

Defense Minister visits hospital to check on injured Page 3

ARAB TIMES

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT

Established in 1977 / www.arabtimesonline.com

Scan the QR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2026 / RAMADAN 15, 1447 AH | emergency number 112 | NO. 19144 | 16 PAGES | 150 FILS

KUWAIT HONORS MARTYRED SOLDIERS AS GULF ALLIES OFFER CONDOLENCES

Kuwait ready for crisis as authorities fully prepared

- Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef reassures Kuwaitis and expats
- 178 Iranian missiles, 354 drones intercepted
- Strategic stock medicine verified
- Communications fully operational



Photo by Samer Shiqer

Kuwait honors the two Navy servicemen Sergeant Waleed Majeed Suleiman and Sergeant Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Dakhel Nasser. The two martyrs were given a solemn military funeral procession with a large number of mourners in attendance.

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Kuwait honored the two Navy servicemen, Sergeant Waleed Majeed Suleiman and Sergeant Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Dakhel Nasser, who were martyred while performing their national duty to protect the homeland and defend its sovereignty in the midst of the brutal Iranian aggression.

The two martyrs were given a solemn military funeral procession with a large number of mourners in attendance. The procession was led by senior military officials, including Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant General Khaled Daraj Al-Shuraiaan and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mishal.

Continued on Page 5

Opinion



Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Embrace the martyrs to the homeland

FINALLY, the deceptive facade of the Iranian regime -- a tool used to shroud the region in ignorance and arrogance under meaningless slogans -- is beginning to crumble.

Nevertheless, many naïve individuals have embraced these slogans, some are even seeking to align with the regime, mistakenly believing they could alter the culture of the region and rewrite its history.

However, their efforts were thwarted by the tenacity of the people who honor the permanence of history and geography, recognizing that ancient truths cannot be undone by empty and unachievable rhetoric.

This context is crucial because, for the past five decades, some have failed to recognize that the Iranian regime is merely a glittering distraction, blinding people to its malicious agenda targeting the Gulf states and their peoples.

It specifically refers to those who, regardless of their beliefs or political loyalty, attempt to rationalize or justify the aggressive actions of Iran. Whatever the justification, sympathizing with such a scheme is an act of treason.

In the current wartime and criminal attacks aimed at destabilizing the region, any form of sympathy for the aggressor is totally unacceptable.

The ultimate target is the fundamental existence of our states, encompassing their political, economic and social frameworks. Those who attempt to sow discord must be held accountable and their actions must be stopped.

The martyrs of the Gulf states, who fell while defending their homeland, demonstrated a level of patriotism that is far more genuine than those who applaud these attacks. The wounded and fallen embody the national identity in its truest form.

At this critical juncture, prioritizing the homeland over ideology is absolute. We cannot afford to permit the proliferation of damaging opinions that contradict the reality of the threat we face.

The attempt by some to distinguish between the criminal aggression of Iran and its right to self-defense is fundamentally a form of betrayal, seeking to blind us to the true nature of the Persian regime.

The current conflict has torn away all pretexts, unequivocally exposing the expansionist reality of Tehran. The 'good neighborliness' slogan of the regime has collapsed, revealing its real and uncompromising face.

Consequently, there is no longer any basis for supporting Iran, even for those who previously viewed it as indispensable.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:
@Ahmedaljarallah
Ahmed aljarallah
ahmed@aljarallah.com
Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com

Embassy suspends operations, advises Americans to stay safe

Kuwait blasts Iran after US Embassy targeted in attack

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and **Agencies**

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the Iranian attack that targeted the United States Embassy in Kuwait.

It considered the attack a blatant violation to all international laws including the 1949 Geneva Convention and 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which provides immunity and protection to diplomatic buildings and its employees during armed conflicts.

The ministry reiterated Kuwait's right to make all the necessary measures to safeguard its security, land and people.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait announced the cancellation of all visa appointments and consular services for U.S. citizens until further notice due to ongoing regional tensions.

The embassy confirmed on its website that it will provide updates to the public as soon as normal operations resume, including instructions for U.S. citizens to request emergency passports if needed.

The embassy advised its staff and all U.S. citizens in Kuwait to remain in safe locations within their homes until further notice.

It noted that Kuwaiti airspace is closed, while the border with Saudi Arabia is currently open, allowing Americans to travel there using available e-visas.

The embassy outlined the following recommended actions for U.S. citizens in Kuwait:

- Find a safe location within your residence, stocked with essential supplies of food, water, and medication.
- Monitor local and international media for the latest developments.
- Be aware of your surroundings and follow the instructions of local authorities.
- Contact airlines directly if flights are affected.
- Keep your phone charged and stay in touch with relatives and friends to keep them informed.
- Enroll in travel advisories to receive the latest security updates.
- For emergencies in Kuwait, call 112 (police, ambulance, fire department).
- Contact the U.S. Department of State - Consular Affairs when needed.

Kuwaiti oil analysts warn of looming global energy shock

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Two Kuwaiti oil analysts said Tuesday that global oil prices surged by seven percent in Monday's trading, driven by military developments in the Middle East and US-Israeli strikes on Iran, as well as Iran's attacks on vital and civilian facilities in Kuwait and other countries in the region.



Dr. Al-Hajeri



Dr. Al-Salem

They told KUNA separately that the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 20 percent of global crude supplies pass, is effectively "closed," warning that any prolonged disruption could trigger a major crisis in global supply chains.

Global markets closed higher on Monday, with Brent crude futures rising USD 4.87 to USD 77.74 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate gained USD 4.24 to reach USD 71.26 per barrel.

Oil and energy expert Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajeri said any actual increase in oil supplies would be a significant development under current conditions, helping stabilize markets and boost investor confidence.

He stressed that OPEC+ is closely monitoring developments and remains pivotal in maintaining market balance.

Al-Hajeri noted that fast-moving geopolitical and logistical factors require high-level coordination among producers, adding that corrective measures aim primarily to prevent sharp volatility and ensure uninterrupted supplies, affirming that OPEC, in coordination with partners, stands ready to act if global supply chains are disrupted.

Continued on Page 5

Day by Day

A JORDANIAN minister gifted his wife a bouquet of mallow (hibiscus) for Valentine's Day. Hibiscus typically appears in Jordan after the rainy season. According to medical reports, mallow is refreshing and beneficial for both the mind and body.

The Japanese do not favor giving roses as gifts because they wilt quickly and lose their appeal. They prefer other items for special occasions. They have a point.

… Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

To save Lebanon from crisis, Aoun approves Hezbollah disarmament

Al-Seyassah Special Report

The Lebanese government has taken steps to rectify the mistakes of past years, during which Hezbollah dominated the country's political and military structures. This contributed to Lebanon becoming a failed state, both militarily and politically, and led to its estrangement from its Arab Gulf neighbors.

The decision was practically endorsed by Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, who assumed the presidency after leading the Lebanese Army.

President Aoun based his decision on two principles:

- Restoring the authority of the state by confining weapons to a single entity, which is the army
- Working to reintegrate Lebanon into the Arab fold and compel Iran to end its interference in Lebanon's affairs.

Since the ceasefire, President Aoun has sought to establish a balance between the Lebanese people and Hezbollah, aiming to address past mistakes, failures, and defeats, and to reintegrate Hezbollah into Lebanese society.

However, Hezbollah maneuvered for months before returning to its usual behavior. It dragged Lebanon into an unequal war that threatens to destroy the entire country.

President Aoun received support from the Prime Minister, and the ministers' approval marked a clear and bold step.

The government has begun taking urgent legal measures against Hezbollah, which considers itself more powerful than the state and its army.

The Lebanese government also condemned Hezbollah's attacks on Israeli sites, which provoked Israeli strikes on Lebanese territory.

Many observers inside and outside Lebanon believe that the ultimate loser in Hezbollah's conflicts with Israel is Lebanon and its people. Many Lebanese have been killed in these clashes, as if their blood were a sacrificial offering to external interests.

Lebanon's infrastructure, facilities, and economy have suffered severe damage.

These observers expressed deep concern over the repeated Israeli attacks on Lebanon, which resulted from Hezbollah's renewed strikes on Israel. Hezbollah entered the current war between the United States and Israel against Iran as a fourth party, seeking revenge for the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.



Lebanese President Joseph Aoun

Observers note that Hezbollah likely assumed Israel would not respond to its swift airstrikes. Israel's reaction was immediate, but it has unfortunately undermined many of the achievements President Aoun has made in economic and financial reforms, as well as ongoing efforts to resolve the issue of bank deposits in consideration of depositors, in addition to his implementation of reforms across various institutions.

Observers described the decision of the Lebanese Cabinet, headed by Nawaf Salam and supported by President Joseph Aoun, as courageous, as it drew a clear line between the state and any armed entity, thus preventing military or security operations originating from Lebanese territory.

The decision affirmed that any entity violating state directives is considered outside the framework of legitimate institutions, marking the first time in Lebanon's history that Hezbollah has been officially deemed outside the authority of the state.

The authority over matters of war and peace now rests solely with the legitimate state, with Hezbollah required to surrender its weapons and limit its activities to the political sphere.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait's MoCI ensures market stability, flow of essential goods

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai on Tuesday visited several water bottling plants and the Al-Fordha vegetable market.

The visit aimed to enhance preparedness, ensure business continuity under the exceptional circumstances, and confirm the availability of essential goods in the local market.

Boodai started his tour in Al-Rawdatain Water Factory, where he looked into the water reserves, production capacity, and the 24-hour operating system, which guarantees supply readiness and meets consumer needs.

He also visited the Aqua Gulf factory, which is operating round the clock with intensified efforts to increase production to support market stability and ensure product availability.

Continued on Page 5

Ramadan Timings

Imsak	Wednesday	04:52
Iftar	Wednesday	17:49
Imsak	Thursday	04:51

'Alert' service for hearing impaired

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah announced on Tuesday the activation of an instant alert service via Sahel application for people with hearing impairments.

In a press statement, Al-Huwailah said the service will issue alerts when sirens sound in the country to ensure public safety in case of danger.

Al-Huwailah added that the service was developed in coordination with the Minister of State for Communications Omar Al-Omar, Sahel app's executive committee, and the General Directorate of Civil Defense to ensure timely warning messages reach all citizens.

She said the step reinforces inclusivity in government services, stressing that ensuring people with

Continued on Page 5



2 Chaos creators in police arrest



8 Bader Al-Kharafi: Maintaining uninterrupted communications is a profound national duty

8 Duqm Refinery unaffected by drone attack on Port of Duqm

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:52	Asr	15:20
Sunrise	06:11	Maghrib	17:49
Zohr	12:00	Isha	19:06

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm with light to moderate freshening at times northwesterly wind, with speed of 12-45 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

By Night: Rather cold with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 10-40 km/h.

Weather

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

Kuwait wins sympathies of world leaders over Iranian attacks on its soil

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Tuesday from the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, who strongly condemned the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwaiti territory.

Modi described the attacks as a flagrant violation of sovereignty and international law, affirming India's full support for all measures taken by Kuwait to safeguard its security and sovereignty.

During the call, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the President of India Droupadi Murmu, expressing his sincere thanks to the Indian Prime Minister for this gesture and India's steadfast support for Kuwait's security and stability

Iraq President

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday a telephone call from Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid regarding Iran's attacks on Kuwait.

During the phone conversation, the Iraqi president underlined the significance of maintaining joint security and Iraq's rejection of any action that could hurt the State of Kuwait amid regional security tensions.

He also stressed the necessity of exerting concerted efforts to overcome this crisis in a way that serves the interests of all parties.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's greetings to the Iraqi president, thanking him for this good fraternal gesture.

Pakistani PM

His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call Monday from Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Shehbaz Sharif, during which the Pakistani leader strongly condemned the brazen Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti territory.

During the call, Sharif expressed Islamabad's firm denunciation of the assault, describing it as a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, airspace, international law, and the United Nations Charter.

He emphasized Pakistan's rejection of the attacks, noting the threats they pose to



HH the Crown Prince

civilian infrastructure and citizens in Kuwait.

Sharif reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Kuwait's leadership, government, and people, and endorsed all measures and decisions taken by Kuwait to safeguard its sovereignty and security.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan, expressing appreciation for Pakistan's steadfast support for Kuwait's security and stability.

