, a last resort to pulverize attackers with nuclear fire should France's commander in chief ever make that terrible call.

French President Emmanuel Macron, the person with the power to unleash France's nuclear arsenal, will on Monday update French thinking on the potential use of warheads carried on submarines and planes, if it ever came to that. This in the context of concerns in Europe that Russian war-making could spread beyond Ukraine, and uncertainty about US President Donald Trump's steadfastness as an ally.

For decades, Europe has lived under a protective umbrella of U.S. nuclear weapons, stationed on the continent since the mid-1950s to deter the former Soviet Union and now Russia. Lately, however, some European politicians and defense analysts are questioning whether Washington can still be relied upon to use such force if needed.

As the only nuclear-armed member of the 27-nation European Union, the questions are particularly pertinent for France.

Possible revisions to France's nuclear deterrence policy, sure to be carefully calibrated and scrutinized by allies and potential enemies alike, could be among the most consequential decisions that Macron makes in his remaining 14 months as president, be-



A Rafale M single seater fighter jet is catapulted on France's flagship Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier in the Arabian Gulf, Jan. 12, 2016. (AP)

fore elections to choose his successor in 2027.

That Macron feels a need to bare France's nuclear teeth, in what will be the commander in chief's second keynote speech laying out the country's deterrence posture since his election in 2017, speaks to his concerns, voiced multiple times, about geopolitical and defense-technology shifts that threaten the security of France and its allies.

Those voicing doubts about Washington's reliability include Rasmus

Jarlov, chair of the Danish parliament's Defense Committee.

"If things got really serious, I very much doubt that Trump would risk American cities to protect European cities," he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "We don't know but it seems very risky to rely on the American protection."

He and others are turning to France for reassurance. In the longer term, Jarlov argues that other European nations also need to arm themselves with

nuclear weapons - an almost unfathomable prospect when U.S. protection seemed absolute in European minds.

"The Nordic countries have the capacity. We have uranium, we have nuclear scientists. We can develop nuclear weapons," he said. "Realistically, it will take a lot of time. So in the short term, we are looking to France."

The world has changed dramatically since Macron's first policy-making nuclear speech in 2020, with new uncertainties shoving old certainties aside.

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, now entering its fifth year, brought war to the EU's door and repeated threats of possible nuclear use from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

China is expanding its nuclear arsenal. So, too, is North Korea's nuclear-armed military. In October, Trump spoke about U.S. intentions to resume nuclear tests for the first time since 1992, although U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright later said that such tests would not include nuclear explosions.

The chosen site for Macron's speech on Monday - the Île Longue base for France's four nuclear-armed submarines - will drive home that French presidents also have nuclear muscle at their disposal in an increasingly unstable world. They each can carry 16 M51 intercontinental ballistic missiles armed with multiple warheads.

## Crete sees illegal crossings spike

# EU readies tougher migration plans

YMPAKI, Greece, March 1, (AP): A Heron 2 drone whirs off the tarmac on a new surveillance mission.

The aircraft's sensors scan for boats along the 350-kilometer (220-mile) stretch of sea between Libya and the Greek island of Crete and can detect activity hidden below deck.

Crete, Greece's largest island, saw a threefold increase in irregular migration last year, becoming the country's busiest point of entry with about 20,000 arrivals, even as overall irregular migration to Europe fell by 26% in 2025 compared with the previous year, according to data from Frontex, the European Union's border agency.

One of Europe's deadliest migration corridors, where unclaimed bodies often wash up on shore, the passage to Crete is fueled by wars and instability across Africa and is growing busier even as pressure eases on other Mediterranean routes.

As the EU readies tougher measures to combat illegal migration, Frontex says it will focus resources on Crete in an attempt to end the surge in arrivals.

Eastern Libya has become a key launch point for smugglers, undercutting years of EU efforts to curb departures and making Crete a new pressure point.

Many boats leaving Libya are overcrowded and barely seaworthy, attempting a long, exposed journey across the Libyan Sea, leading to tragedies such as a sunken fishing trawler



Frontex officers from the Italian Guardia Di Finanza OPV Osum patrol by speedboat on the Aegean Sea near Heraklion, Crete Island, Greece on Feb 16. (AP)

that killed at least 700 in 2023.

Greek authorities recently rescued 20 migrants and recovered four bodies from a vessel in distress south of Crete. Dozens of others are believed missing.

Each rescue underscores the same brutal reality: The crossing is a gamble with lives.

The route to Crete is significantly longer and more perilous than the short trip from Turkey to nearby Greek islands. It requires larger vessels capable of navigating open sea for days and a different operational response from Frontex, including bigger patrol boats and expanded aerial surveillance.

## Europe

**British Cabinet Office minister resigns:** British Cabinet Office minister Josh Simons on Saturday left the government following controversy over a think tank he previously led that reportedly gathered information on journalists.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had asked his independent ethics adviser, Laurie Magnus, to examine whether Simons had breached the ministerial code. Simons said he had been cleared of breaking the code but decided to step down, saying his continued presence in office had become a "distraction."

The row centers on Labour Together, a think tank Simons ran before entering government. Media reports alleged that the organization paid for background research into journalists who had published a critical story about it. (Xinhua)



Simons

**Brussels orders probe of Mandelson:** The European Union has ordered its anti-fraud office to investigate Peter Mandelson, the disgraced former British ambassador to the United States, over his ties to convicted Jeffrey Epstein while serving as Brussels' trade representative.

"Given the circumstances, and the significant amount of documents made available publicly, the European Commission also asked OLAF on 18 February to look into the mat-

ter," a commission spokesperson who was not authorized to be publicly named said late Thursday.

The European Anti-Fraud Office, known by its French acronym OLAF, is the EU's watchdog agency that has tackled migration authorities and lawmakers for financial fraud and rights violations, among other violations. Its office did not confirm the investigation.

An influential British figure, Mandelson is under investigation for alleged misconduct in public office linked to his relationship with Epstein.

Mandelson's ties to Epstein have threatened the leadership of Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who appointed the veteran statesman to the diplomatic post despite warnings about his friendship with the disgraced financier.

Mandelson has been a major player for decades in the center-left Labour Party, known as a skilled political operative dubbed the "Prince of Darkness" for his cunning and ruthlessness. (AP)

**Azerbaijan calls for restraint:** Azerbaijan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Saturday voiced deep concern over the ongoing military escalation in the Middle East, warning that it poses a serious threat to both regional and global security and stability.

In a statement, the ministry called on all parties involved to exercise maximum restraint, avoid any actions that could further inflame tensions, and return to the negotiation table. "We emphasize the importance of respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all states, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and universally recognized norms and principles of international law," the ministry said. (Xinhua)

# Le Pen will not run in 2027 if court imposes electronic bracelet

PARIS, March 1, (AP): France's far-right leader Marine Le Pen said she won't run for president next year if a Paris appeals court orders her to wear an electronic bracelet over alleged misuse of European Union funds.

Le Pen said she hopes the appeals court clears her in key verdict set for July 7 - a ruling that may derail her presidential ambitions.

"I know very well that the decision regarding this candidacy isn't mine to make," she said Wednesday evening on news broadcaster BFM TV.

Le Pen, 57, is challenging a March 2025 verdict that found her and other members of her National Rally party guilty of misusing EU Parliament funds in the hiring of aides from 2004 to 2016 who allegedly worked for the party instead of doing parliamentary tasks.

If convicted, she could be sentenced to a ban from elected office or she will have to wear an electronic tag - or both,



Far-right leader Marine Le Pen walks outside the courtroom during a short break in her appeals trial, in Paris, France on Feb 11. (AP)

among other options. "It's in the hands of three judges who will decide whether or not the millions of French people who

want to vote for me will be able to do so," Le Pen said, following the five-week appeal trial that ended earlier this month.

Cambodia expresses deep concern over situation in Middle East

## Asia, Europe can be powerful force for peace, stability, prosperity: Cambodian FM

PHNOM PENH, March 1, (Xinhua): Cambodian Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn said on Sunday that Asia and Europe, together, can be a powerful force for peace, stability, and prosperity.

Sokhonn, who is also a deputy prime minister, said in a message to mark the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Day.

"On the celebration of the 30th anniversary of ASEM, I am pleased to extend, on behalf of the Royal Government and people of the Kingdom of Cambodia, warm greetings and best wishes for peace, happiness, sustainable development and lasting prosperity to all the peoples of Asia and Europe," he said.

"For three decades, the ASEM has served as a vital platform for dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding," he added.

Sokhonn said that bringing together partners from Asia and Europe, including countries and institutions such as the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat, ASEM represents more than half of the world's GDP, population, trade, and tourism.

"It is a bridge between continents, linking cultures, economies, and people," he said.

**Also:**

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia on Sunday expressed deep concern over the situation in the Middle East, a day after the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said in a statement that the country calls on all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint to avoid further escalation that would harm civilian lives



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet poses for photo, along with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, not in photo, in Hanoi Vietnam on Dec 11, 2023. (AP)

and undermine peace.

According to the statement, there is no report of any Cambodian hurt, and all Cambodian nationals who are in the region are advised to take extra precaution for their safety.

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**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia has recorded a drop in the number of people arrested, but a rise in the amount of narcotics seized in the first two months of 2026, said a report from the Anti-Drug Department on Sunday.

The authorities had apprehended a total of 3,386 drug-related suspects during the January-February period this year, down 8.4 percent from 3,697 suspects over the same period last year, the report said, adding that the number of cases declined by 6 percent to 1,355 this year from 1,442 last year.

"A total of 584.4 kg of illicit drugs had been confiscated from those suspects' possession during the period from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 2026," the report said.

The amount of confiscated narcotics represented an increase of 180 percent from 208.5 kg seized during the first two months last year, according to the report.

Most of the confiscated narcotics were ketamine, ecstasy, heroin, crystal methamphetamine, methamphetamine pills, cocaine, and cathinone.

The Southeast Asian country has no death sentence for illicit drug traffickers. Under its law, those found guilty of trafficking more than 80 grams of illicit drugs could be imprisoned for life.

### Special counsel files appeal against Yoon's insurrection verdict

## S.Korea's Lee urges efforts to restore trust with DPRK

SEOUL, March 1, (Xinhua): South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Sunday called for continued efforts to restore trust with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Building a peaceful Korean Peninsula, where the two Koreas can grow together through coexistence and cooperation and on a foundation of trust, will be the true way to fully uphold the spirit of the independence movement, Lee said in his commemorative speech delivered at the ceremony marking the 107th anniversary of the March 1 Independence Movement during the 1910-45 Japanese colonization.

Lee stressed that South Korea respected the DPRK's system and will neither engage in any type of hostile acts nor pursue any form of unification by absorption, vowing to continue efforts for dialogue resumption with the DPRK.

Meanwhile, a South Korean court issued an arrest warrant for an executive director of a drone manufacturer who is accused of launching unmanned aerial vehicles into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to test performance for economic gains, local media reported.

The Seoul Central District Court said there were concerns about the suspect destroying

evidence and fleeing. Joint military-police investigators alleged the suspect launched drones four times from Ganghwa Island in Incheon from September last year to January, with flight paths set to pass through Kaesong and Pyeongsan in the DPRK before returning to South Korea's Paju near the border.

The investigators said the alleged acts heightened inter-Korean tensions and could have endangered the public, adding they may have harmed military interests by exposing sensitive information.

**Also:**

**SEOUL:** A special counsel in South Korea said on Wednesday it had appealed the life sentence imposed on former President Yoon Suk-yeol over his insurrection verdict stemming from his martial law declaration.

The special counsel said that the decision was made after reviewing the first-instance rulings, citing concerns over the court's fact-finding and legal interpretations, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The appeal covers both the convictions and sentencing of the defendants, whom prosecutors argue played key roles in the alleged attempt to undermine the constitutional order through the brief declaration of martial law in December 2024.

Yoon, identified by prosecutors as the cen-

tral figure in the case, was previously sentenced to life imprisonment by Seoul Central District Court.

The special counsel maintained that the gravity of the charges and the impact on the country's democratic system warranted further judicial review by a higher court.

Yoon was accused of orchestrating the insurrection by declaring an unconstitutional emergency martial law despite the absence of war, incident or equivalent national emergencies.

Yoon was also charged with mobilizing martial law troops and police to obstruct the National Assembly's resolution to lift the martial law and attempting to detain key political figures, such as the leaders of the main political parties and the parliamentary speaker.

The emergency martial law was declared by Yoon on the night of Dec. 3 in 2024, but it was revoked hours later by the National Assembly.

The constitutional court upheld a motion to impeach Yoon in April of 2025, officially removing him from office.

Yoon was indicted under detention in January of 2025 as a suspected ringleader of insurrection, becoming the first sitting president to be arrested and indicted.



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, center left, and his wife Kim Hea Kyung, center right, give three cheers during a ceremony to celebrate the March First Independence Movement Day, the anniversary of the 1919 uprising against Japanese colonial rule, in Seoul, South Korea on March 1. (AP)



Participants react after hearing the news that South Korea's parliament voted to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol outside the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, on Dec 14, 2024. (AP)

## S.Sudan faces turmoil as ex-officials arrested in wave of detentions

JUBA, South Sudan, March 1, (AP): A former South Sudan finance minister is the latest former government official arrested in a wave of detentions that analysts say shows cracks in the government of President Salva Kiir, who also faces an armed rebellion.

The latest arrest came Friday when Bak Barnaba Chol was taken into custody while attempting to cross the border into Uganda. His arrest followed that of another former minister of finance and planning, Marial Dongrin Ater, who was fired in August.

In the past week, a former central bank governor, a former undersecretary for the ministry of petroleum, and a general in the domestic intelligence agency previously posted to the same ministry have been detained.

The exact reasons for the arrests remain unclear.

Government spokesman Ateny Wek Ateny told local media outlet Eye Radio that the arrests were "not political" and were a "direct response to irregularities identified within the monetary system." He said that a committee was investigating "financial malpractices."

Edmund Yakani, a prominent civic leader, said Saturday that the mood in Juba was tense among politicians fearing detention. "So far, these arrests



South Sudan President Salva Kiir addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Sept. 21, 2023. (AP)

have mostly targeted financial institutions, but if the arrests carry into the security sectors it will be very dangerous," he said.

Daniel Akech of the International Crisis Group said the arrests showed a narrowing of the president's "big tent" coalition, which he has relied on for years to maintain control of a fractured political landscape.

The war in Sudan is hurting South Sudan's economy, which is over-

whelmingly dependent on oil exports. All of South Sudan's oil flows through pipelines in Sudan.

Since the South Sudan war began in 2023, pipeline ruptures have at times put more than 60% of oil production offline. The World Bank estimates that South Sudan's economy shrunk 24% in 2025.

In 2024, the International Crisis Group warned that the disruption of oil production could lead to much wider political violence as Kiir runs out of petrodollars "to keep South Sudan's rivalrous generals and warlords on his side."

The regime is already facing an armed rebellion. Opposition leader Riek Machar is under house arrest and on trial for alleged subversion, charges he denies. Many of his allies have since been arrested or purged from the government. Kiir suspended Machar as his deputy in September after Machar faced criminal charges.

Machar's removal coincided with a sharp increase in violence. The U.N. estimates that thousands were killed in 2025 and 280,000 people have been displaced since December.

A UN inquiry has found that South Sudan's leaders are "systematically dismantling" the 2018 peace agreement, signed to end a civil war and return Machar to a unity government with Kiir. Washington is urging peace talks again.



Police officers chase Shiite Muslims blocking a road and set on fire tires during a protest over the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in Karachi, Pakistan on March 1. (AP)

## 9 killed and two dozen wounded in clash outside US Consulate in Pakistan's Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan, March 1, (Agencies): At least nine people were killed and about two dozen were wounded in violent clashes with police and paramilitary forces Sunday after hundreds of protesters stormed the U.S. Consulate in the Pakistani port city of Karachi, authorities said.

The violence came hours after the United States and Israel attacked Iran and killed the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Police and officials at a hospital in Karachi said at least 25 people were also wounded in the clashes and some of them were in critical condition.

Summaiya Syed Tariq, a police surgeon at the city's main government hospital, confirmed that initially six bodies and multiple injured people were brought to the facility. However, she said the death toll rose to nine after three critically wounded died.

Karachi is the capital of southern Sindh province and Pakistan's largest city.

Senior police official Irfan Baloch said protesters briefly attacked the perimeter of the U.S. Consulate but were later dispersed. "The situation is now fully under our control," Baloch said.

He dismissed as baseless reports that any part of the consulate building was set on fire. However, he said protesters torched a nearby police post and smashed windows of the consulate before security forces arrived and regained control.

Witnesses said dozens of Shiite protesters remained gathered about a kilometer (half a mile) from the consulate, urging others to join them. They said one of the protesters had tried to burn a window of the consulate before security forces arrived there and dispersed the demonstrators.

The provincial government of Sindh in a statement urged citizens to express their views peacefully and warned against engaging in violence.

Shiites also held a peaceful rally in Multan, a city in Punjab province, chanting slogans against Israel and the United States. Mamoona Sherazi, who attended the rally, said she was protesting the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader. She described Khamenei as a fatherly figure and a strong voice for Shiites, adding that he also supported Sunni Muslims facing oppression. "God willing, we will never bow before America and Israel," she said.