His Highness the Crown Prince also extended his sincere thanks to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for this gesture, wishing him good health and well-being.

Somalia President

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday a telephone call from Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud who condemned the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwait's territory.

President Mohamud considered the Iranian atrocities as a flagrant violation of international law and sovereignty, affirming his country's full support for Kuwait in all measures taken to maintain its stability and sovereignty.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Somali President.

His Highness the Crown Prince also thanked President Mohamud for this fraternal initiative and unwavering stance to back Kuwait's security and stability.

Maldives President

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Monday a telephone call from Madives President Mohamed Muizzu who strongly condemned the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwait's territory.

President Muizzu considered the Iranian atrocities a flagrant violation of international law and sovereignty, stressing his country's full support for Kuwait in all measures taken to maintain its stability and sovereignty.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the President.

His Highness the Crown Prince also thanked President Muizzu for this fraternal initiative and unwavering stances to back Kuwait's security and stability.

Gov't sector must stick to 30% of workforce

No fingerprint for ones exempted from duty

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) confirmed that fingerprint attendance is not required for employees exempted from work under Circular No. 4/2026 on the determination of the number of workers in government entities in light of the current circumstances in the region, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The CSC issued a clarification in response to inquiries about the circular, stating that each government entity has the authority to determine the number of employees needed to report for work, provided that the number does not exceed 30 percent of the total workforce.

It stated that employees exempted from work are considered as having fulfilled their duties and are not obligated to record fingerprint attendance.

Employees who report for work will remain subject to the work regulations applied during Ramadan, including official working hours, flexible schedule and the permitted number of leave requests.

To ensure employee commitment during these exceptional conditions, the fingerprint attendance system will continue to apply to all staff members who are required to report for work.

Each entity will determine the priority for selecting employees to work either through a rotation system, without rotation or via remote work, depending on operational requirements and the nature of its activities, while the shift system has been suspended.

Under the evening shift arrangement, entities may select evening shift staff from among employees assigned to the morning shift, in accordance with work requirements.

With regard to employees with disabilities or those caring for a person with a disability, their work status is regulated by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

Entities with special operational circumstances will have their work systems determined by the competent authorities, in a manner that serves public interest.

EU Chief, Austrian Chancellor call Kuwait PM, slam Iran hits

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Tuesday.

During the call, the EU Chief condemned the Iranian attacks that targeted the State of Kuwait and expressed Europe's full solidarity and support for all measure it takes to safeguard its security and sovereignty.

His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude for the firm European stand and support for the leadership, government and people of the State of Kuwait.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also received a phone call from Chancellor of Austria Christian Stocker, where he condemned the Iranian attacks that targeted the State of Kuwait.

During the call, the Chancellor expressed Austria's full solidarity and support for all measure Kuwait takes to safeguard its security and sovereignty, and voiced sincere condolences over the martyrdom of two army soldiers while performing their national duties and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

His Highness the Prime Minister expressed his gratitude for Austria's stand and support for the leadership, government and people of the State of Kuwait.

KPC regulates work timings for staff in current scenario

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has issued a circular to regulate the working hours during the current period.

According to the circular, official working hours during the holy month of Ramadan will be 9:00am - 9:30am to 3:00pm – 3:30pm daily. Employees are required to perform their duties during these hours, whether at the workplace or remotely, in a manner that serves the public interest and in accordance with instructions issued by the Health, Safety, Security, and Environment Department.

Managers, team leaders, and employees at their level are required to report to work daily, along with staff whose presence is necessary based on the nature of their work. The responsible manager will determine which employees need to be present.

Only 30 percent of employees below the department head level are required to report to work until further notice.

In line with the provisions of paragraph two, the number of employees - below the team leader level - required to be physically present at the workplace should, as far as possible, not exceed 30 percent of the total departmental workforce daily during this period.

The responsible manager is authorized to determine which employees must be physically present and which can work entirely remotely, based on the needs and nature of the work, while ensuring operational continuity and maintaining the quality of performance and work outputs. The manager is also responsible for monitoring employee attendance and departure.

This circular is effective from March 2, 2026, until further notice.

French Embassy says will remain shut temporarily

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The French Embassy in Kuwait announced its temporary closure to the public due to the regional situation and its local repercussions, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a statement on its X account, the embassy advised French citizens in Kuwait to strictly follow instructions issued by local authorities and to limit non-essential travel.

It explained that the embassy building is temporarily closed to the public. French citizens are urged not to enter the embassy and to stay updated through the embassy's social media accounts on X and Instagram platforms - @FranceKoweit, the official website of the embassy, and the travel advice website.

The embassy noted that it is closely monitoring the situation in coordination with local authorities and will continue to provide updates on the latest developments.

Meanwhile , the Ministry of Social Affairs has called on public benefit associations to postpone all non-urgent activities and events, except those of an urgent nature or tied to specific legal deadlines, reports Al-Anba daily.

The announcement comes as part of the ministry's efforts to organize work and set priorities during the current period of exceptional challenges and circumstances facing the country.

The ministry urged associations to focus on essential priorities that support national stability and recovery.

It emphasized that activities whose delay could cause proven legal or financial harm should continue, provided they are coordinated in advance with the Department of Civil Associations to ensure compliance with general guidelines.

In a circular to associations, the ministry urged boards and executive committees to inform their members of the directive and act accordingly, highlighting the importance of collective cooperation in addressing the current circumstances.



MoI photos
People arrested for filming clips of 'interceptions' and posting on social media.

Chaos creators in police arrest

'Posting missile clips illegal'

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior monitored and apprehended a number of individuals involved in serious violations affecting public security and societal stability.

The arrests included persons who illegally filmed events and circulated video clips, contributing to public disorder, misleading public opinion, and spreading fear among citizens and residents.

The Ministry also confirmed that the Criminal Security Sector detained individuals for publishing content expressing sympathy toward terrorist organizations via personal accounts and social media platforms.

The Ministry stressed that its security apparatus continues to conduct close monitoring of all social media platforms and workplaces, vowing to pursue anyone who violates the law.

Legal measures have been initiated against all those apprehended, who have been referred to the competent authorities.

The Ministry also noted that previous warnings had been issued against such criminal practices and reaffirmed its zero-tolerance approach toward anyone attempting to undermine national security.

The Ministry urged citizens and residents to obtain information exclusively from official state sources, prioritize national interest by refraining from sharing unverified clips, and fully comply with directives prohibiting the filming of ongoing events or authorities performing their duties.

These measures aim to avoid legal consequences and ensure the effectiveness of security operations, safeguarding the security and safety of Kuwait.



Jahra Governorate photo
Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi gives on the spot instructions at the hospital.

Governor wishes quick recovery to soldiers hurt in North Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Jahra Governor Hamad Al-Habashi visited Jahra Hospital to check on the health of those injured in recent events in northern Kuwait, during the Air Defense Forces' response to ballistic missiles and drones that breached Kuwaiti airspace.

According to a press release issued by Jahra Governorate, the governor, during the visit, received a detailed briefing from medical staff on the condition of the injured and the treatment services provided.

He commended the medical teams for their efforts and their professional and compassionate handling of the cases.

The governor emphasized that the visit reflects national duty and the leadership's commitment to monitoring the well-being of citizens and residents in such circumstances.

He also expressed his wishes for the injured to have a speedy recovery.

Online classes continue

Kuwaitis studying abroad must update personal info

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Cultural Office at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Egypt urged all Kuwaitis studying abroad to immediately update their personal information and current location.

The Office affirmed that this update is crucial for maintaining continuous communication and faster coordination with universities. It ensures the smooth progression of the students' academic careers and serves their educational needs, especially in light of the latest developments in the region.

It asked the students to complete the required electronic form through the provided link, emphasizing that their prompt response and cooperation are vital in supporting the educational process for all Kuwaitis studying abroad.

❑ ❑ ❑

Online classes continue: The Ministry of Education announced that online classes via the Teams application will continue until further notice for all grades, including public sector, religious, private sector, and evening education, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry affirmed that it is closely monitoring the situation and coordinating directly with relevant authorities to take any necessary decisions.

It emphasized that any further measures will be announced promptly through official channels.

Municipality launches plan to maintain cleanliness on roads

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Kuwait Municipality has developed a comprehensive emergency plan in coordination with government agencies to ensure the smooth operation of field work by the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy Departments, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued on Monday, Kuwait Municipality explained that the plan was implemented based on directives from the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdul Latif Al-Mishari, and under the direct supervision of the Director General of Kuwait Municipality, Engineer Manal Al-Asfour.

There are a total of 71 cleaning centers distributed in all six governorates, supported by approximately 600 cleaning workers to cover field operations. Some equipment and vehicles are stationed in residential areas to remain close to workers in case of emergencies.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Not good for own people, and hates the neighbors

"THE Cabinet condemned the heinous Iranian missile attack on Kuwait on Saturday, February 28. In this article, I will briefly discuss Iranian politics," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Arabs are peaceful by nature, but they have been troubled by a neighboring country, Iran, which takes pride in its 1979 revolution. It was not only Islamists who revolted against the Shah's regime, as various segments of Iranian society took part in the revolution, with Marxist, liberal, and Islamic leanings. The situation quickly descended into civil war after the Shah's overthrow, as each faction turned its weapons against the others. Ultimately, Ayatollah Khomeini's forces seized power. Those who participated in the revolution chanted, "Death to the Shah, long live freedom," a slogan that did not call for Islamic rule.



Ahmad Al-Dawas

"Since then, Iran has pursued policies aimed at expanding its regional political influence, and interfered in the internal affairs of four Arab countries. This behavior is condemned internationally and violates international law. The consequences have been catastrophic, leading to the destruction of three Arab countries, the deaths of countless people, and the loss of homes and property for many more. Many political analysts hold Iran responsible for the deteriorating political situation in the Arab region, accusing it of fueling sectarian conflict, promoting a language of hatred, abandoning the principle of peaceful coexistence, and pursuing hostile policies.

"Iranian foreign policy is contradictory. Iran publicly declares its commitment to a peaceful policy, yet at the same time it proclaims support for the oppressed peoples of Bahrain and Yemen and asserts its "capability to overthrow the regimes of the Gulf states," as stated by Mohammad Karim Abedi, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, on June 28, 2015.

"As Krishnadev Calamur wrote in the American magazine The Atlantic, "Iran's economic problems are not due to American sanctions, but rather to Iran's enormous spending of tens of billions on its interventions in Syria and Yemen and its funding of Hezbollah and Hamas. This massive spending is what has stirred the Iranian street. Citizens chanted slogans against the government and religious establishment, including "No to Gaza… No to Lebanon, Death to Palestine, Down with the dictator." The regime has neglected the people's well-being, plunging Iran into chaos and instability."

"In response to an article I wrote in 2016 asking whether Iran or Saudi Arabia was more beneficial to the international community, Iran filed a case against me with the Kuwaiti Public Prosecutor. I would like to know Iran's stance on the drug shipments being smuggled into Kuwait. On November 3 and 5, 2020, Kuwaiti authorities foiled an Iranian drug smuggling operation. The drugs were hidden inside Iranian grouper fish. The General Administration of Customs seized methamphetamine (crystal meth) that an Iranian trader had concealed in bags of salt to deceive customs inspectors, taking advantage of the close resemblance between salt and methamphetamine. The Iranian suspect confessed to the crime.

"In 2021, Iranian drug traffickers smuggled methamphetamine into Iran, first in a shipment of chocolates, and later in another shipment hidden inside bags of rice. How did these drugs escape the control of Iranian authorities? This is evidence that Iran does not wish well for its neighbors. Drugs destroy minds. What if Kuwait were the one introducing drugs into the Iranian market?

"On February 28, when the US and Israel launched an attack on Iran, Tehran fired missiles at Kuwait and other Gulf countries, prompting the Kuwaiti Cabinet to condemn and strongly denounce the heinous Iranian attack. A country like Iran needs wise leaders and experienced finance ministers to achieve progress and development. We have repeatedly advised Iran to open a new chapter with the Arab world and others, and to encourage foreign and Arab investment. Yet Iran has done no good for its own people; it has harmed its neighbors, followed medieval policies, and consequently fallen behind."