Shiites also held a rally near the U.S. Consulate in Lahore, the capital of eastern Punjab province, police said. Faisal Kamran, a senior police official, said demonstrators tried to protest outside the consulate but were not allowed. Police dispersed the crowd when they tried to march toward the building, he said.

A rally was also planned in the capital, Islamabad, and elsewhere in the country. Authorities said the government has stepped up security around the US Embassy in the capital, and

consulates across the country to avoid any further violence.

Shiites make up roughly 15% of Pakistan's population of about 250 million and represent one of the largest Shiite communities in the world. They have frequently staged anti-Israel and anti-U.S. rallies in the past, though clashes of this scale are rare.

**Also:**

**KABUL:** Afghanistan's capital Kabul was attacked by Pakistani air power at around 5:40 a.m. local time on Sunday, triggering a series of explosions and the Afghan air defense forces' fire response against aerial targets. This round of airstrikes lasted for about 20 minutes.

In recent days, military tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have escalated, with several rounds of exchange of fire.

At least 52 people were killed and 66 others injured in Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan since last Sunday, **Hamdullah Fitrat**, deputy spokesman for the Afghan government, said on Saturday.

According to the official, the casualties were reported across the eastern provinces of **Nangarhar**, **Paktika**, **Khost** and **Kunar**, as well as southern **Kandahar**.

Clashes erupted along the border between the two countries about a week ago. Since then, officials have reported that the cross-border hostilities have resulted in numerous casualties from both sides.

### Lat/Am

**Bolivia plane crash death toll rises to 22:** The death toll from a plane crash in the Bolivian city of El Alto on Friday has risen to 22, including four children, Health Minister Marcela Flores confirmed on Saturday.

Flores said that 37 people were injured, with several in serious condition, and all have been transferred to public and private medical centers in El Alto and La Paz. The health system activated emergency protocols to provide immediate and specialized care.

The crash occurred Friday night when a Bolivian Air Force Hercules C-130 military aircraft veered off the runway upon landing at El Alto International Airport and collided with public roads. Dozens were injured and about 20 vehicles, including public transport, were destroyed. (Xinhua)

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**8 Ecuador provinces declare emergency:** Eight provinces of Ecuador declared a state of regional emergency for 90 days amid impact of heavy rains, the country's National Secretariat of Risk Management (SNRG) said Friday. The emergency state applies to Guayas, Esmeraldas, Los Rios, El Oro, Santa Elena and Manabi in the coastal area, Loja in the south and Chimborazo in the center, the SNRG said in a press release.

The decision was adopted by the National Emergency Operations Committee "due to the level of impact on the population, the road network, infrastructure and livelihoods," said the release. The state of emergency orders the activation of all entities at different levels of government in the affected territories to respond to the emergency. In addition, all public entities involved are requested to allocate the necessary resources to support the population affected by rain and floods. (Xinhua)

### Subcontinent

**15 dead in India ammo factory blast:** At least 15 persons died and more than a dozen were injured when a powerful blast took place inside an ammunition factory in India's southwestern state of Maharashtra on Sunday, confirmed the local police on Sunday.

The blast occurred in the Kalmeshwar area of the state's Nagpur district at around 07:00 a.m. The factory was engaged in the production of industrial explosives used in mining and other infrastructure projects.

At least 15 bodies have been recovered from the factory premises. Over 12 people have been admitted to a local hospital. Among the injured, some are in a critical condition. All victims are factory workers, said a police officer over the phone while giving details. (Xinhua)

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**Sri Lanka launches drug prevention week:** Sri Lanka launched National Drug Prevention Week on Sunday as part of the government-backed "A Nation United" campaign, which was aimed at curbing illegal drugs and expanding rehabilitation and public awareness efforts.

The initiative aims to suppress the sale of illegal drugs and help people with drug addiction access rehabilitation. The program also seeks to raise public awareness and encourage social dialogue on how to address the drug crisis. During the week, officials will run an island-wide awareness campaign at state institutions and schools, with programs involving government ministries and affiliated institutions.

Organizers said they also planned new awareness activities targeting teachers, students and the public, including promotional campaigns carried out through public transportation such as buses, three-wheelers and school transport vehicles. (Xinhua)

## KPC announces LPG prices for March

KUWAIT CITY, March 1, (KUNA): Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) announced on Sunday the new prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), propane and butane, for the current month of March.

In a statement to KUNA, KPC said that the price of propane will be USD 545 per

metric ton during March, while butane will be sold at USD 540 per metric ton.

Liquefied petroleum gases, propane and butane, are used in the petrochemical industry in addition to other applications such as cooking fuel, heating and various other uses.

## Oil sector employs over 20,000 Kuwaitis

### KPC issues new promotions under Administrative Circular No. 2/2026

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: In accordance with the unified promotion system for grade 17 and above positions in the oil sector, Managing Director for Global Marketing at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Khaled Al-Sabah issued a number of promotion decisions under Administrative Circular No. 2/2026.

These decisions stipulate the following promotions:

■ Islam Jamal as Head of the Crude Oil Sales Team in the Crude Oil Sales Department

■ Dana Al-Ghanim as Head of the Naphtha/Gasoline/Liquefied Gas Sales Team

■ Mishari Al-Hamoud as Head of the Naphtha/Gasoline/Liquefied Gas Sales Team at Global Marketing

■ Fahad Al-Kandari as Head of the Fuel Oil, Specialty Products and Marine Fuel Sales Team in the Fuel Oil, Specialty Products and Marine Fuel Sales Department at Global Marketing

These promotions will take effect at the beginning of March.

In a related move, Bader Al-Munaifi, Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC), introduced organizational changes

in the Onshore Processing Facilities Group under the Joint Operations Directorate.

Saleh Mohammad Al-Jabri was appointed Head of the Operations and Maintenance Team, reporting directly to the Director of the Onshore Processing Facilities Group.

In the Projects and Technical Services Group at the Wafra Joint Operations, Mishari Nasser Al-Shuwaib was appointed Head of the Projects Planning and Control Team, reporting to the Director of the Projects and Technical Services Group.

Meanwhile, sources said KPC and its subsidiaries will carry out a comprehensive round of promotions and appointments throughout 2026 aimed at infusing fresh talent into the oil sector, which is distinguished by its highly qualified and competent national workforce.

This step is consistent with KPC's strategy, implemented since its 46th anniversary, to empower Kuwaiti professionals at all organizational levels.

Sources added that the number of Kuwaiti nationals employed in the oil sector reached 20,336 in 2025, commending their efficiency, leadership capabilities, and vital contributions to the advancement of oil industry.

Suspension of trading starting Sunday, March 1, 2026, until further notice

## Bursa suspends trading as precautionary measure for market safety

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Boursa Kuwait Chairman Mr. Bader Nasser Al Kharafi said that the security of Kuwait and the safety of its citizens and residents are the highest priority and take precedence over all other considerations.

"The decision to suspend trading effective tomorrow is a precautionary and responsible measure taken in full coordination with the Capital Markets Authority and the relevant state authorities to ensure the protection of investors' interests and to uphold the principle of market fairness under these exceptional circumstances," he said.

"We want to reassure the local and international investment community that Boursa Kuwait's technical and operational infrastructure enjoys the highest levels of resilience and fortification and has not been affected by the ongoing events. Our business continuity plans are operating at full efficiency to safeguard data and financial assets, reflecting the maturity of Kuwait's capital market infrastructure and its ability to manage crises with a high degree of professionalism," he added.

AlKharafi concluded his statement saying that "We stand fully prepared to resume operations upon issuing official directives, reaffirming our commitment to continuing our role as a key pillar of the national economy. We pray to the Almighty to protect Kuwait, its leadership, government and people and to preserve its security and stability."

### Trading Suspension and Operational Readiness

In line with its responsibility and in the interest of safeguarding all market participants and employees amid the current circumstances facing the country, Boursa Kuwait announced the suspension of trading sessions effective Sunday, March 1, 2026, until further notice, in full coordination with the Capital Markets Authority and the competent regulatory authorities.

The temporary precautionary measure aims to protect investors' interests and ensure market fairness, prioritizing public safety standards and the stability of the financial system in light of recent security developments.



Bader Al Kharafi



Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait affirms that all its technical systems and databases are operating efficiently and have not been impacted by the ongoing events. The company stressed that investors' funds and financial positions remain fully secured in accordance with the applicable regulatory frameworks and that technical and operational emergency teams are currently operating under established business continuity plans to ensure maximum readiness to resume operations once conditions stabilize.

### Transparency and Communication

Boursa Kuwait remains committed to transparency and continuous communication with all market participants and stakeholders and asks that they obtain updates exclusively through its official website and verified social media platforms to ensure access to accurate and up-to-date information as soon as it is issued.

Boursa Kuwait also reaffirms its confidence in the strength and resilience of the Kuwaiti economy and the ability of state institutions to overcome the current challenges, praying to Almighty God to preserve the State of Kuwait's stability and security under its wise leadership.

Recommends 10 fils cash dividends

# Kamco Invest reports net profit of KD 9.2 million in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced today its financial results for the financial year ended 31 December 2025 reporting a net profit of KWD 9.2mn (EPS:26.78 fils) compared to a profit of KWD4.4mn in 2024 (EPS:12.72 fils).

Total revenue for the year stood at KWD33.7mn (2024: KWD25.4mn), while revenues from fees and commissions stood at KWD18.6mn, an increase of 10.3% compared to previous year. Fee income continues to be the largest component of the company's income representing 55.2% of total income reported during 2025.

Net profit was positively impacted by a one-off favorable legal outcome. In addition, the early-stage investment in a new strategic platform at the beginning of 2025 led to an increase in general and administrative expenses due to initial operating costs. This investment is aligned with the Company's long-term growth strategy and is expected to support sustainable earnings in the years ahead.

A key corporate development was Burgan Bank's acquisition of a 100% stake in United Gulf Bank (UGB), the major shareholder of Kamco Invest, beginning of 2025, further strengthening the Company's ownership structure and strategic alignment.

During the year, the Company successfully raised over USD1.5bn across several products and transactions and grew its assets under management by USD626mn, a growth of 3.9%, to reach USD16.5bn as of 31 December 2025.

Equity funds and portfolios managed by Kamco Invest continued to demonstrate strong outperformance relative to their peers and respective benchmarks. During the year, the Kamco Investment Fund delivered an impressive return of 20.71% and was recognized across six categories at the LSEG Lipper Fund Awards, underscoring the fund's exceptional performance and consistent risk-adjusted returns.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the year, we expanded our presence in the Saudi market with the launch of two Shariah-compliant funds: the Kamco Freestyle Saudi Equity Fund and the Kamco SAR Murabaha Fund. In addition, the Kamco Saudi Equity Fund and the Kamco Freestyle Saudi Equity Fund ranked among the top performers in their respective categories in the Saudi market in 2025, based on published performance data on the Saudi Exchange website. These achievements reflect the strength of our investment capabilities and disciplined portfolio management approach.

On the Alternative Investments side, which includes real estate, private equity, and structured products, the team continued to broaden its platform and enhance its value proposition to clients. During the year, the team launched new products and entered into key partnerships, further diversifying its offering. In addition, USD82.0mn was distributed to investors across its products, underscoring the platform's ability to generate realizations and deliver tangible returns.

In the first quarter, we partnered with an experienced management team to establish a new venture, European Green Logistics Space, in which Kamco Invest hold a majority stake. The platform specializes in the development, investment, and management of logistics assets across Europe. This strategic transaction underscores our commitment to expanding recurring fee income streams while providing regional clients with differentiated access to opportunities in the fast-growing and sustainable logistics sector. Additionally, besides equity investments in real estate assets, the team ventured into a new asset class by investing in the private debt of real estate projects.

Kamco Invest further reinforced its footprint in the technology investment space through the innovative strategy pursued by its closed-end, nearly fully deployed JEDI Fund. The Fund represents a distinctive institutional-grade platform focused on technology investments in the United States, particularly Silicon Valley, and has delivered strong performance, achieving a Gross Multiple on Invested Capital (MOIC) of 1.3x.

Building on this momentum, the private equity team launched during the year a GCC-focused pre-IPO tech fund and completed two strategic investments in Saudi Arabia: Foodics, the region's leading cloud-based technology and payments platform for restaurants, and Unifonic, a prominent communications platform that enhances engagement between businesses and their customers.

The Company successfully exited its investment in Yargici, a leading Turkish fashion and accessories brand held by one of Kamco Invest's private equity funds, through a sale to TIMS Group. The exit highlights Kamco Invest's commitment to delivering long-term value to its clients while ensuring the continued growth and success of its portfolio companies.

During the year, the team entered into a strategic partnership with Flexam Invest, part of the New York Life In-



Sheikh Talal Ali Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah



Faisal Sarkhou

### Talal Al-Ali:

■ Our steadfast focus on our core fee-based businesses has been central to reinforcing our competitive positioning and resilience

### Sarkhou:

■ We delivered robust growth across our business, translating into growth in our total revenue and net profit, and a stronger shareholders' equity base



vestment Management group, to expand its private credit platform into leasing-focused investment strategies. This collaboration further diversifies our alternative offerings

and enhances access to specialized asset classes. The first fund under this partnership was successfully launched and achieved its initial closing during the year, marking

an important milestone in building this new vertical.

Over the year, the Investment Banking team successfully executed 14 landmark transactions totaling USD7.0bn, reinforcing our leadership in capital markets. The transactions consisted of thirteen sukuk and bond issuances worth USD6.7bn for financial institutions and corporates in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar in addition to one liquidity management transaction for USD304mn for a Kuwaiti company.

A majority of the transactions were for Kuwaiti banks, in USD and KWD, amounting to USD3.3bn, followed by the UAE with three transactions worth USD1.5bn, Saudi Arabia with two transactions totaling USD1.4bn, and Qatar with one transaction worth USD500mn.

Kamco Invest was awarded the "Kuwait's Best for Alternative Investments" at the Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2025, highlighting the Company's rapid growth and sustained success in the alternatives space. In addition, Kamco Invest was named "Kuwait's Best Investment Bank - DCM" at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025, in recognition of the team's outstanding performance in executing bond and sukuk transactions for local and regional clients.

In 2025, Kamco Invest maintained a strong focus on expanding its presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates and accelerating business growth, in line with its long-term strategy of strengthening its presence across leading financial and commercial centers. The Company broadened its reach and enhanced its service capabilities to continue delivering integrated, client-centric solutions that address evolving investment needs. This strategic expansion further supported the growth of fee-based revenues and contributed to the resilience and sustainability of its income streams.

The company's brokerage arm, First Securities Brokerage Company (Oula Wasata), continued to expand its client base by leveraging its online trading platforms. Supported by the strong performance of Boursa Kuwait, Oula Wasata recorded a 55% increase in turnover. During the year, it also obtained the Qualified Broker License after fulfilling all regulatory requirements and successfully completing the Market-Wide Tests.

The Company enjoys a strong financial position with KWD69.5mn in shareholders' equity as of 31 December 2025. In its most recent review dated May 2025, Capital Intelligence maintained its "BBB" long-term credit rating and "A3" short-term rating with a stable outlook.

The Board of Directors proposed to the Annual General Meeting a cash dividend of 10fils per share.

Sheikh Talal Ali Abdullah Al Jaber Al Sabah, Chairman, said, "Despite the uncertainties and challenges prevailing across capital markets, we are proud of the solid performance and meaningful progress we have achieved. Our steadfast focus on our core fee-based businesses has been central to reinforcing our competitive positioning and resilience. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our presence in key markets and delivering sustainable, long-term value to our clients and shareholders".

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer, commented, "During the year, we delivered robust growth across our business, translating into growth in our total revenue and net profit, and a stronger shareholders' equity base. Our progress extended well beyond financial metrics, encompassing an expanded market footprint, improved performance across our managed products, and the successful execution of transactions. These accomplishments reflect the depth of our team's expertise, the clarity of our strategic direction, and the resilience and agility of our business model in navigating an evolving global environment".

Sarkhou concluded, "Our focus will remain on growing fee and commission-based income generated from the products and services we offer to our clients, in addition to strengthening synergies with Burgan Bank through closer collaboration, integrated initiatives, and expanded capabilities aimed at delivering enhanced value and more comprehensive solutions to our clients".

**About Kamco Invest**  
Kamco Investment Company K.S.C (Public) "Kamco Invest" is a regional non-banking financial powerhouse headquartered in Kuwait with offices in key regional financial markets, established in 1998 and listed on Boursa Kuwait in 2003. It is an Independently managed subsidiary of Burgan Bank, a member of KIPCO Group, adopting highest standards of corporate governance and regulated by the Capital Markets Authority and Central Bank of Kuwait.

Kamco Invest has AUM of over USD16.5bn as of 31 December 2025 allocated to various asset classes and jurisdictions, making it one of the largest asset managers in the MENA region. It has acted as investment banker to deals exceeding USD48.3bn from its inception till 31 December 2025 in equity capital markets, debt capital markets and mergers & acquisitions.

KPC activates contingency plans

A professional event featuring physical and intellectual challenges

# Oil could reach \$140 if Iran-US war escalates

**By Najeh Bilal**  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: As political tensions in the region intensify in view of the outbreak of war between Iran and the United States of America on Saturday, questions were raised on whether this conflict will drive oil price higher after it surged to nearly \$70 per barrel on the first day.

Many wondered about the implications in case Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz.

An oil expert and a reliable source addressed these concerns, affirming that oil price could increase to between \$120 and \$140 if the war continues.