Also:

"The relationship between the United States and Iran is one of the most complex and tense in modern international affairs. It fluctuates between periods of friendship and alliance and moments of hostility and confrontation," Kuwaiti writer **Emad Khamis Al-Aqab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The past two decades have witnessed a dangerous escalation in tensions between the two countries, resulting in negative repercussions on security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region. Iran's gamble is part of a strategy to strengthen its regional and international position, but it carries significant risks. Iran's gamble involves several aspects, including developing its nuclear program, supporting armed groups in the region, and using military force as a tool of political pressure.

"Through these strategies, Iran seeks to expand its regional influence, but it simultaneously exposes the region to serious dangers. This approach reflects Iran's vision of the regional balance of power, yet it lacks the political wisdom needed to achieve its objectives without threatening regional and international security. Clearly, resorting to military force and striking targets in the Arabian Gulf is not a sustainable solution. Such actions escalate tensions, deepen animosity between nations, and make it harder to reach solutions through diplomatic channels.

"Any attack on the Gulf states could have catastrophic economic, political, and social consequences for the region and the world at large. Targeting peaceful nations, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, is an unforgivable moral and religious offense. Ramadan is a month of peace, tolerance, and mercy. Any aggressive action during this month violates religious and moral principles. Targeting civilians and peaceful nations at this time shows a disregard for human and religious values and deepens hatred and animosity between peoples.

"I want to emphasize that Iran's gamble in its conflict with the United States, and its use of military force in the Gulf, are not sustainable solutions. Turning to violence and escalating tensions only leads to disastrous consequences on every level. Lasting security and stability in the region require pursuing peaceful diplomatic solutions."

❑ ❑ ❑

"The loss of loved ones has a profound and sorrowful impact, especially when the deceased was a dear and irreplaceable friend. But in all cases, it is God's will, and there is no objection to His decree," columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"A few days ago, my dear friend, Ambassador Musaed Al-Thuwaikh, passed away. I was his classmate during our studies in the United States, and our friendship continued until his death. A few months ago, we lost another dear friend, Khaled Abu Qumasha. They had lived together during their studies in Los Angeles. A strong bond of friendship united them.

"The late Ambassador Musaed Al-Thuwaikh possessed a remarkable intellect. At that time, student activism was very strong in the United States, and we organized forums and discussion sessions. In the same state, a prominent Kuwaiti political figure was working on his doctoral dissertation. He met Al-Thuwaikh, and a heated debate ensued. Al-Thuwaikh's arguments were so compelling that the political figure could not respond.



Adel Al-Kharafi

"This politician initially held a harsh viewpoint that harmed Kuwait. However, as he grew older, his patriotism and loyalty to the nation became evident, and he later emerged as a political leader. The late Musaed Al-Thuwaikh was known for his strong arguments and well-reasoned opinions. I recall the day a student delegation met with the late Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, who was known for listening more than he spoke.

"During the meeting, Al-Thuwaikh (May God have mercy on him) spoke about a student newsletter we published in Los Angeles, of which he was the editor-in-chief. He explained how the newsletter was produced and the topics it covered. The late Amir discussed our activities, praised the newsletter, and encouraged us to continue. Al-Thuwaikh was a skilled diplomat, and thanks to his efforts, the crisis that arose between Kuwait and the Philippines over domestic workers was resolved.

"He possessed noble character, integrity, and loyalty to his friends. His passing was deeply felt. I pray to God to have mercy on him and grant his family and loved ones patience and solace."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Defense Minister visits hospital to check on injured





KUNA photos

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah visits the Jahra Hospital to check on well-being of the injured soldiers.

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah paid a visit Monday to Jahra Hospital to inquire about the health conditions of the injured.

In a press statement, the Ministry said that Sheikh Abdullah Ali received a detailed briefing from the medical team on the patients' health status and the treatment services provided.

The Minister affirmed the Ministry's commitment to continuously monitor their condition, wishing them a speedy recovery and continued health and well-being.

KFF guides parents

'Prevent kids from playing in kitchens, avert mishap'

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has released an awareness video presented by Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Al-Mashmoum, in which he urged parents to closely monitor their children and avoid exposing them to danger, reports Al-Anba daily.

In the video, he emphasized that the responsibility for protecting children begins at home through daily supervision and awareness.

Lieutenant Colonel Al-Mashmoum stressed the importance of never leaving children unattended, particularly in areas that pose direct risks, such as swimming pools, to prevent drownings or sudden injuries.

He also warned against allowing children to play in the kitchen or near cooking appliances and gas stoves, which could result in fires or serious injuries, and highlighted the dangers of tampering with electrical sources or home appliances.

Lieutenant Colonel Al-Mashmoum also highlighted the dangers of leaving children unattended in elevators, and urged families to take preventative measures and ensure a safe environment for children at all times.

He stressed that children's safety is a shared responsibility requiring constant vigilance, and called on everyone to follow preventative guidelines to protect lives and property.

In a separate awareness brochure, KFF urged property owners and landlords to work only with companies accredited by KFF for elevator installation and maintenance.

Meanwhile, KFF conducted an inspection campaign in the West Abu Fatira Industrial Area, targeting buildings that violated safety and fire prevention regulations.

According to a statement issued by KFF, the campaign led to the administrative closure and issuance of warnings to 38 buildings for failing to comply with the safety requirements set by KFF.



KUNA photo

A view of the Civil Defense Operations Room.

Kuwait is on red alert from day 1

Ops room vigilant, dedicated

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Civil Defense Operations Room stands as a unified force reflecting the state's ability to efficiently manage crises, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Established from the very first moments of the Iranian aggression, the Civil Defense General Directorate's Operations Room has been responding immediately to inquiries and reports since the initial attacks on Kuwaiti territory. It serves as a vital hub of preparedness, where government institutions collaborate in a coordinated and well-planned manner, reflecting the high level of readiness and the state's capacity for effective crisis management.

Representatives from both civilian and military agencies are working around the clock in the Operations Room to provide support and respond to public inquiries. It is equipped with display screens to monitor all roads and critical locations.

The Operations Room also hosts vigilant Civil Defense personnel, who respond to emergencies by activating three-tone sirens - a flashing tone signaling imminent danger, a wavy tone indicating actual danger, and a continuous tone signaling that the danger has passed.

By handling all inquiries and reports immediately, the Operations Room contributes to a sense of security among citizens and residents. It exemplifies dedication and vigilance, with personnel working tirelessly to ensure the safety of the public under all circumstances.



KUNA photo

Chief of the Kuwaiti Army's General Staff Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shariaan and Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard Lt. Gen. Hamad Al-Barjas during the meeting.

Army, National Guard jointly counter threats

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Chief of the Kuwaiti Army's General Staff Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shariaan and Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard Lt. Gen. Hamad Al-Barjas confirmed on Monday high preparedness of the Kuwaiti Amry's forces and the National Guard to deal with different incidents.

This is implemented as part of common action and unifying efforts as well as boosting integration among all different military sectors.

This came in a shared statement made by Al-Sharai'an and Al-Barjas following a visit by Al-Sharai'an, in line with enhancing coordination and unifying efforts between both sides, the National Guard moral guidance department said in a statement.

Both sides underlined the importance of continued coordination and consultation in a manner that boosts common military and security action system to maintain the country's stability and security, upon the directives of the wise leadership, for the country's public interest, according to the statement.

Only emergency visitors will be received: CARSIR

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Central Agency for Remedying the Status of Illegal Residents (CARSIR) announced the activation of its electronic services system for all its services and transactions, reports Al-Anba daily.

The agency clarified that, at present, it will only receive visitors for emergency cases, due to the current situation in the country and the region, and in the interest of public safety.

In a press statement, CARSIR explained that visitors will be received at its headquarters in Al-Sawaber, but transactions will be limited to receiving cards and handling emergency cases only, until further notice. All other transactions and inquiries will be processed through the approved electronic channels.

These measures aim to organize the work mechanism and ensure the continued provision of services efficiently while maintaining the safety of visitors and employees.

CARSIR urged everyone to adhere to the issued instructions and to make use of the electronic services available on the official website.

The agency reiterated its full commitment to carrying out its national duties according to the highest standards of organization and responsibility.

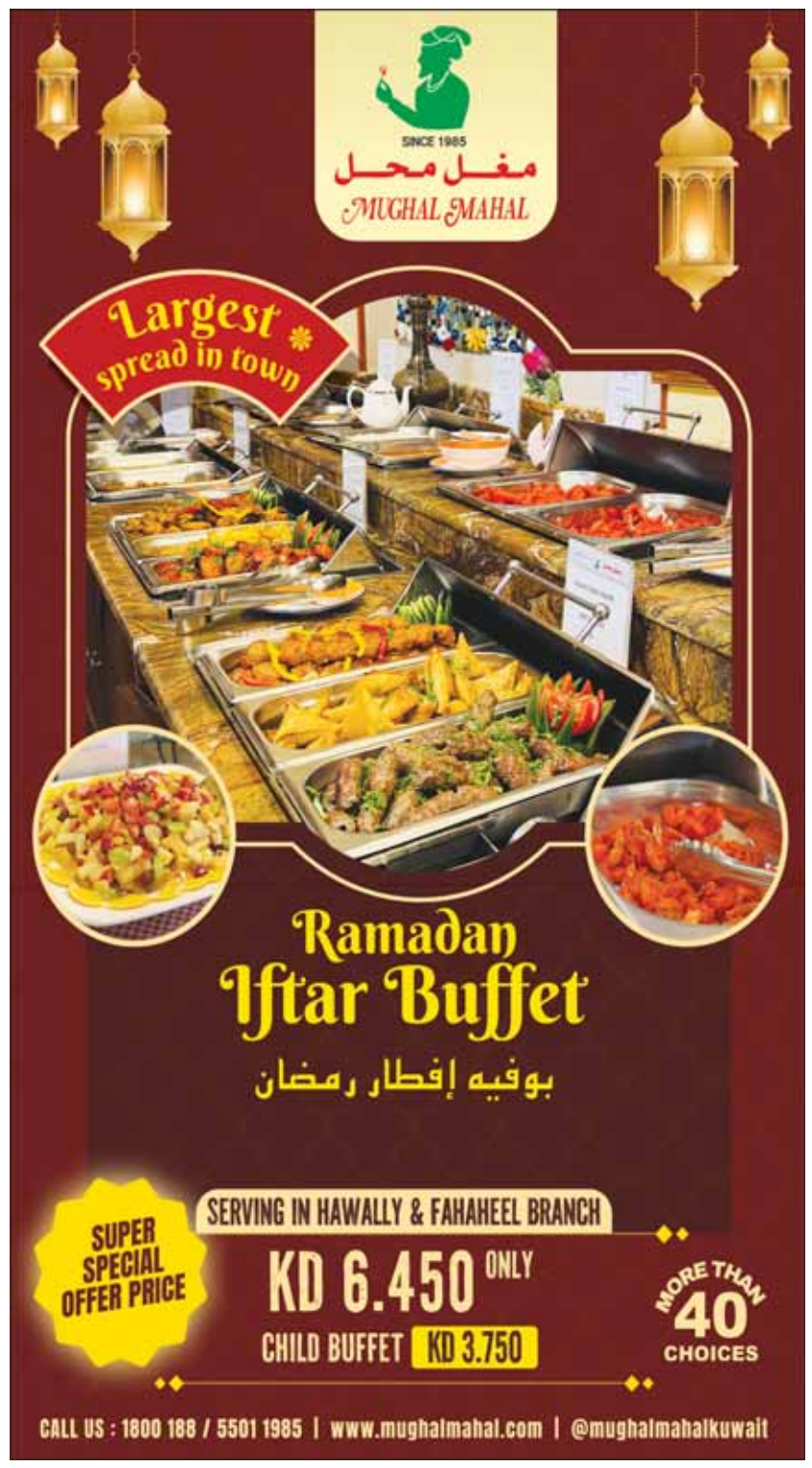




Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Members of the Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, convene in a regular session to approve key urban development, infrastructure, and public space initiatives across Kuwait.