They told the newspaper that targeting oil fields could lead to a major catastrophe for the global oil sector, given the world markets' reliance on Gulf crude.

They believe the war will not be prolonged, particularly after the United States declared that its operations would last only a few days to realize certain objectives.

Oil analyst and expert Kamel Al-Harami projected that a barrel of oil could reach \$120 if the political escalation that began Saturday between Iran and the United States intensifies.

He warned that the global oil landscape will be gravely impacted should Iran target oil fields in the Gulf region.

He said the Strait of Hormuz is experiencing unusual activity, with a noticeable increase in maritime traffic to and from Gulf states, including Kuwait, as a precaution against possible closure amid rising tensions.

Asked about the consequences for oil prices if any Gulf country's oil fields are attacked, Al-Harami stated that forecasting prices under such circumstances is extremely difficult.

Nevertheless, he stressed that the repercussions will be severe, while reiterating his belief that the war will not be extended, especially in light of the United States' announcement that it would last only a few days to realize its objectives.

Al-Harami added that shutting

down the Strait of Hormuz could pose big challenges for Iran, as it would risk losing its customer base.

"Iran exports its oil daily to China and other Asian nations through this strategic passage, making the closure detrimental to its own interests," he explained.

He indicated that the United States will not allow obstruction of the strait, particularly as tensions continue to escalate.

Meanwhile, a source from the oil sector told the newspaper that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) laid down contingency plans in case of emergencies, dismissing the likelihood of the Strait of Hormuz being shut under any circumstances, especially considering its prior experience in managing similar crises.

The source pointed out that the strait has never been entirely closed, even during the height of political turmoil, citing its continuous operation throughout the Iran-Iraq War.

The source added that if the present war lasts, the price of a barrel of oil could reach more than \$140.

However, in the event that Gulf oil supply routes through the Strait of Hormuz are disrupted, shipments could be rerouted via the Arabian Sea and the Suez Canal, although transportation and transit expenses will rise remarkably.

Meanwhile, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) spokesperson Ghanem Al-Otaibi confirmed on Saturday that refining and production activities at the company's refineries are proceeding as scheduled.

In remarks to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Al-Otaibi reassured citizens and expatriates that petroleum product supplies remain steady, including the continuous delivery of daily fuel allocations to service stations.

Al-Otaibi affirmed that the situation remains stable, praise be to Allah, and prayed to the Almighty to protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of harm and adversity.

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: National Bank of Kuwait was crowned first place in the 2026 Corporate Olympics, an event that brought together institutions in an experience filled with intellectual and physical challenges and realistic simulations of the business environment, with the aim of promoting cooperation and creativity within work teams.

This win came in recognition of the outstanding performance of a team of 13 employees who represented NBK in competitions that witnessed wide participation from prominent local institutions, confirming the Bank's position as one of the most prominent supporters of talent development and promoting a culture of institutional excellence.

**An Exceptional Performance**

In this event, NBK's team tackled a series of challenges that combined strategic thinking and working under pressure, along with physical and intellectual tests designed to highlight leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.

The team excelled thanks to the joined efforts of its members, their ability to make good decisions in record time, and their effective role distribution, demonstrating their readiness to handle diverse demands. The team's comprehensive performance resulted in deservedly winning the gold medal and first place.

This achievement shows NBK's commitment to fostering advanced performances, in line with its continuous investment in employee development programs and providing work environments that encourage creativity and taking initiative.

Additionally, this victory proves that NBK's developmental initiatives have successfully contributed to building highly competitive teams able to achieve high levels of performance, further reinforcing its leading and distinguished position among other institutions.

On this occasion, **Maryam Al-Nasrallah**, AVP – Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, said: "We are proud of this victory and the outstanding performance of our team during the challenge."

"This achievement is the result of a deeply rooted work culture based on cooperation, trust, and innovation."

"What the team has presented reflects its ability to deal with challenges that require quick thinking and working harmoniously under pressure."

Al-Nasrallah added: "Participating in the Corporate Olympics reflects NBK's commitment to developing the skills of its employees and the impact of the training programs we constantly provide to boost their capabilities and readiness."

This victory, she stressed, demonstrates the readiness and ability of NBK teams to represent the Bank in various events, and supports



Maryam Al-Nasrallah

**Al-Nasrallah:**

- This achievement is a result of the training and development programs that NBK is committed to providing to its employees on an ongoing basis.
- The success of NBK's team demonstrates the Bank's strong work environment that fosters creativity and a spirit of challenge.



The Champions

its vision of building strong teams that contribute to achieving sustainable accomplishments, which should in turn reflect positively on its progress.

**Corporate Olympics**

The Corporate Olympics is one of the most important professional events in Kuwait, bringing together institutions for a full day of diverse competitions that combine physical activity, intellectual challenges, and realistic business simulations.

The event aims to enhance communication skills among employees, refine their intellectual abilities, and improve team collaborations, which consequently improves performance in the workplace.

It also provides participants with practical

opportunities to develop decision-making and strategic thinking skills within a competitive framework that boosts motivation and fosters a positive attitude.

It is worth noting that NBK is keen to maintain its efforts that focus on empowering employees through comprehensive initiatives aimed at developing their capabilities and enhancing their skills, and this stems from the Bank's firm belief that human capital is the primary driver of sustained institutional success. Moreover, this approach is part of a comprehensive strategy centered on fostering innovation and creating a stimulating work environment capable of driving progress and achieving a positive impact both within and beyond the organization.

# Sticky inflation clouds global policy outlook as markets navigate volatility

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global data painted a mixed macro backdrop, with inflation surprises complicating the easing narrative while growth momentum showed signs of strain. U.S. wholesale inflation accelerated sharply in January, reinforcing the Fed's cautious stance, even as jobless claims signaled a stable "low-hire, low-fire" labor market.

In Europe, BoE officials struck a divided tone ahead of March, with markets leaning toward a rate cut, while Tokyo CPI slowed on energy subsidies but another key measure of inflation remained above target, keeping BOJ normalization expectations intact.

Australia's upside inflation surprise lifted rate hike bets, whereas Canada's economy contracted in Q4 amid a steep inventory drawdown.

Against this backdrop, gold traded higher, the dollar index traded lower, and U.S. equities saw heightened volatility as investors recalibrated rate expectations across major central banks.

**United States & Canada**

**President Trump Implements New Tariff Measures**

The Trump Administration implemented a 10% global import tariff under Section 122 of the 1974 Trade Act, effective Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. Washington time, following the Supreme Court's decision to invalidate prior emergency-based tariffs.

The new measure, applicable for up to 150 days without congressional approval, sets the average effective U.S. tariff rate at approximately 10.2%, down from 13.6% prior to the ruling, according to initial economic analysis.

A proposed increase to 15% would raise the effective rate to around 12%. Exemptions remain for goods compliant with the North American trade pact and selected agricultural products.

Meanwhile, the European Union has paused ratification of its trade accord, amid concerns that cumulative tariffs on certain exports could exceed the agreed 15% ceiling, while India has postponed negotiations.

**Unemployment Claims Reinforces "Low Hire, Low Fire" Economy**

New U.S. jobless claims edged slightly higher last week, while the unemployment rate appeared steady in February, signaling continued labor market stability.

Initial claims rose by 4,000 to 212,000 for the week ended February 21, slightly below economists' expectations of 215,000.

The data suggests the job market remains in a "low hire, low fire" environment, reinforcing expectations that the Federal Reserve is unlikely to cut interest rates before Chair Jerome Powell's term concludes in May.

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1781	1.1765	1.1834	1.1813	1.1740	1.1900	1.1864
GBP	1.3495	1.3436	1.3575	1.3484	1.3340	1.3580	1.3488
JPY	154.92	153.98	156.82	156.05	155.35	157.70	154.85
CHF	0.7729	0.7669	0.7768	0.7687	0.7570	0.7770	0.7611

Meanwhile, continuing claims, a gauge of ongoing unemployment and hiring momentum, fell by 31,000 to 1.833 million in the week ended February 14.

The latest figures were partially influenced by the Presidents' Day holiday and coincide with the survey period for February's unemployment rate.

**Producer Inflation Rises**

U.S. wholesale inflation accelerated in January, challenging President Trump's assertion that price pressures were cooling.

The core Producer Price Index (PPI), which excludes food and energy, rose 0.8% on the month, well above forecasts and December's 0.6% increase, while headline PPI climbed 0.5%, also exceeding estimates.

On an annual basis, core wholesale prices rose 3.6% and headline PPI increased 2.9%, both remaining above the Federal Reserve's 2% target.

The monthly gain was driven primarily by a sharp 0.8% rise in services prices, the strongest since July 2025, particularly in trade services and wholesale margins for professional and commercial equipment.

Goods prices fell 0.3% overall, as declines in food and energy offset a 4.8% jump in metals, though core goods still increased 0.7%.

The data suggests persistent pipeline inflation pressures, likely reinforcing the Fed's cautious stance on rate cuts despite political calls for easier policy.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 97.65.

**Canada's GDP Contracts**

Canada's economy contracted at an annualized rate of 0.6% in the fourth quarter, well below expectations for flat growth, as businesses sharply reduced inventories rather than boosting production.

The drawdown, totaling C\$23.46 billion on an annualized basis, was the main drag on growth, alongside a 4.4% decline in residential construction investment.

Although exports, household spending, and government investment provided some support, they were not enough to offset the inventory impact.

Annual growth for 2025 came in at 1.7%, matching the Bank of Canada's forecast but marking the slowest pace since 2020.

Monthly GDP rose 0.2% in December, though an early estimate suggests activity may stall in January.

The USD/CAD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3642.

**United Kingdom**

**BoE Officials Remain Divided Over Monetary Policy Path**

Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey indicated he may support a rate cut at the March MPC meeting if incoming data confirms inflation is sustainably returning to target, noting it is now "very reasonable" to expect CPI to be near 2% by spring after slowing to 3% in January.

The committee remains divided, with Bailey acting as a swing vote: Megan Greene called for clearer evidence of easing wage growth and inflation expectations before backing a cut, while Chief Economist Huw Pill warned against premature easing given upside risks to underlying inflation. In contrast, Alan Taylor argued for moving policy toward neutral and potentially accommodative territory if growth weakens.

Markets are increasingly pricing in a March cut, with at least one additional reduction expected by year end.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3484.

**Asia-Pacific**

**PBOC Maintains Policy Rates**

The People's Bank of China maintained its 1-year and 5-year loan prime rates at 3% and 3.5%, respectively, marking a tenth consecutive month of unchanged policy amid slowing growth and persistent deflationary pressures.

The 1-year rate, the benchmark for most loans, and the 5-year rate, which guides mortgage pricing, were left steady as fourth-quarter GDP expanded 4.5% YoY, the weakest pace since the post-pandemic reopening in late 2022.

Retail sales growth decelerated to 0.9% in December, a three-year low, while the GDP deflator remained negative for an eleventh consecutive quarter.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 6.8579.

**Australian Inflation Accelerates**

Australian inflation came in stronger than expected in January, reinforcing the risk of further rate hikes.

Monthly CPI rose 0.4% (vs. 0.3% forecast), while annual inflation held at 3.8%. Core inflation climbed to a 16-month high of 3.4%, remaining above the RBA's 2-3% target band for a seventh consecutive month.

Domestic price pressures intensified, with non-tradable inflation rising to 4.9%, driven by surging electricity costs and firm housing and rent prices.

Markets firmed bets of a May rate hike to 66%, the Australian dollar strengthened, and bond futures declined, reflecting expectations that policy may need to tighten further.

The AUD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.7113.

**Tokyo Inflation Declines**

Tokyo CPI inflation moderated in February, largely reflecting the impact of government utility subsidies that reduced household energy costs.

Core CPI (excluding fresh food) rose 1.8% YoY, the slowest pace since October 2024 but slightly above consensus, marking a third consecutive deceleration.

Energy prices declined 9.2% YoY, with subsidies estimated to have shaved roughly 0.25 percentage points off headline inflation. However, another measure of inflation (excluding energy) accelerated to 2.5% YoY, remaining above the Bank of Japan's 2% price stability target and underscoring persistent underlying inflationary pressures.

While the BOJ has signaled it will look through temporary fiscal distortions and focus on trend inflation, the softer headline reading complicates policy communication amid political sensitivity over living costs.

Markets continue to price further normalization, with OIS implying roughly a 52% probability of a rate hike by April ahead of the March 19 policy meeting.

The USD/JPY currency pair was last seen trading at 156.05.

**Kuwait**

**Kuwaiti Dinar**

USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30550.

# GCC 2026 Energy Outlook: Capex, Capacity, Consolidation

By S&P Global

Investments in production capacity will keep GCC NOCs' capex elevated in the next two-to-three years, despite lower oil prices. However, S&P Global Ratings expects the pace of capex growth to moderate from previous years, as most of the production from mega projects will start to come on stream.

At the same time, the GCC NOCs will continue to focus on less carbon-intensive energy sources, such as gas and LNG, in keeping with their sustainability strategies and national transformation agendas. Strong cash flow and relatively low leverage should help the NOCs preserve their creditworthiness despite the additional investment requirements.

Even with a more moderate pace of capex growth, GCC NOCs' spending will remain sizable, at \$115 billion-\$125 billion on average between 2025 and 2027 (see infographic). Capacity expansion plans beyond our base case could elevate spending further. However, this level of spending is unlikely to strain GCC NOCs' free operating cash flows substantially, even with lower oil prices and a slowdown in global economic growth.

On the other hand, GCC NOCs' more cautious approach to spending is likely to reduce rig demand, rationalize average day rates, and weigh on the overall profitability of the region's oil drillers. We think that oil drillers' rating headroom could shrink as a result, but we do not expect any rating pressure in the short term. In addition, industry consolidation could help balance rig supply and demand and subsequently support day rates.

## GCC NOCs

For the purposes of this report, GCC NOCs include rated and unrated companies in the GCC region. These companies include QatarEnergy, Energy Development Oman, Saudi Arabian Oil Co. (Aramco), Abu Dhabi National Oil Co. (ADNOC), Bapco Energies, Kuwait Petroleum Corp., and OQ S.A.O.C. We base our analysis on company websites, public information, and market consensus.

## Capex Remains Elevated Despite Lower Oil Prices

We estimate that, on average, the GCC NOCs' aggregate capex will rise to \$115 billion-\$125 billion in 2025-2027 from \$110 billion-\$115 billion in 2024. The main drivers of this capex are capacity expansion plans in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar and capacity maintenance in Saudi Arabia. In the UAE, ADNOC is targeting an increase in production capacity to five million barrels of oil per day by 2027, while in Qatar, QatarEnergy is expanding its LNG production capacity in phases through its North Field expansion project. We expect capex to taper toward the second half of the decade as the capacity expansion completion dates approach.

Although NOCs' capex requirements will remain elevated, we think that they will take a more cautious stance to spending. This is unlike the trend among the international oil companies, which, over the past 12-18 months, have generally announced downward revisions to their capex guidance, mainly to balance cash flow generation with their financial policy commitments. In particular, in the U.S., we now estimate that the year-on-year drop in aggregate capital spending could be 5%-10%, assuming that West Texas Intermediate oil prices remain about \$60 per barrel (/bbl).

We expect most of the GCC NOCs' capex to remain focused on upstream activities, namely exploration and production (over half of capex, on average). Domestic oil typically remains the core focus of capex, but the regional NOCs are also increasing their focus on gas and international operations. For instance, in March 2025, XRG PJSC, a wholly owned subsidiary of ADNOC, acquired a 10% stake in Area 4 Mozambique for \$881 million. Concurrently, QatarEnergy is actively seeking and securing interests in Africa and South America. These moves by GCC NOCs are increasingly aligned with their ambitions to expand their LNG and trading businesses.

NOCs are also aiming to achieve greater integration along the value chain, and to this end, are leveraging their trading arms and making the supply of feedstock from their upstream to their downstream operations more reliable. For reference, Aramco's downstream operations (manufacturing, marketing, refining, and processing) utilize more than 50% of the crude oil it produces (53% as of end-2024).

## How Did Global Oil And Gas Producers Respond To The Last Oil Price Downturn?

In 2020, the Brent oil price averaged about \$42.0/ bbl, translating into a 35% year-on-year decline compared to the previous year. This led global oil and gas producers to reduce capex, with both the international oil companies and large state-owned producers focusing on preserving cash while prices were under pressure.

We saw capex declines of about 15%-20% for the largest producers globally. While our base cases do not project severe capex cuts globally over the next few years, we anticipate that growth in capex will be relatively muted, at about 0%-5%, compared with about 4%-5% in 2023-2025 for the large oil and gas producers. Globally, we anticipate that capex in the sector will be flat or decline slightly, driven by lower oil prices.

## Lower Oil Prices Should Not Disrupt Investments In Alternative Energy In The Longer Term

The price of Brent oil is hovering in the \$60/bbl-\$65/bbl range (see "S&P Global Ratings Revises Hydrocarbon Price Deck Assumptions," Nov. 10, 2025). This, together with a revised strategic approach, could prompt the international oil companies to delay their allocation of capex to renewables and alternative energy and instead prioritize upstream investments.

The GCC NOCs' strategies continue to incorporate cleaner energy and lower-carbon fuel as part of their sustainability agendas, although this is still a relatively small share of their planned investments. According to S&P Global Energy's global energy demand outlook from

August 2025, oil and gas will continue to contribute about half of energy demand at least until 2040.