Municipal Council approves strategic expansion projects

Wafra zoning, sewage networks get greenlight

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Municipal Council, in its regular session chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri on Monday, approved the following:

■ Request of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) to adopt the structural plan for Wafra Economic Zone,

■ Request to reorganize several plots, the Salhiya Police Station and public facilities in Qibla, Block 14 according to the zoning regulations,

■ Request of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to allocate a site for a mosque and parking area by deducting the needed area from an agricultural plot in Wafra Agricultural Area,

■ Renumbering of plots in Jaber Al-Ali, Manqaf and Fahaheel in Ahmadi Governorate,

■ Requests of the Ministry of Public Works to allocate a route for a sewage line in Dhaher-Block Four, a site for a sewage pumping station in the Second Jahra Industrial Area, a route to connect the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City exit (N1-N10) to the water treatment plant of the city, and a route for the proposed sewage line to connect South Saad Al-Abdullah City to the water treatment plant of the city,

■ Request of the Oil Ministry to amend the 2008 resolution of the Council regarding fuel stations,

■ Request of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) to allocate a drainage channel for rainwater in Fahaheel- Sector Six,

■ Proposal of member Abdullah Al-Enezi to allocate a site for constructing a tall flagpole for the Kuwaiti flag,

■ Annexation of East Taima to Taima and renumbering of plots in Jahra Governorate.

The Council also adopted the recommendations presented in the first workshop of the Farwaniya Governorate Committee on Dec 15, 2025.

These recommendations include intensifying public cleaning efforts, improving the efficiency of sweeping streets, squares and public spaces according to an operational plan, strengthening field oversight of cleaning companies, regularly removing random waste, visual pollution and abandoned vehicles, and strengthening coordination between the Kuwait Municipality and other concerned government agencies regarding urban cleaning, beautification efforts and maintenance of public sites.

Move safeguards academic continuity

PAAET activates 'lecture recording' through Microsoft Teams platform

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the activation of lecture recording through the Microsoft Teams platform in light of the current circumstances in the region.

This step proves the commitment of PAAET to support students and make sure that their academic progress continues without interruption.

In an official statement, PAAET urged faculty members and training staff to enable the lecture recording feature and notify students accordingly.

It pointed out that this will give students the opportunity to review lecture materials at a time suitable for them, particularly in cases of connectivity challenges during live sessions or inability to attend synchronously.

PAAET stressed that the objective of this measure is to provide academic support, enhance flexibility within the educational process, and ensure uninterrupted access to course content for all students. It also extended its wishes for everyone's health and safety.

Auctions and produce levels under review

PAAAFR chief inspects farmers market

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Salem Al-Hai inspected the Kuwait Farmers Union market in Ardiyah, along with the head and members of the Union, as part of his ongoing monitoring of operations and the movement of local agricultural products, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Authority revealed that during the visit, Al-Hai assessed the volume of agricultural products available in the local market. He also observed the auction process and price levels to guarantee market stability and the smooth flow of supply and demand for national produce.

The Authority affirmed its commitment to continue supporting farmers and enhancing the sustainability of local agricultural production, thereby, strengthening food security in the country and maintaining market stability.

It also emphasized that it is closely monitoring the situation in view of the current circumstances and will address any developments in the interest of the public.



PAAAFR photo

PAAAFR Acting Director General, Salem Al-Hai, inspects auctions and product availability in Ardiyah.

KU reduces on-call attendance to 30%

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

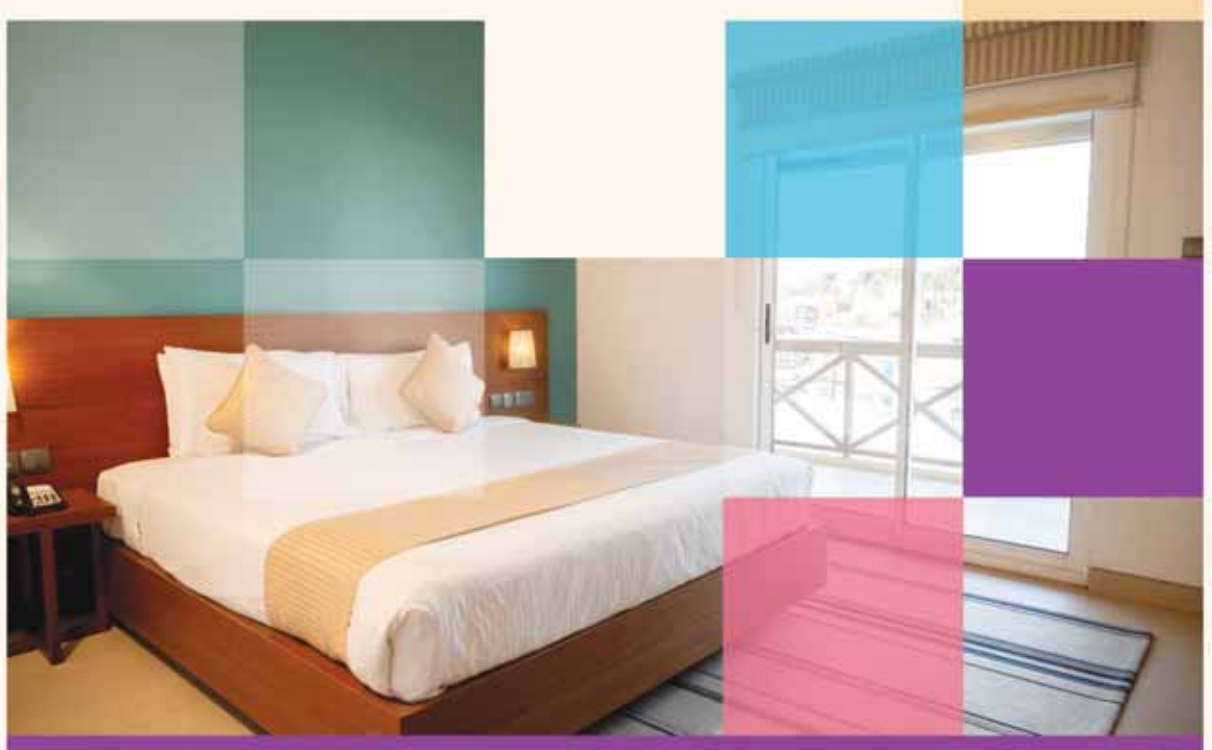
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: In line with official directives and Circular No. 4/2026 issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), Kuwait University has confirmed its commitment to reducing the number of employees in various departments to no more than 30 percent of the total workforce.

In an official statement, the university affirmed that the measure aims to serve the public interest and ensure the safety of all university staff amid current regional circumstances.

It explained that the decision will take effect on March 2 and will take into consideration the nature of work in each department while ensuring the continuity of essential operations. Relevant departments will determine the appropriate attendance percentages and work schedules based on actual needs, in ongoing coordination with CSC and other authorities to ensure effective implementation.

albander hotel & resort البندر



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)	Price
One night stay in **a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons** with inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 46.000
One night stay in a **Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons** inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 102.148 / Net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)	**Price**
One night stay in **a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons** with inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 53.361 / Net
One night stay in **a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons** inclusive of Breakfast	BHD 119.173 / Net

Terms & conditions apply

Tel: +973 17701201 - Ext. 351 | Email: reservation@albander.com | www.albander.com | @albanderhotelandresort

Transport, allowances to improve

PAAET DG visits student housing

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam conducted an inspection visit to the student housing designated for scholarship recipients in Ardiya.

The visit aimed to assess the well-being of students of different nationalities, and to ensure that they are living in a safe and stable environment in view of the current circumstances.

He also met with the students to listen to their observations and requirements, with the goal of improving the quality of services offered to them and fostering a supportive atmosphere that enables them to continue their academic pursuit.

He affirmed that all feedback will be carefully reviewed and that efforts will be intensified to overcome challenges, particularly those related to transportation services for students traveling to their educational institutions or visiting markets and other locations in Kuwait.

He indicated that these measures will be implemented in coordination with the housing supervisors.

He also promised to address delays in the disbursement of allowances and to simplify procedures to ensure the payments are processed promptly.



PAAET photo

PAAET Director General Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam meets with scholarship students at Ardiya housing to discuss their well-being, housing conditions, and services.

News in Brief

Kuwaiti Khalid Al-Otaibi assumes role as Secretary-General of AEO

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Eng. Khalid Al-Otaibi assumed Sunday his duties as Secretary-General of the Arab Energy Organization (formerly OAPEC), following the decision of the organization's Council of Ministers during its 115th meeting held in Kuwait on December 14, 2025.



Al-Otaibi

While speaking to KUNA, Al-Otaibi expressed gratitude to the Council for the confidence placed in him, pledging to meet expectations in leading the organization. He affirmed his commitment to advancing the organization's vital projects, restructuring it to align with global energy developments, and enhancing focus on energy, environment, climate change, and energy transition issues.

Noting current challenges facing the energy sector, Al-Otaibi emphasized the Secretariat's dedication to exerting every effort to serve the interests of all member states.

❑ ❑ ❑

Egyptians urged to stay safe: The Consulate of Egypt urged members of the Egyptian community in Kuwait to exercise caution and adhere to safety instructions issued by the relevant authorities, in light of ongoing events in the region, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The consulate also republished its contact information for community members, including phone numbers 98563003, 25234491, or 25234492 during official working hours, the emergency number 90029100, and its social media accounts.

❑ ❑ ❑

Shuaiba port reopens: The Kuwait Ports Authority announced Sunday the gradual resumption of operations at Shuaiba Port, following a precautionary suspension implemented after shrapnel fell in areas near the port on Saturday.

In a press statement, the authority said operations are returning progressively in accordance with safety procedures, after completing the necessary assessments to ensure the security of facilities and personnel. (KUNA)

Leaders affirm defensive measures

Kuwaiti FM strengthens global response to Iranian aggression

KUWAITC CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Monday received a phone call from Montenegro's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ervin Ibrahimovic.

During the phone conversation, they underlined the condemnation of the Iranian aggression on the State of Kuwait and the region's countries, along with their right to take all necessary measures to protect their sovereignty and territory.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Monday from Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Tom Berendsen.

During the call, both sides reaffirmed their condemnation of Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait and other regional countries, emphasizing the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Monday from Austria's Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Beate Meinl-Reisinger.

According to a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the call reaffirmed condemnation of the Iranian aggression targeting Kuwait and other regional countries, emphasizing the right of the affected states to take all necessary measures to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.



Sheikh Jarrah

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from Latvian counterpart Baiba Braze condemning the Iranian aggression.

During the phone call, he condemned the Iranian aggression that targeted Kuwait and other countries of the region, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. He also stressed the rights of the states that were targeted to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from Slovenian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Tanja Fajon.

During the phone call, the Slovenian official underscored condemnation of the Iranian aggression that targeted Kuwait and countries of the region, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

She also affirmed the right of the states that were targeted to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territories.

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelattty.

During the phone call, the Egyptian official underscored condemnation of the Iranian aggression that targeted Kuwait and countries of the region, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

He also affirmed the right of the states that were targeted to take all necessary measures to safeguard their sovereignty and territories.

Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Monday a phone call from Bangladeshi counterpart Khalilur Rahman.

Project aids families, reinforcing humanitarian support

Kuwait charity delivers food baskets in Sudan

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): The International Islamic Charitable Organization announced Tuesday the implementation of a project to distribute 1,400 food baskets in eastern Sudan, benefiting 8,400 poor and displaced families, as part of efforts to support those affected by difficult living conditions.

In a statement to KUNA, the organization said the project was carried out through its office in the Republic of Sudan, distributing comprehensive food baskets valued at approximately USD 77,000, helping alleviate the beneficiaries' living burdens and enhancing their food security.

The baskets were distributed across three main cities, with 200 in Port Sudan, 500 in Kassala, and 700 in Khartoum, ensuring support reaches the largest possible number of eligible families in the most needy areas.

The organization added that, in coordination with the Kuwaiti Embassy in Sudan, the Ramadan food basket program distributed 5,866 baskets, weighing about 185 tons and costing around USD 388,000, benefiting over 35,000 people across five states. The organization affirmed that the project, part of ongoing relief interventions by its Sudan office, addresses growing humanitarian needs, supports vulnerable communities, promotes solidarity, and highlights Kuwait's humanitarian role while strengthening its charitable and humanitarian presence.





IICO photos

Kuwaiti charity delivers 1,400 food baskets to 8,400 families in eastern Sudan.