## The Middle East's Energy Investments Align With National Sustainability Agendas

As of October 2025, the majority of clean-energy technology in the Middle East aims to decarbonize the power sector through solar photovoltaic and on-shore wind energy, hydrogen production, and battery storage, in keeping with countries' respective sustainability agendas.

The GCC NOCs will play a key role in helping

achieve the national sustainability agendas. They are already making direct investments in renewables and other low-carbon technologies. For example, OQ is investing in renewable energy and green hydrogen projects in Oman through its subsidiary OQ Alternative Energy. The GCC NOCs are also increasing renewable energy deployment by acquiring strategic stakes in the regional renewable energy champions, including Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC - Masdar in the UAE and ACWA Power Co. in Saudi Arabia.

While upstream oil and gas remains a significant contributor to the GCC NOCs' cash flow generation, they continue to expand their clean-energy portfolios to achieve net-zero and energy-efficiency targets. As well as increasing renewable energy deployment, they also plan to add low-carbon hydrogen capacity and expand their LNG portfolios. We think that the GCC NOCs' generally robust financial positions will help them cope with higher spending and pre-

serve their credit quality.

In addition, NOCs' diversification plans include increasing their downstream activities to diversify the business mix and increase efficiency. This includes greater integration with the downstream segment and continued investments in refineries. According to S&P Global Energy, the Middle East's total announced expenditure on refinery additions is about \$4.0 billion-\$4.5 billion in 2025-2026, mostly in 2025, accounting for about 5%-6% of global expenditure.

## NOC Ownership Of Renewable Energy Champions In The GCC

In the GCC, the NOCs and domestic renewable energy champions are aligning strategies to meet their respective countries' net-zero targets and drive the national sustainability agenda. In several cases, the NOCs are shareholders in these renewable energy companies. Even when the NOC is not a direct shareholder, such as in the case of Saudi Arabia, there is still some collaboration between the NOC and the renewable energy company, and the two companies have a common shareholder to drive the national sustainability agenda.

## What This Means For The Capex And Cash Flow Of GCC Drillers

The jack-up drilling market remains supportive, but weaker oil prices could undermine market sentiment.

Despite a gradual recovery post-2020, rig counts have not yet rebounded to pre-pandemic levels. The Middle East rig count, which accounts for about 25%-30% of the available rigs globally, mirrors this trend.

## NOC capex should keep regional utilization rates high, but volatility persists

We expect jack-up drilling utilization rates to remain high, at 85%-95% in 2025, according to data from S&P Global Energy's Petrodata Rigs. This is thanks to strong offshore activity and limited rig supply on the back of continued contract renewals; longer contract tenures, often of two or more years in the GCC; and GCC NOCs' sustained high capex, with limited construction of new rigs on the horizon.

Furthermore, GCC drillers have good cash flow visibility, with backlogs relative to revenue exceeding 1x on average (see charts 8 and 9). The GCC NOCs' medium-to-longer term plans of maintaining capacity targets (Saudi Arabia) or increasing them (the UAE and Qatar) by 2030 support the backlog-to-revenue ratio.

At the same time, the offshore oilfield services sector is volatile and dependent on the oil and gas producers. As a result, further declines in oil prices could negatively affect the sector, including drilling. This could ultimately influence spending, and in turn, delay contract renewals, slow the pace of new contract awards, and, in a more extreme scenario, lead to contract cancellations or suspensions. This sensitivity to oil price movements therefore represents a key medium-term risk for contract drillers.

For example, in 2024, Saudi Aramco paused its plan to expand its maximum sustainable oil production capacity in the country, raising questions about the spending outlook for oil and gas producers. This affected the oilfield service companies along the value chain, especially drillers, including Shelf Drilling, Borr Drilling, ADES, and Arabian Drilling. As a result, the companies relocated some of their rigs to regions like West Africa and Southeast Asia to secure new contracts.

## Consolidation could be on the rise

We expect planned upstream capacity additions in the region to translate into higher demand for rigs. Notably, ADNOC Drilling has announced two acquisitions in 2025:

- An 80% stake in MB Petroleum Services, due to complete in the first half of 2026; and
- A 70% stake in a joint venture with SLB in May 2025 to expand ADNOC Drilling's fleet across Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia.

Separately, ADES Holding acquired Shelf Drilling in the fourth quarter of 2025.

We believe that the divergence between day rates across regions, the demand for rigs, and the increase in planned capacity additions could prompt further consolidation in the market. We will monitor day rates, contract tenures, and profitability trends to assess drillers' future cash flow generation.

## Credit quality diverges between onshore and offshore activities

We rate most GCC drillers speculative-grade, largely in the single 'B' rating category. The depth and breadth of a driller's product offering, its geographical diversity, and its relative scale all affect its overall intrinsic credit quality. As such, we consider that drillers can gain an advantage by balancing the services and equipment they sell across the production, exploration, and development phases of oil and gas projects.

Targeting multiple different hydrocarbon markets, notably natural gas and crude oil, can also benefit the ratings.

## What's Next?

Moderately lower oil prices should not affect the GCC NOCs' spending plans for now. In our view, the GCC NOCs have sufficient buffers to absorb lower oil prices while maintaining solid credit metrics. The NOCs' conservative approach to spending will likely translate into rationalizing day rates for oilfield services companies in the region. As a result, we would expect these companies to focus on cost reduction where possible to increase cash flow resilience.

Table 1  
Select examples of GCC NOCs' latest expansion plans in liquefied natural gas and gas

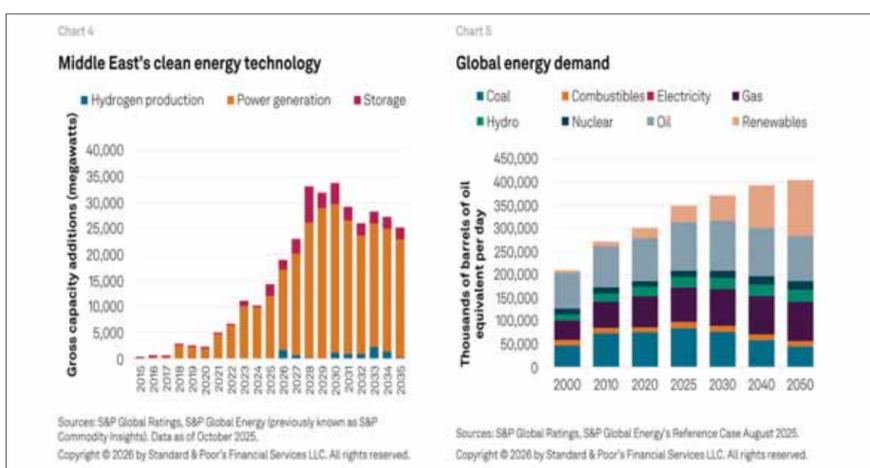
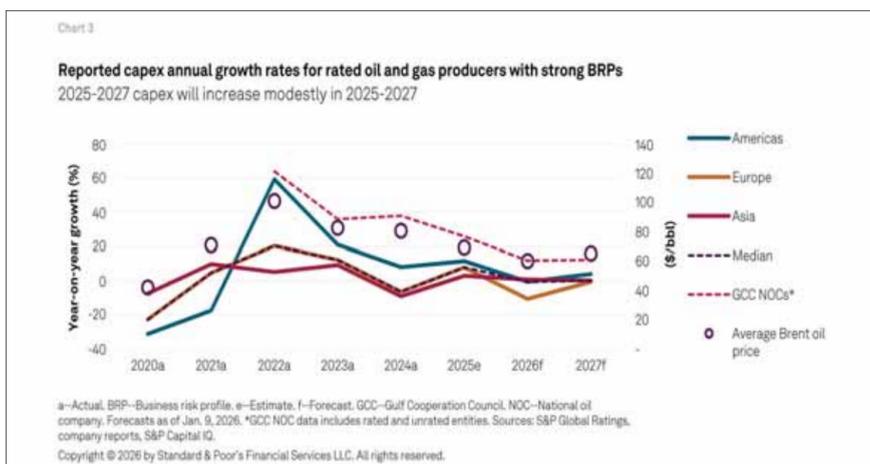
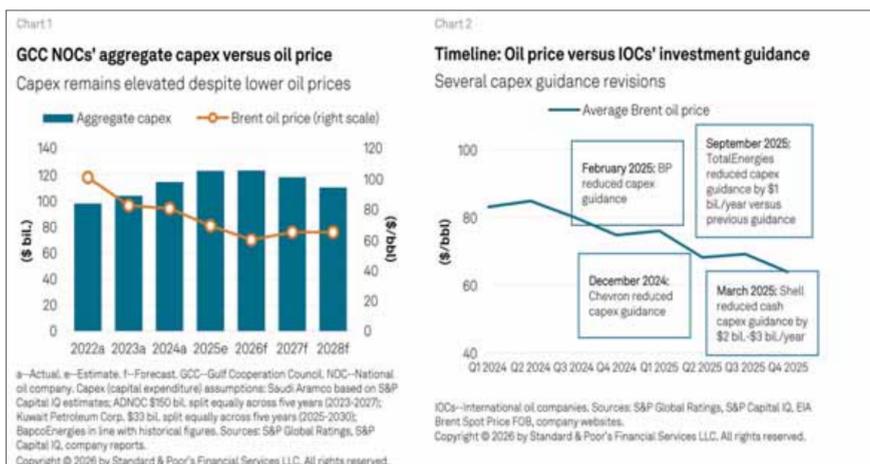
GCC NOCs	LNG projects		Gas projects	
	Domestic	International	Domestic	International
Aramco		Minority stake in MidOcean (Australia, Peru)	Jafurah Gas Field	
			Tanajib Gas Plant	
			Fadhil Gas Plant	
ADNOC	Ruwais LNG Project (2028)	XRG acquisition of a 10% stake in Area 4 concession (Mozambique)	Rich Gas Development Project (2027+)	XRG JV in Arcius Energy (Egypt)
		XRG acquisition of an 11.7% stake in Phase 1 Rio Grande LNG (U.S.)		XRG stake in Absheron gas and condensate field (Azerbaijan)
				XRG 38% stake in Block I (Turkmenistan)
QatarEnergy	North Field Expansion	Golden Pass LNG Facility (U.S.)	Al Khaieej Gas Project	Egypt's offshore North Rafah concession
			Dolphin Gas Project	Namibia

GCC—Gulf Cooperation Council; JV—Joint venture; LNG—Liquefied natural gas; NOC—National oil company. ADNOC and Aramco established to consolidate Aramco's conventional and renewable power investments. SAPCO invests in Public Investment Fund and ACWA Power's renewable energy program. Source: S&P Global Ratings. Copyright © 2026 by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC. All rights reserved.

Table 2  
GCC NOCs' relationships with renewable energy champions

Country	Domestic renewable energy champion	NOC direct ownership stakes	NOC partnerships with renewable energy champions	Government ownership
Saudi Arabia	ACWA Power	None	Jazan Integrated Gasification Power Co. (JV between Aramco, ACWA Power, and Air Products Qudra)	Public Investment Fund
UAE	Masdar	ADNOC owns a 43% stake in Masdar's green energy business and a 24% stake in its renewable business		
Oman	OQ Alternative Energy	OQ owns 100% of OQ Alternative Energy		
	Hydrom	Energy Development Oman owns 100% of Hydrom		
Qatar	QatarEnergy Renewable Solutions (domestic market)	QatarEnergy owns 100% of QatarEnergy Renewable Solutions		
	Nebras Power (international market)	None	Nebras Power is primarily owned by Nebras Energy (formerly QEWCO), in which QatarEnergy has a 10.74% stake	Nebras Power's major shareholders include Qatar Investment Authority (30.17%) and Retirement Fund (14.34%)

GCC—Gulf Cooperation Council; JV—Joint venture; NOC—National oil company; UAE—United Arab Emirates; Saudi Aramco owns 100% of Saudi Aramco Power Co. (SAPCO) and was established to consolidate Aramco's conventional and renewable power investments. SAPCO invests in Public Investment Fund and ACWA Power's renewable energy program. Source: S&P Global Ratings. Copyright © 2026 by Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC. All rights reserved.



Phil Collins, Shakira, Lauryn Hill among Rock Hall nominees

## Olivia Dean dominates Brit Awards with four wins

MANCHESTER, March 1, (AP) — It was Olivia Dean's night at the Brit Awards — she took home four trophies, including artist of the year and song of the year.

Dean, once a Brit school pupil herself, also performed her song "Man I Need" during Saturday's show. She also won the best new artist of the year's Grammys.

The UK's leading music awards show moved from London to Manchester in the North of England; and was opened by Harry Styles making the TV debut with new song "Aperture" from his new album "Kiss all the Time, Disco Occasionally," which will be released next week.

Rosalía won best international artist with ROSÉ & Bruno Mars winning best international song. Geese won best international group.

Robbie Williams lead a tribute to the late Ozzy Osbourne, who died last year. Williams was joined by Black Sabbath members, performing a special arrangement of "No More Tears"

Jacob Alon received the critics choice award (formerly known as Brits Rising Star award) He follows in the footsteps of Adele and Sam Fender.

Other performers included Raye, SOMBRE and Mark Ronson — who received the outstanding contribution to music award.

Phil Collins, Mariah Carey, Lauryn Hill, INXS, Iron Maiden, Luther Vandross and Shakira are some of the 2026 nominees for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a wide net that includes rap, metal, R&B, hip-hop, Britpop, blues rock and pop.

The hall revealed the list of 17 performer nominees Wednesday, a list that also includes Melissa Etheridge, Jeff Buckley, Pink, New Edition, Sade and the Wu-Tang Clan.

Billy Idol, Joy Division/New Order return to the nominations after missing induction last year. The list this time also repeats two sets of musical brothers who have had public feuds and recent reunions — The Black Crowes and Oasis.

Collins, who already is in the Hall as a member of Genesis and had such solo hits as "In the Air Tonight" and "One More Night," has earned eight Grammys, including album of the year in 1985 for "No Jacket Required." Hill's "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill" made history as the first hip-hop album to win the Grammy for album of the year in 1999.

Carey, nominated in 2024 and 2025, has had 19 No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, while soul-jazz vocalist Sade, also nominated in 2024, had such soft rock hits as "Smooth Op-

erator" and "The Sweetest Taboo." The Wu-Tang Clan have been hailed as rap innovators since their game-changing 1993 debut album "Enter the Wu-Tang."

INXS ruled the late 1980s charts with hits like "Need You Tonight," "Devil Inside" and "New Sensation." Two-time Grammy winner Etheridge is best known for her songs "Come to My Window" and "I'm the Only One." Iron Maiden helped power the new wave of British heavy metal with iconic albums like "The Number of the Beast."

New Edition had the hits "Cool It Now" and "Candy Girl," while Shakira has been lauded for her ability to bridge Latin music with rock and pop. Pink has had four No. 1 songs and three No. 1 albums, including "The Truth About Love."

Ten of the 17 nominees are on the ballot for the first time: Buckley, Collins, Etheridge, Hill, INXS, New Edition, Pink, Shakira, Vandross and Wu-Tang Clan.

Vandross, who sold more than 25 million albums and had the hits "Here and Now" and "Any Love," died in 2005. Buckley, whose 1994 debut album "Grace" is widely acclaimed, died in 1997.

"This diverse list of talented nominees recognizes the ever-evolving faces and sounds of Rock & Roll and its continued impact on youth culture," John Sykes, chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, said in a statement.



Olivia Dean wins the Pop Act award during the Brit Awards 2026 in Manchester, England, Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. (AP)

### Variety

**CONCORD, N.H.:** Police say Cher's son was arrested on Friday after acting belligerently at a New Hampshire private high school, of which he has no association.

Elijah Allman, 49, was charged with four misdemeanors: two counts of simple assault, criminal trespass and criminal threatening. Allman, whose father was the late Gregg Allman, was also charged with a violation of disorderly conduct, which is illegal in the state but not considered a crime.



Cher

Paul's School. After charging Allman, police said he was released on bail as his case works through the court system.

Attorney information for Allman was not available in court records.

A representative for Cher was not immediately available. St. Paul's School declined to comment.

An investigation is ongoing. (AP)

**NEW ORLEANS:** Actor Shia LaBeouf, who was arrested and charged with battery after police say he punched several people outside a New Orleans bar earlier this month, was arrested again on Saturday and charged with one additional misdemeanor count of simple battery, court records show.

LaBeouf's attorney said in a statement that his arrest is connected to a Feb. 17 brawl outside the Royal Street Inn & R Bar near the French Quarter for which LaBeouf had previously been arrested. In that case, LaBeouf is accused of repeatedly using homophobic slurs while hitting multiple people during Mardi Gras celebrations.

LaBeouf's attorney Sarah Chervinsky said when they learned New Orleans police issued a new arrest warrant Friday, LaBeouf voluntarily turned himself in to the Orleans Parish jail. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Pop singer Pink says she is not separated from her husband, former pro motocross racer Carey Hart, despite reports suggesting otherwise.

People was first to report the story based on an unnamed source Thursday, under the headline, "Pink Separates from Carey Hart for Second Time After 20 Years of Marriage: Source (Exclusive)."

Shortly afterward, Pink posted a video to her official Instagram account, describing the story as "fake news, not true."

"I was just alerted to the fact that I'm separated from my husband. I didn't know. Thank you People Magazine. Thank you US Weekly. Thank you for letting me know," she said in the clip. "I was wondering, would you also like to tell our children? My 14-year-old and 9-year-old are also unaware. Or do you want to talk about some real news?" (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Sandra Cisneros, one of this year's inductees into the American Academy of Arts and Letters, admits she's been wanting to join for a long time.

"I felt like I was waiting for someone to ask me to dance. I felt like a literary wallflower, because I never got invited," says Cisneros, whose books include such favorites as "The House on Mango Street" and "Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories."

"There are some clubs I don't care to be a part of, but this one I wanted to be in," she added, noting that such friends as the poet Joy Harjo were already in.

Cisneros is among 11 new core members voted in this year, the academy announced Thursday. Others include travel writer Pico Iyer, poets Marie Howe and Carl Phillips, fiction writer Rick Moody and the current U.S. poet laureate, Arthur Sze, who joins such predecessors as Harjo, Billy Collins and Tracy K. Smith.

Abstract painter Joan Snyder is among the visual artists who will be inducted this spring, along with painter-printmaker Elizabeth Peyton, architect-educator Mónica Ponce de León, artist-filmmaker Alfredo Jaar and photographer Stephen Shore. (AP)

### Awards

Domingo honored with President's Award

## Viola Davis receives NAACP's Chairman's Award

LOS ANGELES, March 1, (AP) — Viola Davis delivered a powerful speech about self-worth, resilience and collective progress on the 57th NAACP Image Awards stage Saturday night, telling the audience that personal and national growth require confronting truth and hardship.

"There is no becoming without healing and without a radical acceptance of one's truth," Davis said after receiving the NAACP's Chairman's Award at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium near Los Angeles. "We either move forward together or not at all."

The Oscar, Emmy, Tony and Grammy winner reflected on her journey from childhood poverty in Rhode Island to international success, saying, "I just wanted to be somebody. I wanted success because I thought it was significance."

Davis, 60, has earned widespread acclaim for performances in films including "The Help," "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" and "Doubt," while also captivating television audiences in the legal drama "How to Get Away With Murder." She achieved EGOT status after winning a Grammy for the audiobook version of her memoir, "Finding Me," adding to two Tonys, an Emmy and an Academy Award for the film adaptation of "Fences."

"No one can describe the journey of going from the little chocolate girl searching for hope," Davis said, "to the girl living a transcendent life."

Michael B. Jordan capped off the night as the winner of entertainer of the year after also taking home best actor for his dual performance as twin brothers in the film "Sinners."

Jordan beat out nominees Cynthia Erivo, Doechii, Kendrick Lamar and Teyana Taylor for the top honor. Last year's entertainer of the year winner was Keke Palmer.

During his acceptance speech, Jordan became emotional while acknowledging late actor Chadwick Boseman, his friend and "Black Panther" co-star. "My best friend, Chad ... I miss you every day," Jordan said.

He also thanked his family and community, encouraging those watching from his hometown of Newark, New Jersey, to pursue their goals with humility and compassion.

Hip-hop trailblazers Salt-N-Pepa were inducted into the NAACP Image Awards Hall of Fame, recognized for their groundbreaking impact on music, culture and the representation of women in rap.

The Grammy-winning group — Cheryl "Salt" James, Sandra "Pepa" Denton and DJ Spinderella — rose to prominence in the late 1980s and 1990s with hits including "Push It," "Shoop" and "Whatta Man," helping bring female voices to the forefront of hip-hop while shaping conversations around confidence, relationships and self-expression.

Accepting the honor, the trio reflected on their legacy and influence across generations of artists.

"We didn't know we were building a movement," said Spinderella, the stage name of Deidra Muriel Roper. "We were just being ourselves."

The ceremony kicked off with host Deon Cole blending sharp political humor with pointed cultural commentary, including a censored jab referencing immigration enforcement and a nod to the recent disruption involving Jordan and Delroy Lindo at the British Academy Film Awards.

Cole's monologue drew loud reactions from the crowd as he joked about



Viola Davis accepts the Chairman's Award during the 57th NAACP Image Awards on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, in Pasadena, Calif. (AP)



Delroy Lindo, (from left), Wunmi Mosaku, Jayme Lawson, Sev Ohanian, Ludwig Göransson, Michael B. Jordan, Zinzi Coogler, Ryan Coogler, and Miles Caton accept the award for outstanding motion picture for 'Sinners.' (AP)



Colman Domingo accepts the President's award. (AP)



Michael B. Jordan accepts the award for Entertainer of the Year. (AP)

removing anything associated with "ICE" from the guest list before shifting into a comedic prayer segment that

touched on celebrities and current headlines.

The actor-comedian then referenced

the BAFTA disruption, which occurred in February when a racial slur was shouted from the audience by



Quinta Brunson accepts the award for outstanding actress. (AP)



Cheryl 'Salt' James, (from left), Deidra 'Spinderella' Roper, and Sandra 'Pepa' Denton of 'Salt-N-Pepa' accept the Hall of Fame award. (AP)



Kerry Washington arrives at the 57th NAACP Image Awards. (AP)



Samuel L. Jackson speaks about Rev. Jesse Jackson. (AP)

## From box office bomb to media powerhouse

## Skydance's 20-year rise to overtake Paramount, Warner Bros

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP) — In its debut film, Skydance Productions released a special effects-laden World War I drama about fighter pilots with a starring role for an unknown actor, the company's founder, David Ellison.

It was a box office bomb.

Twenty years later, in a twist fit for Hollywood itself, the tiny studio once brushed off as a billionaire scion's vanity project is poised to be an entertainment behemoth. With that once-unknown actor at its helm and a merger with Paramount already under its belt, Skydance is now on the cusp of another takeover that once seemed unthinkable, this time of storied giant Warner Bros. Discovery.

"It's only a surprise to those who haven't been paying attention to the long game," says Walter Nicoletti, founder of the film production company Voce Spettacolo, noting Skydance's focus on financing hit movies and accumulating assets while partnering with some of the biggest companies in the business. "This is a sort of a silent takeover. Skydance didn't start as a predator. It started as an essential partner."

When Ellison, the son of tech giant Oracle Corp. co-founder Larry Ellison, launched Skydance as a 23-year-old in 2006, the company registered little more than a blip in an industry where he was just another rich newcomer trying to

gain a foothold in the warmth of Hollywood's bright lights. "Flyboys," the war story it chose as its inaugural feature, did little to raise its profile.

"Cloyingly formulaic," jeered The Seattle Times. An "inflated wannabe epic," chimed in The Washington Post. "It's hard not to giggle," concluded The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

The celebrated critic Richard Roeper echoed the panning reviews of his brethren and the lackluster response of audiences in questioning what the movie's makers were thinking. "Why make such a corny and incredibly predictable film?" he wrote.

But Ellison plodded on. As the years ticked by, more flops came but he slowly notched successes too. He partnered with some of the biggest names in the business, including Paramount, Netflix and Apple, and unleashed a string of hits that brought in hundreds of millions at the box office. He lured both talent and streams of financing. He even released the rare film to surpass the \$1 billion mark, the 2022 blockbuster "Top Gun: Maverick," with his studio's most reliable star, Tom Cruise.

Jason Squire, a former studio executive, emeritus professor at the University of Southern California, and host of "The

Movie Business Podcast," is no fan of the deal that has Skydance poised to take over Warner Bros., seeing the consolidation as reducing competition and hurting the industry. But he nonetheless marvels at how Ellison went from being "not high on the radar" in Hollywood to entertainment's pinnacle.

"One of the traditions of entering the movie business is serious wealth, or access to serious wealth. But once you get a foothold, you have to demonstrate that wealth - by buying things, acquiring projects," Squire says. "They became a player." Money alone didn't assure Ellison's success, Squire says, but it sure helped.

"He became a member at the table when these partnerships and the infusion of dollars really set him up on a really strong trajectory," he says. "It's quite amazing."

In time, the failure of "Flyboys" was not what anyone thought of about Skydance. While there have been a few disappointments, including its reboot of the "Terminator" franchise, a string of "Mission: Impossible" flicks continually put Cruise in the limelight and audiences in theater seats. Hits like "Grace and Frankie" on Netflix gave it an entry to streaming television.

A run-up of successes had rumors swirling what giant might gobble Skydance up.

But in the end, Skydance did the gobbling.

After years of partnering with Paramount, the two companies merged last year, and in the months since, Ellison went on a relentless spending spree, announcing agreements on everything from streaming rights for Ultimate Fighting Championship to a deal with the creators of "Stranger Things," who were lured from Netflix.

Meantime, while the much larger Netflix once seemed a shoo-in to acquire Warner Bros., Ellison's Skydance was unrelenting in its counterproposal. On Thursday, it emerged the winner. Netflix walked away from its offer, leaving regulators as Skydance's only potential foil.

"This was absolutely a meteoric rise. Two decades from its formation to its current position to become one of the most powerful media companies in the world is nothing less than incredible," says Tre Lovell, a Los Angeles media law and entertainment attorney. "What Skydance has done over the past two decades has not been accomplished by any other media company in history."

Skydance's merger with Paramount delivered MTV, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon and a host of other channels, including its flagship CBS, where the change in power has brought turmoil to its news division.

## Fashion

Queen of Pop's legacy shines

## Madonna steals the spotlight at Dolce &amp; Gabbana show

MILAN, March 1, (AP) — Madonna made a star appearance in Dolce & Gabbana's front row during Milan Fashion Week on Saturday for a collection that felt like a conversation with the Material Girl herself.

To the backdrop of her hit "You'll See," Madonna and her boyfriend Akeem Morris were ushered to their seats next to Vogue's Anna Wintour just as the Fall-Winter 2026-27 show was about to begin. Other front row guests couldn't resist recording the moment as she hugged actor Alberto Guerra, with whom she recently shot a Dolce & Gabbana campaign.

Madonna, 67, has been a Dolce & Gabbana icon since the 1990s, with key moments including wearing a bodice by the duo studded with colored stones and crystals for the 1991 New York preview of the film "Truth or Dare."

The designers also created costumes for the Erotica tour in 1992 and the Drowned World Tour in 2001.

Madonna last appeared at the Dolce & Gabbana showroom for the Spring-Summer 2025 collection, wearing a lace veil. This time, her infamous blonde locks were loose. She wore a black blazer over a dark minidress, with turquoise leather gloves giving the only color pop.

Designer Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's collection for next fall and winter featured transparent lace dresses and skirts reminiscent of Madonna's early aesthetic and big-shouldered pinstriped suits that recalled her Vogue music video. The collection also featured big faux furs and animal prints.

Models gave a little twirl in front of Madonna and Wintour, making sure they caught the mirrored double-breasted suits with lapels on both the front and the back. Both style-makers wore dark sunglasses as they squatted in the low front-row seats, Madonna wrapping her arms around her legs. Attentive during the show, they privately exchanged impressions at the end.

After the show, the designers walked down the runway to embrace the Queen of Pop and then whisked her backstage.

Outside, hundreds of fans gathered to catch Madonna and other stars who packed the front row. They included singers Hikaru Iwamoto of Japan, Choi San of South Korea and Achille Lauro of Italy.



A model wears a creation from the Dolce & Gabbana Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. (AP)



Models wear creations from the Bottega Veneta Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection presented in Milan, Italy, Feb. 28, 2026. (AP)



Madonna congratulates Stefano Gabbana at the end of the Dolce & Gabbana Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. (AP)

## Fans turn hobby into lucrative investments

## 30 years on, Pokémon fans still hooked

LOS ANGELES, March 1, (AP) — Benson Lu's life revolves around Pokémon.

The 26-year-old has played the mobile game Pokémon Go every day for a decade, watches the animated show every week, goes to the local card shop in his Los Angeles suburb to play the brand's trading card game every week, and has a whopping collection of cards worth more than \$70,000.

"I don't remember when was the last day I did not think about Pokémon at all," he said.

In the 30 years since Pokémon debuted in Japan with the 1996 release of Pokémon Red and Pokémon Green for Nintendo Game Boy, the franchise has taken over the globe with its animated shows, mobile games and highly coveted trading cards. Its popularity continues with fans young and old.

Pokémon offers a masterclass in character design, which has helped make it so enduring, said Heather Cole, teaching assistant professor of game design and interactive media at West Virginia University.

"I think the longevity of it has to do with the characters and world-building it does with the characters," she said.

It's not just cuteness that has people clamoring for merchandise, particularly trading cards. Today, some are so coveted that social media star Logan Paul sold one for a record \$16.5 million. In Southern California, the fervor around Pokémon cards has led to strings of break-ins in recent months at trading card stores that have amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars of losses and even some collectors robbed at gunpoint.

Adam Corn, owner of card business Overdose Gaming Inc, said he was able to buy a house last year from his Pokémon cards.

"Pokémon almost always appreciates in value over time," Corn said. "So it's just a really good place to put your money in my opinion, better than a lot of other assets."



Fans pose for a photograph during Pokémon Day as they celebrate the 30th anniversary of Pokémon, Friday, Feb. 27, 2026, in London, England. (AP)

Companies like Beckett Grading Services and Professional Sports Authenticator authenticate and grade the quality of Pokémon cards on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being pristine mint condition and fetching the highest prices. Paul bought the PSA Grade 10 Pikachu Illustrator card a few months prior for \$5.3 million and wore the card on a chain around his neck in videos. It features a Pikachu holding a pen and feather squeezer.

Last Tuesday, thieves stole more than \$80,000 of Pokémon cards from Do-We Collectibles in Anaheim - the second time the store has been targeted. Other stores around Los Angeles and in New York have been hit by Pokémon thieves too.

Duy Pham, owner of the Anaheim store, said the financial incentive of trading cards for robbers and scalpers means "the hobby will never be the same."

"It's rougher for collectors and players," Pham said. "It's hard for us to get anything."

Collectors can either pay retail price for a standard pack of randomized Pokémon cards, around \$5 for 10 cards, or buy the specific card they want secondhand for higher prices. But much like gambling, opening packs doesn't always pan out to profit - Aiden Zeng spent \$1,000 on packs of cards that were only valued at \$60 on the resale market, he said.

Zeng, 17, said his fandom began in elementary school, when he obsessed over character guidebooks. He eventually began trying to collect every single type of card available for his favorite, Black Kyurem.

"I memorized every single Pokémon's specific move set, what region they come from, some of the lore behind it," Zeng said.

Even beyond dedicated collectors, Zeng said he has seen a resurgence of popularity for Pokémon at his high school in Toronto, where some students decorate their phone cases with cards featuring special artwork or a holographic sheen.

## Variety

LOS ANGELES: The latest season of "Drive to Survive" will also be available to US viewers on Apple TV as part of a collaboration with Netflix.

The eighth season of the popular Formula 1 series launched Friday. "Drive to Survive" has been credited with helping to increase the popularity of the global motorsports series.

The show will recap the 2025 season, which included the firing of Christian Horner as Red Bull's team principal, Lewis Hamilton's first year at Ferrari and McLaren drivers Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri vying for the championship. Norris won his first F1 title by two points over Max Verstappen. (AP)

CANNES: Park Chan-wook will lead the Cannes Film Festival jury, will be the 1st Korean in the role.

Park Chan-wook, the Korean filmmaker of "Oldboy" and "No Other Choice," will head the jury at the 79th Cannes Film Festival, festival organizers announced Thursday.

Chan-wook is the first Korean to preside over the jury that will award the prestigious Palme d'Or. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Singer D4vd is the target of a Los Angeles County grand jury investigation of the killing of a 14-year-old girl whose decomposed body was found last year in an apparently abandoned Tesla registered to him that was towed from the Hollywood Hills, court documents showed.

Prosecutors describe the 20-year-old Houston-born alt-pop singer whose legal name is David Burke as the target of the investigation in grand jury subpoenas issued Jan. 15 seeking to have three of his relatives testify. (AP)

## First album in 10 years

## Bruno Mars is for lovers on throwback 'The Romantic'

LOS ANGELES, March 1, (AP) — Bruno Mars is back - did you miss him?

The 16-time Grammy Award-winning Mars is an undisputable hitmaker, and that trend continues with the nine-track "The Romantic," his fourth full-length album. Just over 30 minutes in runtime, it's a brief return for the singer; this is also his first solo release in a decade, succeeding 2016's groovy, R&B-inspired collection "24K Magic." (Not that he's been absent. There's his mega-popular collaborative project with Anderson .Paak, Silk Sonic, and his recent hits "Die with a Smile" with Lady Gaga as well as "APT." with Blackpink's Rosé.)

On "The Romantic," retro-pop is the name of the game and Mars remains one of the great, spirited nostalgists.

That's clear from the lead single "I Just Might." It's all feel-good disco-pop-soul, a sentimental performer giving his escapist audience exactly what they crave: a funky reprieve from anywhere that is not the dance floor. Itch, meet scratch.

Mars' massive "24K Magic" channeled '90s throwbacks (listen to "Finesse") and try not to think of New Edition and Bell Biv DeVoe) as much as it did Mars' greatest influence, Michael Jackson. "The Romantic" does something similar with the addition of some new reference points. Press play on the Philly soul-informed "Cha Cha Cha" and be met with an unexpected interpolation of Juvenile's 2003 smash "Slow Motion."

Another standout, "Something Serious," sounds similar to Santana's 1970 hit cover of the Tito Puente classic "Oye Como Va." Vintage Latin music appears to be a new fascination, also evidenced in the acoustic opener "Risk It All," a near-mariachi ballad with classical guitar.