PADA halts classes, admissions

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Dr. Khalifa Al-Hilaa, the acting Deputy Director General for Medical, Psychological, and Social Services at the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA), announced that PADA has decided to suspend classes at its vocational rehabilitation and day care centers until further notice, and to halt the admission of new cases at its early intervention centers.

Dr. Al-Hilaa told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Sunday that the decision reflects PADA's social responsibility and its commitment to the safety of students, staff, and employees for ensuring a safe environment for all.

He said PADA is continuously monitoring developments in coordination with relevant official bodies to take all necessary measures to protect the well-being of its beneficiaries and to ensure the continued provision of essential services according to the highest standards of care.

Indian Embassy and ICACs to maintain Ramadan schedule

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait announced that it will continue operating as usual during the holy month of Ramadan, based on the established schedule, along with its four Indian Consular Application Centres (ICACs), reports Al-Anba daily.

In an official statement, the embassy explained that working hours during Ramadan are from 9:00am to 3:00pm, with the last application submission at 2:30 PM, from Saturday to Thursday. Friday is an official holiday.

The ICACs, operated by BLS International Ltd, are located in four areas of Kuwait:

- Kuwait City (Al-Jawhara Tower on Ali Al Salem Street)
- Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh (Nesto Hypermarket Building, Mezzanine floor)
- Fahaheel (Al-Anoud Complex, Mezzanine floor on Mecca Street)
- Jahra (Al-Khalifa Building on second floor)

The embassy confirmed that it is closely monitoring the current situation, and any changes to working hours will be announced in due course.

It urged the Indian community to follow the official website and the embassy's social media accounts for the latest updates.

Continued from Page 1

Embrace the

The political dynamics must change. Those who remain committed to the old position must abandon their illusion and confront the reality of the situation.

This moment serves as a potent reminder of the historical suffering that the Iranian regime inflicted on Kuwait and the region -- a pattern stretching from the 1980s to the present day.

Whenever a crisis escalates, Tehran predictably reverts to threatening the Gulf states and attempting to carry out various destructive acts to destabilize them.

Unfortunately, governments have shown restraint and wisdom in dealing with those who used irrational political ends as justification for the actions, often hoping for the understanding of everyone.

Still, this patient approach has proven ineffective for individuals whose judgment is obscured by ignorance, preventing them from recognizing reality.

The ongoing war, marked by systematic and daily aggression from Iran against our countries, exposed the expansionist agenda of the regime.

We have consistently cautioned against falling into the trap of Iran. Yet, there remains a group whose vile aims and hopes for unattainable slogans indicate they do not deserve allegiance to the homeland.

It is disheartening that this minority of Gulf citizens express affection for an enemy intent on causing destruction to them and their families, especially since loyal citizens are sacrificing their lives.

We must honor the real martyrs by welcoming them into our homeland and extending the blessing of citizenship to their families.

Kuwaiti oil

For his part, Chairman of the Kuwaiti Business Council in Dubai, Dr. Firas Al-Salem, said the reported closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and uncertainty surrounding US-Iran escalation have made crude and petroleum exports "extremely difficult."

Al-Salem said China would be among the hardest hit, importing about 4.6 million barrels per day (bpd) from Gulf states and Iran out of total daily consumption of 15 million bpd, followed by India at 2.1 million bpd from the Gulf.

Other Asian countries - including South Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore - import nearly six million bpd via the Strait.

He added that Gulf exports would face significant challenges, particularly downstream petroleum products such as agricultural fertilizers, petrochemicals and chemicals, of which Gulf states are the largest exporters among Arab countries.

This would also be reflected in global price levels for these supplies, in addition to higher insurance costs for oil and gas tankers following attacks on some vessels by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the Gulf of Oman.

Al-Salem noted that a halt in Gulf crude flows would disrupt global refiners, especially in Asia, which maintain long-term contracts with major producers such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates.

Switching to different types of crude oil would require technical adjustments at refineries, which could lower their operating capacity and worsen disruptions in global oil supplies.

He pointed out that the Gulf countries have historically been reliable producers, with the flexibility to increase production during global shortages.

Targeting Gulf oil and gas infrastructure could further disrupt exports, citing the impact on gas markets following attacks on facilities in Ras Laffan Industrial City, which contributed to a sharp spike in UK gas prices after Qatar halted exports.

Kuwait's MoCI

During his tour in Al-Fordha vegetable market in Sulaibiya, he inspected the incoming produce and stock of fruits and vegetables and reviewed supply and distribution mechanisms to ensure the continuous flow of goods and the smooth operation of the supply chain.

The ministry affirmed that water supplies in the markets are abundant and the reserves are sufficient, while factories continue to operate at full capacity to meet the demand and stabilize the supply.

It also emphasized that the flow of goods and vegetables is smooth and in adequate quantities to meet consumer needs, with ongoing monitoring and coordination with relevant authorities to guarantee the availability of supplies and maintain the stability of the local market.

To save

Observers confirmed that the Lebanese people support the government's messages to Hezbollah, calling on the group to cease its actions outside the framework of the state.

They praised the Lebanese government's decision to keep the country out of any conflict amid the tense regional situation. The decision sends a message to the world that Lebanon's legitimate leadership, represented by President Aoun and the government, is committed to preserving the country and preventing its involvement in any conflict.

Observers also expressed full support for the Cabinet's calls to halt Israeli hostilities against Lebanon.

'Alert' service

disabilities receive immediate warnings is a national duty and shared responsibility, and part of the state's efforts to use digital technology to serve people first.

Al-Huwailah affirmed the ministry and the Public Authority for Disability Affairs' continued support for initiatives that promote social inclusion and ensure a safe and equitable environment for all.

Kuwait ready

All those present expressed immense pride in the two men, affirming that there is no sacrifice nobler than martyrdom in the service of one's country, while celebrating their ultimate act of defending Kuwait and its territory.

Several countries in the region expressed condolences and solidarity with Kuwait. Saudi Arabia voiced its deepest sympathies, affirming full support and readiness to assist Kuwait in any measures necessary, while wishing a speedy recovery to the injured.

Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Jordan similarly extended sincere condolences, emphasizing their solidarity with Kuwait and support for all measures to safeguard its sovereignty and security. Qatar specifically offered prayers for mercy upon the martyrs' souls and recovery for the injured, while also sending sympathies to the families.

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah stressed that the situation in the country is "beyond excellent," describing the recent developments as "a crisis that will pass, no matter how severe it becomes."

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef made the statement when he visited the Civil Defense decision-making room on Tuesday, indicating that all concerned authorities are performing their roles to the fullest in the interest of the citizens and expatriates.

He disclosed that the visit is aimed at thanking the staff for their continuous work and tireless efforts to serve Kuwait.

He pointed out that incoming reports are dealt with immediately and referred to the relevant authorities. "In case the need to activate the sirens arises, the necessary procedures are implemented," he added.

He said the participating entities include the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Information, Kuwait Red Crescent Society and other agencies working in an integrated manner to serve Kuwait and all those living here.

He also touched on the statement issued by the Ministry of Interior to put an end to rumors and irresponsible photographing and publication of images that should not be shown due to their impact on the people.

He emphasized that official information is issued only by the concerned agencies like the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Information and others, stressing that the Ministry of Defense is the entity in charge of current developments.

He stated that those filming any scenes should not publish them, as State authorities are the only ones mandated to publish whatever is necessary. He urged everyone to adhere to the security measures that will be strictly enforced.

He said "My priority as Minister of Interior is to reassure everyone living in Kuwait. Some people do not learn from what is happening. I will take every measure we can as to apply the law on anyone, regardless of their position or status. Please abide by the instructions issued by the State."

In another development, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef chaired the meeting with all relevant State agencies at the Civil Defense Joint Operations Room.

This meeting is part of the commitment of the senior leadership of the Interior Ministry to continue field monitoring and ensure preparedness for various situations.

In a press statement, the ministry announced that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef reviewed the operational procedures in the Operations Unit and was briefed by the representatives of the concerned government agencies present at the meeting.

The briefing covered the tasks and responsibilities of each agency, as well as the procedures for immediate response to reports and incident management.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef commended the strong coordination among all participating agencies. He expressed his appreciation for their efforts and teamwork, which guarantee the efficiency of field operations and the ability to deal with emergency situations in a professional manner.

At the conclusion of the meeting, he underscored the importance of maintaining this integrated approach and preserving the highest level of vigilance and preparedness.

He stressed that concerted efforts and the protection of lives and properties are the top priorities, wishing everyone success in fulfilling their national duty.

In related news, a total of 178 ballistic missiles and 384 drones have been monitored and intercepted since the launching of the Iranian aggression on Kuwait, according to the country's Ministry of Defense.

In addition, 27 members of the Kuwaiti army have been injured, the ministry's Spokesman Col. Saud Al-Atwan said in a press statement, adding that they are in stable condition and two of them are receiving medical treatment.

He reassured that the Kuwaiti Armed Forces are on high alert and working with high efficiency around the clock.

PM inspects Shuaiba Port

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Tuesday paid an inspection visit to Shuaiba Port accompanied by Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan

His Highness the Prime Minister was briefed by officials on safety measures taken by Kuwait Ports Authority to gradually resume operations at the port.

He toured the communications tower at Shuaiba Port to review workflow and inspected the container yard and cargo handling procedures, including unloading, loading, storage and re-export operations.

PM checks on medicine stock

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, on Monday paid an inspection tour of the Health Ministry's warehouse of medicines and medical supplies.

During the tour, His Highness the Prime Minister checked on the country's strategic drug stock and the health system efficiency and preparedness to address different circumstances and emergencies.

Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah also listened to an explanation from relevant officials about storing and distribution mechanisms and control systems to ensure that drugs are available and plans in place to answer the medicine needs and boost the strategic drug stock.

On Tuesday, Deputy Commander of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah conducted an inspection tour of the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Chemical Defense and Radiation Monitoring.

In a press statement, Sheikh Faisal confirmed that the center has been placed at the service of Kuwait's national goals in full cooperation with state institutions to protect national security and safeguard the environment from pollution, in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The center is equipped with the latest advanced devices and conducts chemical and radiation detection through fixed monitoring stations, reconnaissance patrols, pollution recording, and radiation leak response, he added.

Airspace, waters readings normal

The Kuwait National Guard confirmed on Monday that readings in Kuwait's airspace and territorial waters remain within normal levels.

Director of the National Guard's Moral Guidance Department Brigadier General Dr. Jadaan Fadhel told KUNA that specialized staff at Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Center for Chemical Defense and Radiological Monitoring is continuously monitoring the situation, in coordination and cooperation with relevant state authorities to ensure everyone's safety.

He affirmed that the radiation monitoring system is operating around the clock with full efficiency and capability.

Brigadier General Jadaan urged everyone to rely on official sources and not to be swayed by rumors or unverified information, in order to safeguard the safety of all.

It also prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect beloved Kuwait and its people from all harm under its wise leadership.

Chief of the Kuwaiti Army's General Staff Lt. Gen. Khaled Al-Shariaan and Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard Lt. Gen. Hamad Al-Barjas confirmed on Monday high preparedness of the Kuwaiti Amry's forces and the National Guard to deal with different incidents.

This is implemented as part of common action and unifying efforts as well as boosting integration among all different military sectors.

This came in a shared statement made by Al-Shariaan and Al-Barjas following a visit by Al-Sharian, in line with enhancing coordination and unifying efforts between both sides, the National Guard moral guidance department said in a statement.

Both sides underlined the importance of continued coordination and consultation in a manner that boosts common military and security action system to maintain the country's stability and security, upon the directives of the wise leadership, for the country's public interest, according to the statement.

Public safety top priority

Interior Ministry personnel are ready to deal with all incidents in Kuwait amidst regional developments, Undersecretary Major-General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib said Monday and affirmed that safety of the public was a top priority.

Al-Wuhaib warned against taking photographs or record videos of security-related incidents in the country because it would cause panic and anxiety among the public.

Speaking to KUNA and Al-Akhbar channel while visiting the decision-making room at the Civil Defense Department, Al-Wuhaib said the Ministry of Interior would not tolerate any act that undermined security and safety of people.

"We will put an end to these wrong practices, and indeed we dealt with a number of cases" who would face proper punishment.

"We assume there are sleeping cells ... and we are ready for them," he affirmed.

He urged the public not to listen to rumours and seek news from official sources.