There are few weak moments across "The Romantic." Any criticism is best



This image released by Atlantic Records shows 'The Romantic' by Bruno Mars. (AP)

reserved for its most imitative moments: "On My Soul" is imbued with physical joy, but it also bares striking resemblance to Curtis Mayfield's "Move on Up." Elsewhere, Mars nearly self-plagiarizes: "Why You Wanna Fight?" could be in Silk Sonic's discography. Both are ripe for a good time. As the saying goes, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. And for Mars, may alterations be few and slight.

## Also:

LOS ANGELES: Harry Styles is back with his fourth solo album, "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally," out Friday via Columbia Records. Details are sparse: He described the album as "an audio representation of a long diary entry" in a Q&A with his stylist Harry Lambert in The Sunday Times Magazine; he's teased the release as a direct reflection of his time spent out of the spotlight in Rome. The first taste arrived in the form of "Aperture," a Styles' opening track if we've ever heard one, a five-minute slow-burn built of accelerating synths. He told BBC Radio 1 the song was at least partially inspired by seeing LCD Soundsystem live and listening to the '80s English post-punk band The Durutti Column.

## Schools to focus on fitness, mental health, safety

## China aims to make children fit via new guideline

BEIJING, March 1, (Xinhua): Chinese children will spend more time outdoors, on artistic hobbies and handiwork after the country rolled out a new guideline to develop "healthy schools."

The guideline, issued by the Ministry of Education, serves as a key policy document for implementing a health-first education philosophy, said Sun Mingchun, director of the division of physical, health and arts education under the ministry, at a press conference on Friday.

"While progress has been made, challenges remain in areas such as students' physical fitness, eyesight, weight management, mental health, food safety and nutrition," Sun noted.

The guideline aims to address these prominent concerns in a coordinated manner and shift the focus of education from emphasizing academic performance alone to promoting students' all-round physical and psychological development, he added.

Eight key tasks have been identified as central to this initiative, according to the guideline.

Schools will strengthen physical education by ensuring that primary and secondary school students engage in no less than two hours of integrated physical activity each day, while also introducing 15-minute class breaks and promoting fitness improvement programs for university students.

Efforts will be made to enhance aesthetic education by fully offering arts courses and improving regular art exhibition and performance mechanisms, which should be accessible to all students. Labor education will be reinforced through programs aimed at cultivating sound work habits and showcasing students' labor skills and achievements.

Mental health education will be deepened by strengthening professional teams and advancing the construction of a nationwide monitoring and early warning system focused on the mental health of students.

Comprehensive measures will be taken to prevent and control myopia, especially during key stages in kindergartens and primary schools, with the goal of accelerating the de-

cline in China's myopia rates. Obesity prevention capabilities targeting primary and secondary school students will also be strengthened via closer coordination between schools, families and medical institutions.

Campus food safety management will be tightened, including stricter implementation of first-aid knowledge and skills, and the provision of dedicated food safety and nutrition management personnel.

Life safety education will be incorporated into curricula, with broader dissemination of first-aid knowledge and skills, and through the required installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and other emergency equipment.

Pilot programs have been launched in more than 540 schools across seven provincial-level regions, namely Beijing, north China's Hebei, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Shandong, all in east China, central China's Henan and Guangdong in south China, which will explore replicable models suitable for healthy school development, Sun revealed.

## Cereulide contamination

## PAFN issues precautionary recall of Nutricia Danone infant formula

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) has announced a voluntary precautionary recall of infant formula products manufactured by Nutricia Danone, following reports issued through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release published on its official social media accounts, PAFN explained that the company is recalling several batches of infant formula as a precaution due to the potential presence of the substance cereulide, in order to protect consumer health and safety.

Immediate measures have been taken, including suspending the distribution of all affected batches, continuing to withdraw the products from the market in coordination with the relevant authorities, and implementing all necessary precautionary steps to ensure food safety and protect consumer health in Kuwait.

The authority urged consumers to check the batch number printed on the packaging and to stop using the product immediately if it matches the numbers listed in the warning notice.

## 2030 elimination goal

## New sleeping sickness pill gets OK, set for African use

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP): European drug regulators on Friday endorsed a new and simpler treatment for sleeping sickness, in what could be a game boost to efforts to eliminate the disease.

A European Medicines Agency committee gave its nod to acoziborole, made by Sanofi. The decision is seen as a crucial step to making the medicine available in Congo, the country with the most sleeping sickness cases, and paving the way for its use in other African countries.

The product's proponents say three of the pills, taken together as a one-time dose, are an easier and far more accessible treatment than current regimens, which can require arduous trips to hospitals.

"This disease is on the brink of elimination" and the new drug could accelerate progress toward finishing the job, said Dr. Junior Matangila of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, an international organization focused on new treatments.

If sleeping sickness could be eliminated, it might be the first time spread of an infectious disease was erased without a vaccine, Sanofi officials noted.

Monica Mugnier, a sleeping sickness researcher at Johns Hopkins University, said the drug is a major treatment improvement but that it's yet not clear exactly how big a turning point its approval will be. There are still questions about where the disease-causing parasite is lurking, for example.

"This isn't solved yet," she said.

Sleeping sickness is spread by tsetse flies found only in rural, sub-Saharan Africa. The flies bite people and infect them with a parasite.

Infections can start with vague, flu-like symptoms, and then worsen as the parasites multiply and fan out through the body - including into the nervous system. One result is the namesake symptom: a flipped sleep cycle in which people are awake at night but drowsy during the day. Coma and death can occur if it's not treated.

Researchers have been unable to develop a vaccine against the wormlike microscopic parasite because it has a unique ability to alter its protein coat, making it difficult to design an enduring immune system defense, Mugnier said.

The battle against the parasite has relied on efforts to kill off the flies and



In this photo provided by the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, Dr. Mariame Camara holds an acoziborole pill at the Dureka Clinical Trial site, in Dureka, Guinea, in 2024. (AP)

on medicines to save infected people. It's been difficult. Many of the infected are living in remote areas without access to hospitals.

"It's a disease of poverty," said Matangila, who is based in Congo.

Sleeping sickness surged in the 1970s and 1990s amid political and economic instability in sub-Saharan Africa. Not helping was that the traditionally available medications were toxic and painful.

Treatments improved in the early 2000s and were a major reason for a dramatic decline in reported infections, which in 2009 dropped to below 10,000 for the first time in a half century. In 2024, there were fewer than 600 reported cases of the most common version of sleeping sickness, although it's not known how many people are infected and undiagnosed.

The World Health Organization has set a goal to stop the spread of that form of sleeping sickness by 2030.

Current treatments can take 10 days and require difficult trips to hospitals from remote villages. Many patients have had to undergo spinal taps, to help doctors understand the stage of infections - and which drugs to use.

Enter acoziborole. A small but pivotal study of about 200 patients in Congo and Guinea found that more than 95% of treated patients were considered cured 18 months later.

Sanofi officials used that study as a basis to push for approval of the drug for the most common form of human sleeping sickness. It can be used for people ages 12 and older, to treat both early and advanced-stage infections - taking away the need to do spinal taps.

## Organs shift could boost lifesaving transplants

## More organs are being donated after heart stops, not brain death

WASHINGTON, March 1, (AP): The vast majority of organ donations once came from people who were brain-dead. Now they're increasingly coming from people who died when their heart stopped beating, a major shift that can boost transplants but also raises public confusion, researchers reported Thursday.

What's called donation after circulatory death, or DCD, jumped dramatically in a short period: It accounted for 49% of all deceased donors in the US last year, up from 2% in 2000.

Technology has helped overcome barriers to using those organs - ways to keep them from deteriorating as the heartbeat winds down - spurring this type of donation at the same time the nation is hunting ways to overcome a dire shortage. More than 100,000 people are on the transplant waiting list and thousands die waiting. Just over 49,000 transplants were performed last year.

But specialists from NYU Langone Health found donation after circulatory death is far more common in some parts of the country than others. That suggests better educating the public and local hospitals about the option could further increase access to life-saving transplants.

The findings, published in the medical journal JAMA, come as some rare but scary reports of potential donors who showed signs of life have shaken trust in the transplant system.

Additional safeguards are being developed by both federal officials and the nonprofit organ procurement organizations, or OPOs, that the government certifies to coordinate donation. The new findings may aid that policymaking.

Donation after circulatory death is complex and "we need to make sure we are doing it well," said Dr. Babak Orandi, an NYU transplant surgeon and study co-author. "If we stop doing it or severely restrict it, there would be pretty significant repercussions for patients."

While living donors can provide certain organs, most transplants are thanks to donations from the deceased. Brain death is declared when testing shows someone has no remaining



An organ recovery team works to remove the liver and kidneys from a donor June 15, 2023, in Jackson, Tenn. (AP)

brain function. If they're a possible organ donor, the body is kept on a ventilator to support the organs until they're retrieved.

Donation after circulatory death can be an option if someone has a non-survivable injury but all brain function hasn't ceased, and the family chooses to end life support. Death occurs after the heart gradually stops beating. Once that happens there's a mandatory wait - five minutes, according to guidelines from the American Society of Transplant Surgeons - to be sure it won't restart. Then the person's doctor declares death.

By law, donation and transplant groups can't participate in the decision to end life support, and they're not in the room when it's withdrawn. Organ retrieval cannot begin until death is declared. If death doesn't occur quickly enough, within about two hours, the organs aren't usable and retrieval isn't attempted.

To track the donor evolution, the NYU team analyzed data from the nation's Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network, and from 55 OPOs that recover organs in assigned regions around the country.

Last year, circulatory death accounted for more than half the donors at 24 organ donation agencies. But it varied

widely, with some accounting for as little as 11% of donors.

Hospital resources play a role, according to the Association for Organ Procurement Organizations. Decisions to withdraw life support are common, but small or rural hospitals may not be as familiar with the extra steps involved with donation.

Another factor is whether hospitals have adopted that new technology. The quality of organs can suffer as the heart stops, briefly depriving them of oxygen. After death is declared, a tool called normothermic regional perfusion allows surgeons to temporarily restore that blood flow to organs in the chest or abdomen - avoiding the brain - while they do the delicate work of removing them.

It has helped enable use of organs from older, sicker donors after their hearts stop. But even temporarily restoring blood flow after death has raised ethical questions.

The Health Resources and Services Administration is preparing new national policies to improve safeguards for this type of donation. One proposal would allow anyone involved with a potential donor who questions if their condition is right for life-support withdrawal to call for a pause in those preparations.

## FMD vaccination

## Hope for next-gen malaria vaccine

MELBOURNE, March 1, (Xinhua): Scientists have mapped how the human immune system fights *Plasmodium vivax*, paving the way for the first effective vaccine against the dominant malaria strain in the Asia-Pacific.

The study, published in *Immunity*, provides critical evidence of how protective immunity to *P. vivax* works, identifying specific targets on the parasite and explaining how antibodies function to prevent and clear infection, said a statement from Australia's Burnet Institute on Friday.

"These exciting findings open new avenues for developing *P. vivax* vaccines to combat the malaria burden globally and support a path to elimination," said Professor James Beeson, head of malaria immunity and vaccines at Burnet, which co-led the study with Australia's Walter and Eliza Hall Institute.

**FMD:** South Africa on Friday launched a nationwide vaccination campaign against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) to protect the country's livestock industry and agricultural economy, local media reported.

During a visit to a farm near Mooi River in KwaZulu-Natal Province, Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen said that mass vaccination remains the government's primary strategy to effectively contain the outbreak, according to TimesLIVE news site.

"We are committed to protecting the livelihoods of our farmers, from our communal lands to our commercial operations," Steenhuisen said, noting that the government's goal is to regain its "FMD-free with vaccination" status.

To support the nationwide effort, 45 vaccination teams have been deployed across the country, operating daily with a target of inoculating up to 90,000 animals per day and covering the approximately 2.4 million head of cattle in KwaZulu-Natal, which has been identified as the primary epicenter of the outbreak.



A total lunar eclipse, known as the blood moon, is visible between skyscrapers Friday, March 14, 2025, in downtown Chicago. (AP)

## Visible across continents

## A total lunar eclipse to turn moon blood red on Tuesday

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP): A blood-red moon will soon grace the skies for a total lunar eclipse - and there won't be another until late 2028.

The spectacle will be visible Tuesday morning from North America, Central America and the western part of South America. Australia and eastern Asia can catch it Tuesday night. Partial stages of the eclipse with small bites taken out of the moon can be seen from Central Asia and much of South America. Africa and Europe will be shut out.

Solar and lunar eclipses happen due to a precise alignment of the sun, moon and Earth. There are between four and seven a year, according to NASA.

The eclipses tend to follow each other, taking advantage of the sweet spot in the celestial bodies' orbits. Tuesday's total eclipse of the moon comes two weeks after a 'ring of fire' solar eclipse that dazzled people and penguins in Antarctica.

During a total lunar eclipse, the Earth is between the sun and full moon, casting a shadow that covers the moon. The so-called blood moon looks red because of stray bits of sunlight filtering through Earth's atmosphere.

The show unfolds over several hours, with totality lasting about an hour. Compared to a solar eclipse, "the lunar eclipse is a little more of a relaxed pace," said Catherine Miller at Middlebury College's Mittelman Observatory.

For those in the path, there's no need for any special equipment to observe - just a clear, cloudless view of the sky.

Use a forecasting app or any online celestial calendar to look up the exact timing for your area. Venture outside a few times to see Earth's shadow darken the moon, eventually revealing the reddish-orange orb.

## New genetic analysis offers some ancient gossip

## Female humans favored Neanderthal males: study

NEW YORK, March 1, (AP): Humans and Neanderthals cozied up from time to time when they lived in the same areas tens of thousands of years ago. But we don't know much about who got with whom, or why.

A new genetic analysis offers some ancient gossip: The pairings were more often female humans with male Neanderthals.

How exactly this happened remains a huge question mark. Did human women venture into Neanderthal populations, or were the Neanderthal males drawn to larger human enclaves? Were these interactions peaceful, confusing, secretive or even violent?

"I don't know if we'll ever get a definitive answer to how this happened, since we can't travel back in time," said population genetics expert Xinjun Zhang with the University of Michigan, commenting on the new analysis.

But the study, published Thursday in the journal *Science*, shows "that whenever Neanderthals and modern humans have mated, there has been a preference for male Neanderthals and female modern humans, as opposed to the other way around," said author Alexander Platt, who studies genetics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Scientists know that Neanderthals and humans mated because there is a small but important percentage of Neanderthal DNA in most modern humans outside of sub-Saharan Africa - including genes that can help us fight some diseases and make us more susceptible to others. But they have also known that the Neanderthal DNA is not distributed evenly throughout the human genome.

In particular, there is a surprising lack of Neander-



This Friday, March 20, 2009 file photo shows reconstructions of a Neanderthal man, (left), and woman at the Neanderthal museum in Mettmann, Germany. (AP)

thal DNA in the human X chromosome, one of the bundles of genes in each cell known as a sex chromosome, compared with the amount of Neanderthal DNA in the other, non-sex chromosomes in the cell.

Scientists thought that maybe the genes in those locations were simply not beneficial - or even harmful. Perhaps people with those gene patterns didn't survive as well so those genes were filtered out by evolution over time.

Or, they thought, maybe the difference could be explained by how the two species intermingled.

To try to solve the riddle, Platt and colleagues looked instead at the Neanderthal genome and the human DNA that got interspersed during a "mating

event" 250,000 years ago.

When comparing these genes, they found more of a human fingerprint on the Neanderthal X chromosome - the same chromosome that, in humans, has less Neanderthal DNA than would be expected.

The most likely explanation for this mirror image pattern is mating behavior. That's because of the way sex chromosomes are passed from parents to children, explained Platt. Because genetic females have two X chromosomes and genetic males have one X and one Y chromosomes, two out of every three X chromosomes in a population, on average, are inherited from people's mothers.

If more human females mated with Neanderthal males than the other way around, over thousands of years you would expect to see just what they found: more human DNA in Neanderthal X chromosomes and less Neanderthal DNA in human X chromosomes.

"I think that they've taken some really important steps in filling missing pieces to the puzzle," said Joshua Akey, who studies evolutionary genomics at Princeton University and wasn't involved with the new study.

The study can't totally rule out other explanations. For example, Zhang said, it's possible that the offspring of human males and Neanderthal females just didn't survive as well.

But the simplest and most likely, explanation, the study found, is also the most interesting: "It's not the result of a strictly Darwinian survival of the fittest," Platt said. "It's really the result of how we interact with each other, and what our culture and society and behavior is like."

## Old Apollo rocks shed new light on moon's magnetic field long ago

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., March 1, (AP): Lunar rocks collected by Apollo astronauts more than half a century ago are providing a fresh take on the moon's mysterious magnetic field, scientists reported recently.

Samples to be retrieved by future moonwalkers in NASA's new Artemis program should yield even more clues. Four Artemis astronauts are expected to fly around the moon in a crucial test flight, blasting off as early as April from Kennedy Space Center after weeks of delays.

The study by University of Oxford researchers in England suggests that while the moon's magnetic field has been weak during most of its existence, it strengthened and even exceeded Earth's magnetic

activity during extremely brief periods 3 billion to 4 billion years ago. Their findings appear in the journal *Nature Geoscience*. Magnetic fields help to shield against dangerous cosmic rays and, in the case of Earth, the sun's harsh radiation as well.

The moon had "incredibly short spikes in high magnetic field strength" lasting no more than 5,000 years and possibly as short as a few decades, the result of melting titanium-rich rocks deep within the moon, said lead author Claire Nichols.

Scientists previously theorized that the lunar magnetic field remained strong for long stretches based on their analysis of rocks fetched by Apollo moonwalkers from 1969 through 1972. With Artemis

astronauts exploring the moon's south polar region instead of the low-latitude lava plains of Apollo days, the new samples should shed even more light on the moon's ancient magnetism.

Nichols and her team pored over earlier measurements of the Apollo samples and found that high titanium levels corresponded with preserved traces of high magnetic activity. Rocks from the first and last moon landings - Apollo 11 and Apollo 17 - were loaded with titanium.

"We have found a missing link," Nichols said in an email. Magnetic field activity can be "intermittently really strong and may fluctuate far more than we have traditionally thought."

## SPORTS

## Lakers rout short-handed Warriors to snap skid



Los Angeles Lakers guard Luka Doncic, left, and Golden State Warriors guard Gary Payton II compete for possession of the ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)



Miami Heat guard Davion Mitchell (45) goes to the basket as Houston Rockets guard Reed Sheppard (15) defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Miami. (AP)

## Pelicans stay hot, top Jazz as Williamson exits early

**SAN FRANCISCO, March 1, (AP):** Luka Doncic had 26 points, eight assists and six rebounds, LeBron James added 22 points, nine assists and seven rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers ran away from the short-handed Golden State Warriors for a 129-101 win.

The Warriors struggled to produce enough offensive power as Stephen Curry missed his 10th straight game for Golden State still nursing a right knee injury and newly acquired center Kristaps Porzingis sat out with an illness.

Gui Santos scored 14 points to lead the Warriors in his fifth straight double-digit game and 12th in the last 13 — and this one came after he received a three-year contract extension earlier in the day.

Gary Payton II contributed 12 points for Golden State, his seventh game out of the last nine in double digits.

James went 7 for 13 from the floor with four 3-pointers after he shot around with 11-year-old daughter Zhuri before the game after completing his own warmup in a sweet moment.

The Lakers snapped a three-game losing streak overall

and a three-game skid on the road with just their third win in the last eight — and also third in eight on the road against the Pacific Division this season.

**Pelicans 115, Jazz 105**

In Salt Lake City, Saddiq Bey scored 24 points as New Orleans beat the Jazz 115-105 to complete a two-game sweep in Utah after Pelicans star Zion Williamson left the game with an ankle injury.

Williamson left early in the second quarter with a right ankle injury and didn't return. He had four points, two assists and a rebound in 11 minutes.

Pelicans interim coach James Borrego said only that Williams "tweaked" his ankle. He said he would get more information and hoped it was nothing serious.

Bey, coming off a 42-point performance in Thursday's 129-118 win of the Pelicans, shot 7 for 16 from the field and 3 for 8 from long distance, and was helped by 7-for-10 shooting from the line.

Jeremiah Fears and Bryce McGowens each scored 18 points, Herbert Jones scored 10 of his 17 points in the first half and Jordan Poole added 11. Fears chipped in 11 rebounds and five assists as New Orleans won its fourth straight and for the sixth time in eight games.

Isaiah Collier's 21 points led Utah, which lost its fifth straight. Keyonte George, who was back in the lineup after

missing 10 games with ankle sprains, scored 17. Elijah Harkless scored 14, Ace Bailey had 13, Kyle Filipowski added 12 and Brice Sensabaugh 10.

**Raptors 134, Wizards 125**

In Washington, Immanuel Quickley had 27 points and 11 assists to lift the Toronto Raptors to a 134-125 victory over the Washington Wizards.

Brandon Ingram added 24 points for the Raptors, who rebounded from back-to-back home losses to Western Conference contenders Oklahoma and San Antonio earlier in the week. Toronto is in fifth place in the East, now three games clear of the play-in group.

Will Riley scored 19 points for Washington, which lost its fourth straight game after beating Indiana twice in a row coming out of the All-Star break.

The Wizards remain without newly acquired Anthony Davis (finger) and Trae Young (knee, quad), and 7-footer Alex Sarr (hamstring) didn't play either. Collin Murray-Boyles (thumb) did not play for Toronto.

**Heat 115, Rockets 105**

In Miami, Bam Adebayo had 24 points and 11 rebounds, Pelle Larsson scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter and the Miami Heat beat the Houston Rockets.

Tyler Herro scored 18, Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 14 and Kel'el Ware had a 13-point, 15-rebound game for the Heat.

Andrew Wiggins - who needed eight stitches to close a laceration inside his mouth - had 12 points for Miami.

Kevin Durant finished with 32 points, eight assists and six rebounds for the Rockets, who got 20 points from Amen Thompson and 14 from Reed Sheppard.

Both teams had double-digit leads early; the Rockets ran out to a quick 14-4 edge, the Heat answered with a 37-14 run to take a 41-28 lead. And then things settled down, with the sides staying relatively close the rest of the way.

Neither team had a double-digit lead in the second half until Larsson hit a pair of free throws with 1:52 left for a 113-103 lead.

The Rockets played without Jabari Smith Jr., sidelined with a sprained right ankle. He isn't expected to play in Washington on Monday either.

"We'll target when we return home," said Rockets coach Ime Udoka, who put Sheppard into the starting lineup in Smith's place.

**Hornets 109, Trail Blazers 93**

In Charlotte, Brandon Miller had 26 points and eight rebounds, and the Charlotte Hornets beat the Portland Trail Blazers for their fourth consecutive victory.

Miller made six 3-pointers and the Hornets finished 16 for 42 behind the arc after totaling 72 in the previous three victories, equaling the NBA record for most in a three-game span.

## LAFc blanks Dynamo

## Teen Hall makes history as Red Bulls edges Revolution

HARRISON, N.J., March 1, (AP): Julian Hall scored to lead the New York Red Bulls in a 1-0 victory over the New England Revolution on Saturday as the 17-year-old became the youngest player in MLS history to score in each of his club's first two games of the season. Hall headed the goal in the 53rd minute for his MLS-leading third goal of the year. He received a headed assist from 16-year-old Adri Mehmeti. The initial cross came from a 17-year-old Matthew Dos Santos.

Mark Delgado had a goal and an assist, Son Heung-min had two assists and Hugo Lloris posted a second straight clean sheet to help Los Angeles FC beat Houston 2-0 after the Dynamo lost two players to red cards.

Houston defender Antonio Carlos was tagged with a red card in the second minute of stoppage time in a scoreless first half, forcing the Dynamo to play a man down from there.

LAFc (2-0-0) took advantage in the 56th minute when Delgado used assists from Son and Denis Bouanga to score. Delgado scored for the 26th time in 345 career appearances. Bouanga's second assist in as many matches gives him 22 in 103 career appearances. None of Bouanga's 66 goals have come against Houston - the only team he has not scored on.

Thomas Müller scored twice and Brian White added a goal in a 22-minute span of the first half and Yohei Takaoka finished with a second straight clean sheet in the Vancouver Whitecaps' 3-0 victory over Toronto FC.

Müller ignited the Whitecaps with a penalty-kick goal in the 25th minute, then made it 2-0 with a goal 12 minutes later. White capped the scoring two minutes into stoppage time with an unassisted netter. It was White's 80th career goal for Vancouver in all competitions.

Müller's PK came after Toronto's Walker Zimmerman fouled Azil Jackson. His second goal came with assists from Mathias Laborda and Sebastian Berhalter in the 37th minute. João Klauss scored two goals two minutes apart in the first 13 minutes - after a score by Lucas Sanabria - and the Los Angeles Galaxy cruised to a 3-0 victory over Charlotte FC.

Sanabria gave the Galaxy (1-0-1) the lead in the 8th minute with an unassisted goal. Sanabria had two goals in 21 appearances as a rookie last season.

Timo Werner assisted on a goal in his MLS debut on Saturday night and the San Jose Earthquakes beat Atlanta United 2-0.

Preston Judd and Ouseni Bouda each scored a goal for San Jose. Judd gave San Jose a 1-0 lead in the 24th minute. Following an Atlanta turnover in its defensive half, Jamar Ricketts raced to the left corner of the 18-yard box and lobbed a cross to the front post, where Judd skipped a header into the net.

Teenager Aiden Hezarkhani scored his first career goal, Ariath Pjol scored early in the second half and Real Salt Lake continued to dominate the Sounders at home with a 2-1 victory.

Real Salt Lake (1-1-0) improves to 14-1-4 when the Sounders (1-1-0) visit America First Field. Seattle hasn't won in Sandy since winning a U.S. Open Cup match in 2016.

Hamzat Ojediran and Lucas Herrington each scored their first career MLS goal to help the Colorado Rapids beat the Portland Timbers 2-0.

Zach Steffen stopped three shots and had his first shutout of the season for Colorado (1-1-0).

Ojediran opened the scoring in the seventh minute, when the 22-year-old midfielder ripped a straight-away shot from 35 yards that deflected off defender Finn Surman and rolled into the net.

Kelvin Yeboah's rebound goal and Drake Callender's four saves gave Minnesota United FC a 1-0 win over Cincinnati FC on Saturday.



Vancouver Whitecaps' Azil Jackson, left, and Toronto FC's Richie Laryea vie for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match, in Vancouver. (AP)

## Balogun scores again in Monaco win, PSG extends Ligue 1 lead to 4 points

PARIS, March 1, (AP): American forward Folarin Balogun continued his excellent run of form with another goal as Monaco defeated Angers 2-0 in Ligue 1 while Paris Saint-Germain extended its lead.

PSG was four points ahead in the table after beating Le Havre 1-0.

Balogun put the host in the lead in the 57th minute with his fourth goal in seven matches.

Luck was on his side when his header connected with a cross; the ball bounced back on an opponent then on his leg before crossing the goalline.

Monaco dominated and deservedly doubled its lead in the 62nd when Simon Adingra slotted home with a powerful curled shot from outside the box.

Monaco posted a third straight win and moved up to seventh in the standings, with 12th-placed Angers lagging eight points behind.

PSG won thanks to Bradley Barcola, who headed the ball home in the 37th minute from winger Lee



PSG's head coach Luis Enrique gives instructions during a Champions League second leg playoff soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco in Paris. (AP)

Kang-in's cross. PSG had several chances to add more luster to the scoreline but a shot from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia hit the post and a penalty by Désiré Doué was saved

by Le Havre goalkeeper Mory Diaw.

PSG was without injured players including star forward Ousmane Dembélé.

## Inter rebounds from disappointing Champions League exit

## Lukaku's last-gasp goal ends Napoli's winless run

MILAN, March 1, (AP): Romelu Lukaku's first goal of the season with the last kick of the match ended Napoli's winless run.

Lukaku, who had played just 41 minutes this campaign following a serious preseason thigh injury, pounced in the sixth minute of stoppage time to help Napoli win at bottom club Hellas Verona 2-1.

He appeared to tear up when the final whistle blew seconds later. His last goal was on May 23 followed by a terrible few months. Shortly after his torn thigh, his father died suddenly in September at 58.

"On a personal level soccer gives you a lot. It has given me everything but losing my father like I lost him weighs on me every day," Lukaku told DAZN while struggling to hold back tears. "But it is what it is and I carry on for my daughters, for my brother and for Napoli which has given me so much.

"Because before arriving at Napoli I was dead. Last year we did something wonderful, this year is a bit difficult for us, but we have to look forwards and do everything to finish as high as possible in the table."



Napoli's Sam Beukema, centre, and Verona's Jean Daniel Akpa Akpro challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Hellas Verona and Napoli in Verona, Italy. (AP)

It was Napoli's first win in four matches in all competitions. The defending Serie A champion remained third in the league table, 14 points below leader Inter Milan after the Nerazzurri beat Genoa 2-0. Verona remained nine points

from safety.

Napoli got off to a great start as Rasmus Højlund's looping header remained third in the league table, 14 points below leader Inter Milan after less than two minutes.

However, Højlund was also involved in the equalizer in the 65th.

Second-placed Lens drew at Strasbourg 1-1 on Friday.

Having come back to Ligue 1, Arnaud Nordin scored his first goal for Rennes in a 1-0 win over Toulouse.

Nordin struggled for playing time in the Bundesliga with Mainz and joined Rennes on loan in January until the end of the season.

The winger's goal in the 27th helped Rennes to a third consecutive win.

On a five-match winless run, Toulouse remained in 10th place.

Nordin jumped higher than defender Charlie Cresswell and broke the deadlock with a header. Nordin previously played for Saint-Etienne and Montpellier. He has more than 200 French league games under his belt.

Rennes hired coach Franck Haise this month following Habib Beye's exit and was tasked with guiding the team to fourth spot and a place in the Champions League qualifying rounds.

He attempted to clear a Verona corner but it came out to Jean-Daniel Akpa Akpro, whose shot was deflected in by Højlund. The goal was credited to Akpa Akpro as the initial shot was on target.

Verona almost won it in stoppage time but Kieron Bowie couldn't keep his attempt on target after Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret flapped aimlessly at a cross.

And instead it was Napoli which snatched the win. A corner was played short and eventually crossed in by Giovane for fellow substitute Lukaku to sweep in first time from close range.

Inter rebounded from a disappointing Champions League exit to Bodø/Glimt midweek.

Federico Dimarco started and ended the move in the opening goal in the 31st. Dimarco found Henrikh Mkhitaryan and raced into the box to receive the lofted, return pass and volley in from an improbable angle. Hakan Çalhanoğlu drilled a spot kick into the bottom right corner in the 70th after Genoa midfielder Alessandro Amorim was penalized for handball.

Earlier, Como came from behind to win at relegation-threatened Lecce 3-1.

Liverpool continues midseason recovery

# Man City wins without Haaland to keep pressure on Arsenal

LONDON, March 1, (AP) — Without the injured Erling Haaland, Manchester City relied on the latest goal from recently signed forward Antoine Semenyo to secure a win that kept the pressure on Arsenal in the Premier League title race.

Semenyo did his best Haaland impression by meeting a low cross with a close-range finish for the winner in first-half stoppage time as City held firm to beat Leeds 1-0.

It was Semenyo's sixth goal in 11 games since joining from Bournemouth in January.

"We just need to control what we can control," Semenyo said, "win our games and see what happens."

Haaland was unavailable for the trip to Leeds - his city of birth - after sustaining what City manager Pep Guardiola described as a "little injury" in training on Thursday. It was the first league match the Norway striker has missed all season.

City rode its luck at Elland Road, with Leeds squandering two clear-cut chances in the first half and piling on the pressure late in the game.

Still, City racked up a fourth straight league win and a sixth in a row in all competitions.

Mohamed Salah's run of league games without scoring is up to 10.

Fortunately for the Egypt star, his Liverpool teammates had no problem finding the net in a 5-2 thrashing of West Ham that continued the defending champion's midseason recovery. Hugo Ekitike, Virgil van Dijk, Alexis Mac Allister and Cody Gakpo all scored for Liverpool, which also forced an own-goal as the team racked up more than four goals in a league game for the first time this season.

Liverpool has won four games in a row in all competitions and six in its last seven - the only blip being the home loss to City. Arne Slot's side moved level on

points with fourth-placed Manchester United, which plays on Sunday at home to Crystal Palace.

Salah's last league goal for Liverpool was way back on Nov. 1 against Aston Villa. It's his longest scoring drought in the competition since joining from Roma in 2017.

Brentford squandered a three-goal lead before scoring a stoppage-time winner to beat relegation-threatened Burnley 4-3. And that was only half the drama.

After pulling it back from 3-0 down to 3-3, Burnley striker Zian Flemming had a goal ruled out for the most marginal of offside.

There was a cruel sting in the tail for the hosts, though, as Brentford playmaker Mikkel Damsgaard tucked the ball into the bottom corner in the third minute of added-on time.

Still, Burnley thought it earned a point when, with the clock ticking toward 100 minutes, veteran striker Ashley Barnes found the net - only for VAR to intervene again, with the goal ruled out for handball after a wait of more than five minutes.

In another goalfest, Everton won at Newcastle 3-2 - but only after England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford produced a stunning save to keep out Sandro Tonali's long-range volley in stoppage time.

Pickford somehow turned the Italy international's shot onto the crossbar, leading Everton manager David Moyes to say: "The biggest credit I could give the save would be to say that Tonali's volley was textbook. Probably if he got it he couldn't do any better if he tried again. It was so good, technique, on target."

Newcastle recovered from Jarrad Branthwaite's early header to equalize through Jacob Ramsey, but almost instantly conceded again when goalkeeper Nick Pope spilled a shot and Beto pounced to score.



Manchester City's Omar Marmoush shoots during the Premier League soccer match between Leeds United and Manchester City in Leeds, England. (AP)

Jacob Murphy volleyed past Pickford to make it 2-2 but Newcastle conceded once again within seconds when Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall surged into the box and crossed for substitute Thierno Barry to bundle the ball

across the line.

Also, Bournemouth fought back to draw with Sunderland 1-1 thanks to Brazilian striker Evanilson, stretching its unbeaten run to eight games.