Al-Wuhaib said the decision-making room aimed at facilitating coordination among different ministries and departments.

Kuwaiti Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology Omar Al-Omar affirmed on Monday that the ministry activated all its operational and regulating sectors and raised preparedness to the highest level to ensure continued Internet and communications services.

This came in a statement made by the ministry to KUNA after a shared meeting held among the ministry of communications, and the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) as well as the Central Agency for Information Technology, communication companies and service providers.

Al-Omar, also Acting Minister of Information and Culture, reassured nationals and expats that fixed and wireless networks are working at their full capacity.

He noted that communications system in the state professionally does its duty around the clock.

Roaming services are available and efficiently work, he noted, lauding communications companies in boosting contacting the stranded nationals outside the country and providing roaming services for free in a manner that ensures constant contact and shows national efforts integration in these conditions.

Elsewhere, Iran expanded its targets Tuesday, striking the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia as Washington began to pull many staff out of the Middle East. The U.S. and Israel battered Iran with airstrikes in what President Donald Trump suggested was just the start of a war that has severely disrupted the world's supply of oil and gas, international shipping, and air travel.

The conflict escalated further on its fourth day, with Israel sending new ground troops into Lebanon and explosions ringing out in Iran's capital. Hundreds of people have been killed, the vast majority in Iran.

The spiraling nature of the war raised questions about when and how it would end. Trump said it could last four to five weeks - but that the U.S. was prepared to go longer. He seemed to leave open the possibility for more extensive U.S. military involvement, telling the New York Post on Monday that he was not ruling out the possibility of boots on the ground.

Still, the administration's objectives remain unclear. The initial U.S.-Israeli strikes killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Trump urged Iranians to overthrow their government.

Since then, however, senior administration officials have said regime change was not the goal. Trump's initial announcement of the strikes listed several grievances, from concerns about Iran's nuclear and missile programs to its leadership.

An attack from two drones on the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh caused a "limited fire," according to Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry, and the embassy urged Americans to avoid the compound. It followed an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait that announced Tuesday it had been closed until further notice.

The U.S. State Department ordered the evacuation of non-emergency personnel and family in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Qatar, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. In addition, the U.S. has urged citizens to leave more than a dozen Middle Eastern countries, though with much of the airspace closed many remained stranded. Several other countries arranged evacuation flights for their citizens.

Minnesota launches investigation

National Guard deployment in New Orleans extended for 6 months

NEW ORLEANS, March 3, (AP): The Louisiana National Guard announced Monday that 120 troops will remain deployed in New Orleans through August.

The six-month extension comes after 350 Guard members deployed to New Orleans in late December, in the run-up to New Year's and other high-profile events like the Sugar Bowl. The troops, which had mainly clustered in the city's historic French Quarter, had been scheduled to depart in the aftermath of Mardi Gras.

New Orleans is one of several Democrat-run cities, such as Washington and Memphis, Tennessee, where the federal government deployed armed troops under the administration of President Donald Trump. Hundreds of federal agents also converged on Louisiana in December as part of a separate immigration crackdown in and around New Orleans.

During his State of the Union address last week, Trump touted the deployment in New Orleans as a "big success." In January, Trump credited the troops with reducing the city's violent crime within a week of their deployment. City police data shows violent crime rates have significantly declined over the past three years in parallel with national trends.



The Louisiana National Guard, military police, and Louisiana law enforcement agencies patrol the French Quarter along Royal Street as part of a National Guard deployment for New Year's celebrations in New Orleans on Dec 30, 2025. (AP)

According to a press statement from the Louisiana National Guard, the remaining guard members will serve as a "visible presence to deter criminal activity in New Orleans."

New Orleans Mayor Helena Moreno, a Democrat who initially opposed the deployment, said that the troops would benefit the city in the coming weeks. She pointed out that National Guard troops had assisted the city during last year's Mardi Gras in the aftermath of a vehicle-ramming attack in the French Quarter that killed 14 people on New Year's Day.

"I continue to support the partnership with the LA National Guard to assist in our major events and there are several coming up in the next few weeks," Moreno said in a statement.

Also:

WASHINGTON: A **Minnesota** prosecutor announced an investigation Monday that may lead to charges against federal officers, including Border Patrol official **Greg Bovino**, for misconduct during an immigration enforcement crackdown.

Hennepin County Attorney **Mary Moriarty** said in a news conference that her office is already looking into 17 cases, including one where Bovino threw a smoke canister at protesters on Jan. 21. Another on Jan. 7 involved federal officers making an arrest outside a high school and deploying chemical irritants while students and staff were in the area.

"Make no mistake, we are not afraid of the legal fight, and we are committed to doing this correctly," Moriarty said. "Operation Metro Surge caused immeasurable harm to our community."



Redness is seen on the neck of US President Donald Trump as he delivers the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress in the House chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Feb 24. (AP)

White House attributes redness on Trump's neck to skin cream

WASHINGTON, March 3, (AP): The White House on Monday attributed a large red spot on President Donald Trump's neck to a skin cream he is using, without elaborating on what condition it is treating.

The redness drew widespread attention Monday, when news photographers captured close-up images of the president's neck during a Medal of Honor ceremony in the East Room of the White House.

"President Trump is using a very common cream on the right side of his neck, which is a preventative skin treatment, prescribed by the White House Doctor," Sean Barbabella, the president's doctor, said in a statement. "The President is using this treatment for one week, and the redness is expected to last for a few weeks."

'I hope soon peace will be yours'

Melania Trump presides at UNSC meeting on children in conflict as US attacks Iran

UNITED NATIONS, March 3, (AP): US First Lady Melania Trump presided over a UN Security Council (UNSC) meeting on Monday focusing on children in conflict, one of her signature issues, and acknowledged she was doing so in "challenging times" as the United States has joined Israel in attacking Iran.

"The US stands with all of the children throughout the world," she said, speaking generally and not specifically about the new war in the Middle East. "I hope soon peace will be yours."

Hanging over Monday's meeting was what Iranian state media says was an airstrike that hit a girls' school in southern Iran, killing at least 165 people and wounding dozens more. The Israeli military said it was not aware of strikes in the area. The US military said it was looking into the reports.

Shortly before Monday's session began, Iran's ambassador to the UN, Amir Saeid Iravani, said it was "deeply shameful and hypocritical" for the US to convene a meeting on protecting children during conflict while launching airstrikes on Iranian cities.

"For the United States, 'protecting children' and 'maintaining international peace and security' clearly mean something very different from what the UN Charter provides," he told reporters.

UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo said the world body was aware of the reports of the deaths at the girls' school. She noted the impact the US strikes and the Iranian retaliatory strikes was having on children across the region.

"We have been reminded of this truth over the last two days," she told the Security Council. "Schools in Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman have closed and moved to remote learning owing to the ongoing military operations in the region," she said.

Melania Trump was the first spouse of a world leader to take the president's seat at the United Nations' most powerful body, which is charged with ensuring global peace and security, according to the UN

The wife of President Donald Trump was given the opportunity as the United States takes over the council presidency for the month of March. In the past, presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers have often wielded the gavel.

Speaker after speaker on Monday said it was important to close the digital divide between developed and developing countries so all children have access to 21st century technology.



Melania Trump, First Lady of the United States, presides over the United Nations Security Council at United Nations headquarters on March 2. (AP)

Melania Trump strongly advocated for all children to be connected to artificial intelligence to help them learn about the beliefs, customs and history of others. "AI is democratizing knowledge which was once confined to university libraries," she said.

Drawing a connection between knowledge and peace, she urged members of the Security Council to "safeguard learning."

"Enduring peace will be achieved when knowledge and understanding are fully valued within all our societies," she said.

While the first lady spoke of a need to protect children and their access to education and technology in conflict, her husband's administration has cut funding for a number of UN agencies and other international organizations that address these issues.

Among them is the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict, which provides detailed reporting on the impact that conflicts have on children around the world. This information can help trigger action to prevent rape and violence against women and children. President Trump withdrew US support in January.

The US has also dramatically cut funding for the UN children's agency, UNICEF, and has withdrawn from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO.

DiCarlo told the council the world is facing the highest number of armed conflicts since World War II. "The number of civilians killed in these conflicts is the highest in decades," she said. "Our reality is clear: When conflicts erupt, children are among those most severely affected."

The first lady arrived at UN headquarters in a motorcade and was greeted by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. She shook hands with each of the 15 Security Council members and posed for a group photo.

The rotating president of the council gets to choose the subject and participants for some meetings. Monday's meeting was scheduled before the war began.

The council's last meeting, on Saturday, was a contentious emergency session called in response to the start of the war. Guterres condemned the U.S. and Israeli airstrikes as violations of international law, including the UN Charter. He also condemned Iran's retaliatory attacks for violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations in the Mideast.

Melania Trump took the unusual step last summer of writing a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin before his summit with her husband and later announced that the effort had led to a group of children displaced by the Russia-Ukraine war being reunited with their families.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 resulted in Russia taking Ukrainian children out of their country so they could be raised as Russian. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has lobbied world leaders for help reuniting families.



French President Emmanuel Macron reviews the troops during his visit to the nuclear submarine navy base of Ile Longue in Crozon, France on March 2. (AP)

France will allow temporary deployment of N-armed jets to European allies: Macron

L'ILE LONGUE, France, March 3, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron announced Monday that France will increase its nuclear arsenal and, for the first time, allow the temporary deployment of its nuclear-armed aircraft to allied countries, in a new strategy aimed at strengthening Europe's independence.

In speech planned long before the most recent outbreak of war in Iran, Macron outlined how French nuclear weapons fit into the security of Europe as leaders there express concerns over recurring tensions with US President Donald Trump and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

France has been the only nuclear power in the European Union since Britain's exit from the bloc in 2020.

"To be free, one needs to be feared," Macron said at a military base at L'Ile Longue on France's Atlantic coast that hosts the country's ballistic missile submarines.

Macron said the new posture, which he called "forward deterrence," could "provide for the temporary deployment of elements of our strategic air forces to allied countries," but said there would be no sharing of decision-making with any other nation regarding the use of the nuclear weapons.

Talks about such deterrence cooperation have started with Britain, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden and Denmark, Macron said.



A Rafale aircraft takes part in a refueling operation moments before the arrival of French President Emmanuel Macron at the nuclear submarine navy base of Ile Longue in Crozon, France on March 2. (AP)

France also will allow partners to participate in deterrence exercises and allow allies' non-nuclear forces to participate in France's nuclear activities, said Macron, who is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces under the French constitution.

European partners welcomed the strategy.

In a joint statement, Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said the two countries would deepen integration in deterrence starting this year, "including German conventional participation in French nuclear exercises and joint visits to strategic sites."

In a letter to Dutch lawmakers, Defense Minister Dilan Yesilgöz-Zegerius and Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen said the Netherlands was in strategic talks with France on nuclear deterrence as "a supplement to, and not a replacement for, NATO's collective defense and nuclear deterrence capabilities."

Russia-Ukraine talks planned for Abu Dhabi may change venue: Zelenskyy

KYIV, Ukraine, March 3, (Agencies): US-brokered talks between Russia and Ukraine expected later this week may take place in Switzerland or Turkey if a planned meeting in Abu Dhabi is not possible due to the war in the Middle East, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday.

He also noted that Western countries have given no indication so far that their delivery to Kyiv of vital air defense missiles could be disrupted by commitments to Middle East defense.

US-led diplomatic efforts to end the war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 are continuing. But the American and Israeli attacks on Iran, and the response of Iran and Iranian-backed militias firing missiles at Israel and Arab states, may divert international attention from the 4-year-old conflict in Europe.

"Due to hostilities, as of today we cannot confirm (the talks) will take place in Abu Dhabi," Zelenskyy told reporters in a WhatsApp chat. He said last week that the United Arab Emirates capital would be this week's venue.

Previous Russia-Ukraine talks have been held in Abu Dhabi, Istanbul and Geneva. They have not produced a breakthrough on key issues.

Zelenskyy said there has been no immediate change in American and European supplies of air defense weapons, especially American-made Patriot systems, to Ukraine. However, he noted that the volume of deliveries could fall if the Middle East attacks continue.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, (left), shakes hands with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store in Kyiv, Ukraine on Feb 25. (AP)

Russia's effort to knock out Ukraine's power grid over the winter failed, Zelenskyy said, though it caused much damage. Russian aerial attacks are now turning to other infrastructure, including the water supply, he added.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday that the United Kingdom would bring experts from Ukraine to help Persian Gulf countries shoot down Iranian drones. Ukraine has built expertise in drone operations during the war, as Russia launches daily bombardments with Shahed drones developed in Iran.

But Zelenskyy said he had not received any direct requests either from the United Kingdom or other countries about that possibility.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces have struck a major oil terminal and a naval base in Russia's southern port city of Novorossiysk, the armed forces said on Tuesday.

America

Clintons questioned about Epstein: A House committee investigating Jeffrey Epstein labored for six months to question former US president Bill Clinton and former secretary of state **Hillary Clinton**, but once they finally had a chance to sit down with some of the highest-ranked officials to ever be deposed by Congress, the sessions veered off track with a leaked photo, talk of the pizzagate conspiracy theory and questions about disclosing government information on UFOs.



Clinton

Videos released Monday by the House Oversight Committee of depositions for both Bill and Hillary Clinton from last week showed how overall the former Democratic president distanced himself from Epstein, even as he said it was important for anyone with information about Epstein's abuse to come forward. Hillary Clinton repeatedly told the committee she never even recalled meeting Epstein during hours of questioning that at times became heated. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Crews rescue 2 from hot-air balloon: Crews in East Texas rescued two people stranded hundreds of feet in the air after a hot-air balloon became entangled on a communications tower over the weekend.

Firefighters responding to the tower on Saturday morning found the balloon entangled more than 900 feet (274 meters) above the ground, according to officials in Longview, a city of more than 80,000 about 120 miles (193 kilometers) east of Dallas.

The complex, hourslong rescue involved more than a dozen firefighters stationed at various heights along the tower. It took them about an hour to climb up to the man and woman in the balloon's basket and to give them ropes and harnesses to help them escape. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

United flight returns to LA airport: A United Airlines flight returned to the Los Angeles airport Monday about 40 minutes after taking off for an emergency evacuation after a reported fire, authorities said.

All flights at the LAX International Airport were ordered to remain on the ground for about half an hour during the flight's return and evacuation, according to advisories from the Federal Aviation Administration. No injuries were reported.

The flight, which was en route to Newark, New Jersey, returned to LA to address a possible engine fire, the airline said in a statement. The LA Fire Department said it responded and the fire was contained as of an hour after the plane's landing.

The flight took off at 10:43 a.m., began to turn around at about 11 am and landed again at 11:19 am, according to flight tracker FlightAware. (AP)

Annual session of China's top political advisory body to run from March 4 to 11

BEIJING, March 3, (Xinhua): China's top political advisory body, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), will hold its annual session from March 4 to 11 in Beijing, a spokesperson for the session said on Tuesday.

The fourth session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee will begin at 3 pm on Wednesday and conclude on the morning of March 11, spokesperson Liu Jieyi said at a news conference.

During the session, national political advisors will hear and deliberate on a report on the work of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee and a report on the handling of the political advisors' proposals, according to the spokesperson.

They will sit in on the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress, the country's top legislature, which is scheduled to open on Thursday, hear and discuss documents including a government work report, and discuss a draft 15th Five-Year Plan for national economic and social development, Liu said.

They are also expected to deliberate on and approve a political resolution of the annual session, a resolution on the work report of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee, a resolution on the report on the handling of proposals since the previous session, and a report on the examination of new proposals submitted during this year's session, he said.

The 2026 CPPCC National Committee session includes opening and closing meetings, group meetings and sector-specific consultations. Diplomatic envoys to China will be invited to observe the opening and closing meetings, said Liu.

Also:

BEIJING: A total of 26,000 individuals turned themselves in to China's discipline inspection and supervision agencies in 2025, according to a work report from the country's top anti-graft body.

The report, which was released in full, was previously delivered in mid-January at a plenary session of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

According to the report, the CCDI and the National Commission of Supervision last year launched investigations into 181 officials registered at and supervised by the CPC Central Committee.



Liu Jieyi, spokesperson for the fourth session of the 14th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, attends a press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 3. (Xinhua)

Asia

2 killed as copter crashes in Philippines: A civilian helicopter made an emergency landing Tuesday in a grassy clearing near a village east of the Philippine capital, killing two people and injuring the three others onboard.

It was not immediately clear what caused the forced landing in clear weather about 50 meters (164 feet) from the nearest cluster of houses in a village in Pililla town in Rizal province, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines and other officials said.



Masinsin

The Bell 505 helicopter took off from Manila and was enroute to Quezon province, more than 400 kilometers (248 miles) southeast of the capital, when it made a forced landing, aviation officials said.

One person died instantly from the impact of the landing and another died in a hospital. The three others, including the pilot, were brought to a hospital with injuries, Pililla town Mayor **John Masinsin** and the provincial police told reporters.

Masinsin added without elaborating that two of those onboard were foreigners, including one of the two who died.

"The survivors are still in shock so we cannot extract details from them," Masinsin told reporters. "We're prioritizing their recovery."

Aviation officials said an investigation was underway. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Laos reveals results of Nat'l Assembly election: The Lao National Election Committee on Monday officially announced the 175 elected members of the Lao National Assembly's 10th legislature following the nationwide vote held on Feb 22.

According to a report of the Lao People's Army News on Tuesday, representatives were elected from 18 constituencies across the country. The newly elected members will serve in the 10th National Assembly, representing their constituencies in legislative deliberations, socio-economic policymaking, and the oversight of state affairs.

Authorities said that election committees at both central and provincial levels will disseminate the official results nationwide to ensure public awareness and uphold transparency throughout the electoral process. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

Sydney police kills armed man: An armed man has been shot dead by police at a residential complex in inner-Sydney following reports he had assaulted two women.

The police force in the state of New South Wales (NSW) said that officers were deployed to a unit complex in the inner-city suburb of Potts Point around 10:50 a.m. on Tuesday following reports that a man armed with a knife had entered the complex and assaulted two women, aged 56 and 48.

Officers arrived and deployed a taser against the man, but it was ineffective, and he was subsequently shot after allegedly threatening police.

NSW Police Force Assistant Commissioner Peter McKenna told reporters on Tuesday afternoon that the man was declared deceased at the scene.

He said that the two women were residents of separate units within the complex and were both hospitalized with head and facial injuries not considered life-threatening.

Neither was believed to be known to the man who was shot by police, McKenna said.

A crime scene has been established at the complex, and the investigation into the incident will be reviewed by police integrity bodies. (Xinhua)

US sanctions Rwanda military over support for M23 rebels in Congo

KINSHASA, Congo, March 3, (AP): The US imposed sanctions Monday on the Rwandan Defence Forces and four of its senior officials for supporting the March 23 Movement, an armed group responsible for human rights abuses in the central African nation of Congo.

The latest penalties come after a US-mediated peace agreement was signed in December by Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Washington, alongside U.S. President Donald Trump.

Trump at the time praised the leaders for their courage, as the deal also opened the region's critical mineral reserves to the US government and US companies.

Despite the agreement, fighting between the two parties continues on several fronts in eastern Congo, claiming numerous civilian and military casualties.

M23 is the most prominent of about 100 armed factions vying for control in eastern Congo, near the border with Rwanda. The conflict has created one of the world's most significant humanitarian crises, with more than 7 million people displaced, according to the UN agency for refugees.



M23 rebels negotiate with Rwanda Army to release captured Romanian mercenaries to Rwanda Government, who were fighting alongside Democratic Republic of Congo army (FRDC), at Gisenyi border point in Congo on Jan 29, 2025, after the M23 rebels advanced into eastern Congo's capital Goma. (AP)

Congo, the US and UN experts accuse Rwanda of backing M23, which has grown from hundreds of members in 2021 to around 6,500 fighters, according to the UN.

The US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control alleged that M23's offensives would not have been possible without the active support of the Rwandan government and key senior officials.

Gang violence displaces record 1.4 million people

Haiti government opens registration for what would be first election in decade

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, March 3, (AP): Haiti's government opened a 10-day registration period Monday for political parties to run in an upcoming general election, a critical step for a country that hasn't held one in more than a decade as deadly gang violence persists.

Heavily armed soldiers and police surrounded the headquarters of Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council as a handful of political operatives for long-established parties picked up the necessary paperwork.

Joining them was Pierre Dieu-Donné Delice, a psychologist who heads a new party called Tools for Another Haiti. Delice told The Associated Press that he and other party members are tired of the transitional government in power since President Jovenel Moïse was killed at his private residence in July 2021.

"They love transition because there's no control. They can do whatever they want," Delice said of Haiti's current government.

Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé is the current interim leader of the troubled country where gangs control an estimated 90% of Port-au-Prince and swaths of land in the central region.

He has the backing of the US government and used to share power with a transitional presidential council that was established in 2024, nearly three years after Moise was killed. The council stepped down on Feb. 7 as required by law, leaving Fils-Aimé as the sole leader of the country.

Haiti's government has pledged to hold a general election in late August and a runoff by early December, but it's unclear if that will happen.

"The conditions are not ready yet for an election," lamented Delice, leader of the new party, noting that gang violence persists in several regions. "There is no way for candidates to campaign there. … If the situation stays the way it is now, it will be impossible to have an election."



A man carries a child on his shoulders to take him to school in the Petion-Ville neighborhood of in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on March 2, 2026. (AP)

More than 5,900 people were reported killed last year across Haiti and more than 2,700 injured, according to U.N. statistics.

Gang violence also has displaced a record 1.4 million people in a country of nearly 12 million inhabitants.

Delice himself had to flee his home in the central coastal town of Arcahaie with his family after heavily armed gangs attacked it.

He also had to move his party's headquarters from his hometown to Port-au-Prince, and said he's forced to travel by boat or helicopter to meet with regional party members because gangs retain control of the main routes going in and out of the capital, occasionally opening fire on vehicles passing through.

Joseph André Gracien Jean, the minister in charge of electoral matters, celebrated the start of registering political parties on Monday.

"Today, we take a big step," he told the AP. "People should be elected to return to a democratic order."

He said the council is not waiting until security is established across Haiti to register parties.

"It's a long process; step by step, we are moving forward," Gracien Jean said. "What's important is that the executive branch is making an effort."

The registration process ends on March 12, and officials expect the pace to pick up before the deadline.

The head of Haiti's National Police, André Jonas Vladimir Paraison, recently told the AP that authorities were still working on a plan to safely hold general elections.

In upcoming months, a new gang suppression force is expected to replace a UN-backed mission led by Kenyan police that remains understaffed and underfunded.

Authorities deploy troops and impose curfew after protests

Pakistan kills 67 Afghan security force members in 5th day of fighting

ISLAMABAD, March 3, (AP): Afghanistan's ground forces attacked Pakistan's military positions at 16 locations along the southwestern border early Tuesday and fired on multiple points in the northwest, triggering intense clashes in which 67 Afghan security force members and one Pakistani soldier were killed, as fighting between the two neighbors entered its fifth consecutive day, officials said.

Pakistan "successfully repelled these multiple attacks" along the Afghan border, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said.

Afghan forces carried out ground assaults in 16 locations in the southwestern districts of Qilla Saifullah, Nushki and Chaman in Balochistan province, Tarar said on X. In retaliatory attacks, Pakistan killed 27 members of Afghan forces, he said.

Tarar said that Afghan forces also launched attacks at 25 locations in the border regions of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where Pakistani troops killed 40 Afghan security force members.

There was no immediate comment from Kabul on the Pakistani figures.

However, Pakistan and Afghanistan have both repeatedly claimed to inflicted heavy losses on the other side since Thursday, when Afghanistan launched attacks in retaliation for Pakistani airstrikes the previous Sunday. Since then, Pakistan has carried out operations along the border, with Tarar on Monday, saying that 435 Afghan security force members were killed and that 31 positions have been captured in the fighting.



Smoke emits from Afghan side as trucks are parked along roadside following cross-border clashes between Pakistan and Afghan forces, near Torkham border crossing point, Pakistan on Feb 28. (AP)

In Afghanistan, the Defense Ministry kas repeatedly assured the world, including neighboring countries, that it won't allow Afghan territory to be used against other nations. The ministry' spokesman, Enayatullah Khawarazmi, said that "I repeat once again that we will not allow any person or group to use our territory against other countries."