# Farhan record century in vain as Pakistan bows out of World Cup



Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan plays a shot during the T20 World Cup cricket match between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Pallekele, Sri Lanka. (AP)

## New Zealand sneaks into semifinals

PALLEKELE, Sri Lanka, March 1, (AP) — New Zealand backed into the Twenty20 World Cup semifinals when Pakistan could only narrowly beat Sri Lanka in a gripping match. Pakistan had to restrict Sri Lanka's chase to 147 to advance from the Super Eights at New Zealand's expense.

It looked achievable when Pakistan reduced Sri Lanka to 101-5 in the 12th over. But its hopes were foiled when Pavan Rathnayake and captain Dasun Shanaka led Sri Lanka to 148 in the 16th over. But then Pakistan found itself in danger of failing to defend its highest-ever T20 World Cup total, 212. Shanaka began the last over against Shaheen Shah Afridi by slamming 4-6-6-6. Sri Lanka could pull off a heist with six runs needed off the last two balls. But Shanaka missed trying to scoop the fifth ball and left the sixth, a yorker, thinking it was wide. It was not. Pakistan won by five runs and bowed out of the tournament on net run rate, -0.123 to New Zealand's 1.390.

"When I lost the toss, it was always going to be challenging because of the dew," Pakistan captain Salman Agha said. "It was a good pitch. Restricting (Sri Lanka) to 148 was going to be challenging - we tried." Tournament co-host Sri Lanka was already out of semifinal contention but finished its fourth straight defeat to applause from its home crowd after going down swinging. "Sometimes as players, we feel the pressure," Shanaka said. I wanted to say sorry to all the fans because we fell down. It was a close game; I could've finished it. Well bowled to Shaheen."

England, New Zealand and South Africa have nailed semifinal spots. Pakistan was made to bat first, and openers Sahibzada Farhan and Fakhar Zaman combined for 176 runs, the highest ever partnership in men's T20 World Cup history. They eclipsed the 175 by New Zealanders Tim Seifert and

Finn Allen on Feb. 10. Farhan's blistering 100 off 60 balls also blew away Virat Kohli's single tournament runs record of 319 in 2014.

Farhan passed Kohli when he reached 40. He has 383 after two centuries and two half-centuries. "The ton didn't work for the team, that's why I'm sad," Farhan said. "I have been feeling well, which brings confidence. I knew I could hit whatever was in my arc."

Zaman was promoted to opener for the first time in the tournament, and the left-hander slammed 84 off 42 balls as Pakistan posted 212-8. Sri Lanka could have broken their stand in the 11th over but didn't go for a television referral when replays suggested Zaman edged behind on 46 and the partnership at 107-0.

Their stand of 176 finished in the 16th over when Zaman played onto his stumps. Sri Lanka fought back with eight wickets in the final 26 balls for 36 runs. Farhan, dropped on 76, fell in the final over after hitting five sixes and nine fours. "We didn't bat well in the tournament," Agha said. "It was only Sahibzada Farhan who batted exceptionally well. Our batting was always a concern, especially the middle order. It's been an issue for a few years now." Fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka grabbed 3-33, and Shanaka took 2-42.

Sri Lanka's top order was rattled by Abrar Ahmed (3-23), one of three changes by Pakistan. But with the ball getting wet because of dew, it became difficult for the bowlers to hit the right lengths. Pakistan spinner Usman Tariq struggled with his grip and returned 0-43, ending his streak of consecutive T20 innings with a wicket at 26, two shy of the record. Rathnayake anchored Sri Lanka with 58 off 37, and Shanaka almost achieved the miracle at the death. Shanaka smashed eight sixes and two fours in his unbeaten 76 off 31 balls.

## Aicher and Vickhoff complete the podium

# Goggia wins super-G to regain commanding lead

SOLDEU, Andorra, March 1, (AP) — Sofia Goggia won her second super-G of the season Sunday and regained a commanding lead in the race to the World Cup discipline title.

The Olympic downhill bronze medallist extended her advantage in the super-G standings to 84 points over Alice Robinson of New Zealand and 116 over Emma Aicher of Germany in third, with two events left.

A race win is worth 100 points. "I'm still not thinking about it," said Goggia, who bounced back in impressive style, a day after the Italian had her lead reduced to just 20 points following a sixth-place finish in another super-G. "I'm really thinking day by day, race by race. It was a solid run today, I got back the points I lost yesterday," she added.

With a trademark gutsy run, Goggia beat Saturday's winner Aicher by 0.24 seconds and third-placed Kajsa Vickhoff Lie of Norway by 0.31.

Robinson finished 0.94 seconds behind in seventh. "It was a really similar race to yesterday. But we decided to adopt a different strategy to get into the central pitch, and it paid off," Goggia said.

Goggia and Robinson set up their duel for the super-G title early in the season when they won



Italy's Sofia Goggia speeds down the course during a women's World Cup super-G race, in Soldeu, Andorra. (AP)

the first two races, but neither added another win until the Italian's victory Sunday.

Goggia now has nine career wins in super-G but is chasing her first season title in the discipline, having won the crystal globe in downhill four times, most recently in 2023.

"I still haven't won in downhill yet (this season), and this is maybe a bit strange for everyone, because I have been doing so many podiums in

downhill in my career," said Goggia, who was the 2018 Olympic downhill champion.

"I have a really solid feeling with the super-G, so I'm happy with it. Now it's important to stay really focused for the next ones in which we play for everything." Olympic super-G champion Federica Brignone came nearly a second behind her Italian teammate in eighth, improving from her 15th-place finish in Saturday's race when she was more than two seconds off the pace.

Brignone returned from a broken left leg just before the Milan Cortina Games and then won gold in super-G and giant slalom.

Mary Bock earned her career-best result leading the U.S. ski team in 11th, one position ahead of her teammate Keely Cashman.

Olympic downhill champion Breezy Johnson was nearly three seconds off the pace in 30th.

Aicher's seventh podium result of the season saw the German close in on second-ranked Camille Rast in the overall standings. The Swiss skier has 963 points while Aicher is on 914.

Mikaela Shiffrin leads with 1,133 points as the American aims for her sixth overall title. She hasn't competed in speed races this season except for one super-G start last December.

# Australian Hannah Green wins HSBC Women's World Championship by stroke

SINGAPORE, March 1, (AP) — Australian Hannah Green has won the HSBC Women's World Championship for a second time, holding off a fast-finishing American Auston Kim to claim a one-stroke victory on Sunday.

Green, the 2019 Women's PGA Championship winner, closed with a 69, after an erratic back-nine with three birdies and three bogeys nearly opened the door for Kim.

Green tapped in for bogey at the last and a 14-under four-round total of 274 at the par-72 Sentosa Golf Club and give her another title in Singapore after also winning here in 2024.

Kim had the equal-best round of the day with a 67 on the back off six birdies and an eagle, but bogeys at the second and especially at the par-3 15th ended her charge at

13-under 275, and one shot behind a faltering Green.

Minjee Lee, who had been co-leader with Green coming into Sunday's final round, mixed three birdies with three bogeys for a frustrating even final round 72 and was tied for third with Angel Yin (71) and Pauline Roussin-Bouchard (68) of France at 11-under 277.

Top-ranked Jeeno Thitikul, who won last week's tournament in her native Thailand, shot 73 Sunday and was 2-under 287 and tied for 31st. She was one shot behind defending champion Lydia Ko, who had a 72.

The 72-player, no-cut tournament was the second of three stops on the LPGA's early year Asian swing, with the final one next week at Hainan Island, China.

## Best of the Rest

**Medvedev takes the Dubai title:** Daniil Medvedev won his 23rd ATP singles title at the Dubai Championships when Tallon Griekspoor withdrew from the final injured.

Griekspoor hurt his left hamstring on Friday against Andrey Rublev and won their two-sets semifinal but couldn't recover in time for the final.

"I have been better that's for sure," the Dutchman said at the trophy ceremony. "I went to the hospital this morning and had a couple of scans, which showed something serious. It kept me from coming on court tonight and will keep me from the court in the coming weeks."

Medvedev won his second title of the year after Brisbane in January. It was also his second Dubai title after victory in 2023. Its the first time he's won the same event twice. "That's what is crazy about it," Medvedev said. "I never did it in any city in the world and the first time I do it, it's (via) a walkover." (AP)

□ □ □

**US wins the Sydney leg of Sail GP:** The United States showed its mastery of light conditions by winning the Sydney leg of the SailGP series, beating Britain and Spain in a three boat final.

Racing took place in winds of between 8 and 15 knots (9 to 17 mph) and the United States looked in its element, clearly beating Britain for its first win of the season.

Driver Taylor Canfield positioned the United States at the top end of the starting line in the final and, while Britain crossed slightly ahead, the USA was faster and had a better angle. Britain was just ahead at the first mark but the United States again had better speed and took a lead which it didn't concede for the rest of the race.

Britain split away on the second leg, looking for better wind. But the tactic didn't work and the United States positioned itself well to cement its advantage.

While the United States achieved a best speed of the day of around 41 knots, it only managed to stay on its foils for 22 percent of the final. The win was its first in two seasons, since Cadiz in season four. SailGP features 13 identical 50 foot catamarans which rise out of the water on foils and can attain high speeds. In the previous event of the series in Auckland, New Zealand strong winds saw boats achieve speeds of around 100kmh (60mph). (AP)

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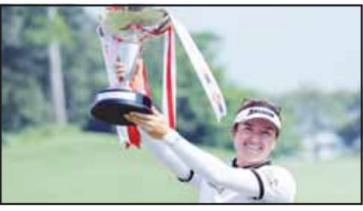
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Hannah Green of Australia poses with the tournament trophy after winning the HSBC Women's World Championship at Sentosa Golf Club in Singapore. (AP)

# Sports

## Kuwait suspends all sports amid regional crisis

Kuwait Club, Al-Qadsia AFC games on hold

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The Asian Football Confederation has officially postponed the quarterfinal first-leg clash of the AFC Challenge League between Kuwait SC and Al-Shabab, which was scheduled to take place Wednesday in Muscat.**

Similarly, the Gulf Cup Football Federation has delayed the Gulf Champions League semifinal encounter between Al-Qadsia and



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

Al-Rayyan, originally set for the same day.

The postponements follow a formal request from Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef to AFC President Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, urging the suspension of matches across the region due to the prevailing circumstances, in order to safeguard players, coaching staff, administrators, and medical teams.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef cited the nationwide suspension of sports activities in Kuwait, along with the recall of players and staff by government ministries and public institutions to fulfill national duties. He also pointed to the temporary closure of airspace in Kuwait and several Gulf countries, which has complicated travel arrangements.

He stressed that Kuwait Club would be unable to travel to Oman for its fixture against Al-Shabab, while Al-Qadsia has been unable to continue training due to the halt in domestic sports activities. In addition, Al-Rayyan cannot travel to Kuwait because of airspace restrictions.

Earlier, Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma announced the suspension of all sports competitions and events in Kuwait in light of the current regional situation, emphasizing that the move aims to protect the safety of athletes, fans, and all members of the sports sector.

Al-Jalahma explained that the de-



A file photo of Kuwait Club players celebrating.

cision forms part of precautionary measures adopted by the state to preserve public security and safety. The suspension applies to all official com-

petitions, tournaments, and sporting events across various disciplines until further notice.

He affirmed that authorities are

closely monitoring developments and will provide updates regarding the resumption of activities in coordination with the relevant bodies. The minis-

ter also called on all federations and clubs to fully adhere to the directive, underscoring that safety remains the highest priority.

### Kerr delivers for Aussies again

## Australia holds off Philippines in Women's Asian Cup opener



Philippines' Angela Beard, left, and Australia's Hayley Raso battle for the ball during the Women's Asia Cup soccer match between Australia and the Philippines in Perth, Australia. (AP)

PERTH, Australia, March 1, (AP): The scene was set for a hometown star and Sam Kerr delivered for Australia - again - with the only goal in a 1-0 win over Philippines in the Women's Asian Cup tournament opener on Sunday.

The Chelsea striker scored with a header from the edge of the box in the 14th minute following a cross from Clare Wheeler on the right and a header back across goal from Caitlin Foord.

It was the 32-year-old Kerr's 70th goal for Australia and a welcome return from a long-term knee injury that has prevented her from playing for the Matildas since the 2023 World Cup.

The crowd of 44,379 was a record for the tournament and something of a tribute to Kerr, who was raised in Perth.

The Australians went into the tournament hoping to relive the atmosphere generated during the Women's World Cup on home soil almost three years ago, when the Matildas shattered audience records on the way to the semifinals.

It wasn't all one-way, though. Australia had 85% of possession, had 15 shots on goal and completed 674 passes to 118 for Philippines, but wasn't able to break down the defense.

Hayley Raso appeared to give Australia a 2-0 lead when she found the back of the net on the half-hour but it was disallowed for offside following a VAR review.

Goalkeeper Olivia McDaniel was heavily involved for Philippines, helping limit the margin against the team considered a strong favorite to top a group also containing 2022 runner-up South Korea and Iran.

Kerr played the full game and Australia also had a

positive return from Mary Fowler, who went on in the 68th minute in a long-awaited return from injury for the Matildas.

"I think I'm just finding my confidence again," Kerr said in a post-game TV interview. "I guess that's for other people to judge, but I feel like I'm still my normal self."

"I've just got to get more touches in, around the box."

Australia hasn't won the continental title since 2010, losing the finals to Japan in 2014 and '18 and eliminated in the semifinals four years ago. This is Kerr's fifth Asian Cup campaign and she's determined to win it again.

"Today was a good start and there's lots of belief within the team," Kerr said. "But, as you see today, there's a lot of quality teams in the Asian Cup."

Iran opens Monday against South Korea. At a scheduled pregame news conference Sunday on the Gold Coast in Queensland state, Iran head coach Marziyeh Jafari declined to comment on the military strikes.

"I don't think we should talk about these matters at all right now," Jafari said in comments translated to English. "There's a team here for a very important competition that matters to these women and I think those should be the questions."

Iran captain Zahra Ghanbari said her squad was in Australia with the target of qualifying for next year's Women's World Cup in Brazil.

"The mindset of all our players and our team is that, God willing, we can get out of our group," she said. "Our entire focus is on getting to the World Cup and achieving great success there."

### Iraq also in line

## UAE emerges as leading replacement if Iran withdraws from 2026 World Cup

KUWAIT CITY, March 1: The FIFA has outlined its regulations governing the withdrawal of any national team from the 2026 FIFA World Cup, set to be hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The clarification comes amid indications that the Iran national football team could consider withdrawing from the tournament. Iranian FA President Mehdi Taj stated in media remarks: "Given the current events, it is unlikely that we are thinking about the World Cup, but the final decision rests with the sports authorities."

According to FIFA's statutes, should Iran officially withdraw, a replacement team from Asia would be selected to maintain the continent's allocated quota and preserve the integrity of the tournament draw.

The frontrunner to take Iran's place is United Arab Emirates, which finished third in Group A during the Asian qualifiers.

In that case, the tournament schedule would remain unchanged, with the replacement team stepping into Group G alongside Egypt, Belgium, and New Zealand, competing according to the



In this file photo, players celebrate after qualifying for the World Cup.

existing fixture list.

Reports have also highlighted other potential scenarios, including the possibility of Iraq being selected, particularly given its advancement to the

final playoff stage representing Asia. Another option under discussion involves awarding the berth to the highest-ranked Asian team, a criterion that could likewise favor Iraq.

## Bayern sinks Dortmund to open 11-point lead

BERLIN, March 1, (AP): Harry Kane scored twice again and Bayern Munich opened an 11-point lead in the Bundesliga with a 3-2 win at Borussia Dortmund in Der Klassiker.

Joshua Kimmich let fly with his left boot to score the winner with a volley in the 87th minute, just four minutes after Daniel Svensson equalized for Dortmund with a brilliant volley inside the left post.

Nico Schlotterbeck put Dortmund 1-0 up at the break, but Serge Gnabry set up Kane's response and the England star got his second from the penalty spot - after a foul by Schlotterbeck on Josip Stanišić - to take his league tally to 30 goals this season.

Kane has scored two goals or more for the fourth successive game and is threatening Robert Lewandowski's season record of 41.

It's the second painful defeat for Dortmund in as many games after its Champions League exit to Atalanta on Wednesday despite going into their playoff second leg with a 2-0 advantage.

Dortmund top scorer Serhou Guirassy and defender Ramy Bensebaini started as substitutes with coach Niko Kovac explaining that Ramadan fasting was impacting the Muslim players' fitness.

"It takes a lot of energy if you can't eat and drink all day," Kovac said. "That's why I couldn't bring the guys on today. We have the data. You can see that if the players can't eat and drink it has an impact on performance."

Schlotterbeck headed the opener from a free kick against the run of play in the 26th.

The Dortmund defender was somewhat fortunate to be on the field after escaping with a yellow card for a bad challenge on Stanišić just minutes before.

Dortmund captain Emre Can had to go off before the break with a suspected left knee injury.

Dayot Upamecano almost equalized after the break when he crashed against the post, and Kane finally got Bayern's reply in the 54th with an easy finish to Gnabry's cross.

Dortmund goalkeeper Gregor Kobel got his left hand to the ball but couldn't stop the penalty flying in under the crossbar for Kane's 45th goal of the season across all competitions.



Bayern Munich's Joshua Kimmich, centre, celebrates with Josip Stanišić and Michael Olise after scoring his side's third goal during the Bundesliga soccer match between Borussia Dortmund and FC Bayern Munich in Dortmund, Germany. (AP)