Khawarazmi said in a statement that Afghan forces had also responded to Pakistan's attacks in the past 24 hours, destroying about a dozen posts and killing four Pakistani soldiers. He said that so far, 28 Afghan soldiers have died and 42 others have been wounded in the fighting.

Meanwhile, Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesman for the Afghan government, accused Pakistan of violating Afghan airspace and targeting public areas, including homes, mosques, madrasas and public facilities in Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar, Paktia, Kandahar, and Kunar provinces, apart from targeting refugee camps.

He said that these attacks have resulted in the death of 110 civilians, including 65 women and children.

Meanwhile, the UN mission in Afghanistan called for an immediate halt to the fighting, warning that the conflict is worsening the country's already dire humanitarian situation.

Also:

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani authorities deployed troops and imposed a three-day curfew before dawn Monday in the northern cities of **Gilgit** and **Skardu** after several people died and tens were injured in violent protests following the killing of **Iran**'s Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** in **US** strikes officials said.

Thousands of Shiite demonstrators on Sunday attacked the offices of the UN Military Observer Group, which monitors the ceasefire along the disputed Himalayan region of **Kashmir**, and the UN Development Program in Skardu city.

Lat/Am

Comunes fights for survival in Colombia election: Former rebels that once controlled large swaths of rural Colombia are now fighting for their survival as a political party, as the country holds a high-stakes congressional election on Sunday.



Basset

Getting enough votes to retain their congressional seats, or even maintain their status as a political party, will be a tall order for former members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, who now run the party called Comunes, or Commoners.

The party had 10 guaranteed seats in Colombia's Congress during the last two legislatures, a concession granted to the rebels in their 2016 peace deal with the government.

But now, under the terms of the deal, those seats are gone, and Comunes must compete on equal footing with other political parties.

Few observers expect the former rebels to retain their seats in a crowded field where more than a dozen parties will compete for positions in the Senate and House of Representatives.

"They have not really gained the support of the people," said **Yan Basset**, a political science professor at Bogota's Rosario University. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

Cuba detains ten Panamanians: Cuba's government said Monday that authorities have detained 10 Panamanian citizens accused of fabricating subversive propaganda, in the latest international incident involving the Caribbean island.

The announcement comes just days after a fatal shooting involving a US boat in Cuban waters.

Cuba's Interior Ministry said that the Panamanians were paid to enter the island "with the purpose of making signs with subversive content, contrary to the constitutional order."

The government said that according to initial statements from those detained, the Panamanians were ordered to leave Cuba "once the objective was achieved," and that they would receive between $1,000 and $1,500 each upon their return.

The ministry said the detainees acknowledged their responsibility for the alleged activity and were arrested on Saturday in Havana. Officials did not provide further details, including the nature of the alleged propaganda.

Panama's Foreign Ministry declined to comment Monday. (AP)

Business

Kuwaiti oil price rises to $78.7 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil rose by USD 9.5, reaching USD 78.7 per barrel (pb) in Monday trading, compared with USD 69.2 pb on Friday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

On global markets, Brent crude increased by USD 4.87 to USD 77.74 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude rose by USD 4.24 to USD 71.26 pb.

Operations continue normally

Duqm Refinery unaffected by drone attack on Port of Duqm

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Abdullah Al-Ajmi affirmed that the refinery is unaffected by the drone attack on the Port of Duqm in Oman two days ago.

In an exclusive statement to the newspaper, Al-Ajmi revealed that operational activities at Duqm Refinery, including production and export operations, are continuing as usual without interruption.

He said the refinery is running at its full refining capacity of 255,000 barrels per day, stressing that there are no threats to the refinery, which is jointly owned by Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) and OQ Group.

He said the Kuwaiti employees stationed at the refinery are carrying out their responsibilities with outstanding professionalism, alongside their Omani counterparts and colleagues of other nationalities.

Meanwhile, reliable Omani sources told the newspaper that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to the intensifying crisis between the United States and Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran could increase demand for Duqm Refinery products.

Sources pointed out that the refinery usually witnesses a notable rise in orders, particularly during times of geopolitical instability in the region, owing to its position within the Duqm Special Economic Zone in the Sultanate of Oman, overlooking both the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Sources explained that this distinctive and strategic location protected the refinery from the severe political developments that have affected the region since October 2023. They pointed out that the location of the refinery gives it direct access to major international shipping routes linking Asia and Africa, establishing it as a prominent geostrategic hub whose significance becomes apparent during crises and interruptions to supply routes passing through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea.

They indicated that the success of the refinery is largely attributed to the alignment and integration of the expertise of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiary, KPI, with the experience of the Omani partner, OQ, particularly in light of the extensive history of KPC in the refining industry.

They added that the refinery produced more than 6.2 gigawatt-hours of solar energy, while onverting 85 percent of its hazardous liquid waste into energy.

Regarding its milestones, sources stated that 2016 marked the completion of the refinery site preparation works, with construction contracts awarded at the beginning of 2017. "Construction activities commenced in 2018 and culminated in the launch of initial commercial operations in 2022. In January 2023, the refinery received its first cargo of crude oil, followed in March 2023 by the sale and export of its first shipment of refined products," sources added.

Sources asserted that the most notable milestone was on Feb 7, 2024, when the refinery was officially inaugurated in the presence of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Moreover, Ghanem Al-Otaibi, official spokesperson of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC), stated that debris fell at the Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery early Monday morning, causing minor injuries to two workers.

Al-Otaibi wrote on the X platform account of KPC that "the situation was dealt with immediately in accordance with the safety and security protocols. The injured workers were taken to Adan Hospital and both of them are in stable condition and remain under medical supervision."

He stressed that the refinery's operational and production activities were not affected and continued without disruption. "Emergency response teams promptly initiated their duties following the incident and activated the rapid response plan, implementing all required precautionary measures to safeguard the employees and facilities. No material damage occurred. Mina Al-Ahmadi Refinery continues to operate at full capacity, with the highest priority placed on ensuring the safety of personnel in all sites," he concluded.

General market index rises 0.34%

Boursa Kuwait sees gains across all market indices

KUWAIT CITY, March 3, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait began trading on Tuesday with broad gains across its indices. The general market index rose 28.78 points, or 0.34 percent, closing at 8,437.07 points.

The main market index increased by 22.40 points, or 0.29 percent, to 7,786.79 points, while the premier market index added 31.64 points, or 0.35 percent, reaching 9,013 points.

The Main 50 index posted the strongest performance, gaining 63.36 points, or 0.79 percent, to stand at 8,049.38 points.

Markaz: Kuwait markets remained resilient in February as geopolitical risks add uncertainty

S&P GCC composite index declined by 2.8%

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The performance of Kuwait equities remained resilient in February 2026, while the performance of other GCC markets was mixed.

The Kuwait All Share Index remained flat in February, gaining 0.1%, with the banking sector index falling 0.3%. National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Finance House declined by 0.8% and 0.5%, respectively,forthe month.Among sectors, Consumer staples gained the most in February, rising by11.6%. Jazeera Airways registered a share price gain of 23.1% during the month, driven by a 113.7% y/y increase in its 2025 net income. ACICO Industries gained 17.8% during the month,supported in part by a cooperation agreement signed on 15 February 2026 between Kuwait International Bank and ACICO to provide affordable financing solutions and exclusive incentives for citizens building residential plots.

According to the IMF, Kuwait's real GDP is expected to expand by 3.8% y/y in 2026, driven by the unwinding of OPEC+ production cuts.Fitch estimates Kuwait's credit at 9% y/y in 2026, a tad lower thanthe 11.4% y/y growth in 2025. Kuwait's real estate sales declined in January 2026 to KD 236 million (-56% m/m), marking the lowest monthly sales figure in the past twelve months.The decline follows a record 26% y/y surge in yearly real estate sales to KD 4.4 billion in 2025. The decline was across the residential, investment, and commercial segments, reflecting normalization after a strong December, though sales were still marginally higher y/y (+2.4%).

All GCC equity indices, except Saudi Arabia and Qatar, ended the month on a positive note, with Oman's MSX 30 index leading the gains at 16.8%. MSXI's gains were mainly driven by the optimism built around the country's push to be classified as an Emerging Market by global index providers. The 5.9% decline in Saudi Arabia's Tadawul Index exerted significant pressure on regional performance, contributing to a 2.8% decline in the S&P GCC Composite Index. Market sentiment weakened amid escalating geopolitical tensions between Iran and the U.S., as well as fiscal concerns, with Saudi Arabia's budget deficit widening to SAR 94.85 billion in Q4 2025 from SAR 88.5 billion in the previous quarter.Saudi Arabia's leading banks, Saudi National Bank and Al Rajhi Bank, recorded monthly declines of 7.1% and 5.8%,respectively. Saudi Telecom Company declined by 5.8%after reporting a 39.9% y/y drop in net income (SAR 14.83 billion) for 2025, due to a non-recurring gain in 2024. Abu Dhabi's equity index increased by1.7% during the month, supported by major blue-chip stocks. Aldar Properties gained 12.6% after recording a 35.8% y/y growth in net income for 2025. Dubai equity index increased by 1.1% during the month, supported by an 8.0% monthly gain in Emaar Properties. Emaar Properties recorded a 27.9% y/y growth in its net income for 2025.

The UAE's Economy and Tourism Minister stated that the UAE economy is expected to grow by more than 5% in 2026, supported by the expansion of non-oil sectors and extensive business reforms that have led to an increase inthe number of registered companies to 1.45 million in 2025, up from650 thousand in 2020. Meanwhile, GASTAT released Saudi Arabia's real GDP growth, which stood at 4.9% y/y in Q4 2025 and 4.5% y/y for 2025. Growth was driven by a rebound in the oil sector(5.6% y/y in 2025) and steady non-oil expansion, despite weakness in government activity. Credit growth, however, eased to an 18-month low of 11.5% y/y in December 2025, reflecting softer personal lending and tight banking-sector liquidity. GCC and India signed a joint statement to launch FTA negotiations, which will deepen cooperation across trade, services, and investment. Fitch downgraded Bahrain's credit rating to 'B' with a stable outlook, citing persistently high government debt at 146.8% of GDP in 2025 and large fiscal deficits at 13.4% of GDP in 2025, up from 10.1% in 2024.

The MSCI World Index was largely unchanged during the month,posting a modest 0.6% gain. Similarly, the S&P 500 registered a mild decline of 0.9%. The muted performance reflected sector rotation away from large-cap technology stocks toward industrials, metals and mid-cap companies, as investors became more selective towards AI-related themes and diversified into global equities. The Nasdaq Composite index declined 2.3% during the month amid growing concerns over potential downside inm AI stocks. Emerging Markets, as measured by the MSCI EM Index,gained 5.4% during the month, supported by Korean equities.Korea's KOSPI index registered 19.1% gains for the month, driven largely by Samsung, which grew 34.9% for the month as it is expected to become an exclusive memory chips supplier for Nvidia's advanced processors. Chinese equities increased by 1.1% during the month,while Taiwan equities registered strong gains of 10.4% for the month.

The yield on the 10-year U.S.Treasury notes decreased by 29 bps during the month, to 3.97%. The FED Governor, Christopher Waller, said strong January payroll growth of over 200,000 and unemployment near 4% could support holding rates in March, while weaker jobs data in February may lead to a possible 25bps cut. He also cautioned against shrinking the Fed's $7+ trillion balance sheet, arguing that repeatedly seeking emergency funding is massively inefficient.

Oil (Brent) prices closed at USD72.48 per barrel for the month, gaining 2.5%. Oil prices are expected to witness a significant increase in volatility due to the escalation of geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and Iran, which can disrupt global supply in the near term.

The key driver of market movements in March 2026 will be, to a large extent, the ongoing geopolitical developments in the Middle East. GCC has suffered collateral damage in this conflict between Israel and the US on the one side and Iran on the other. Markets are assessing the likely duration of this conflict. While the hope is for a swift end, recent examples of geopolitical conflicts point otherwise.

About Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz"

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

Communications Minister Omar Al-Omar visits Zain HQ to assess operational readiness

Bader Al-Kharafi: Maintaining uninterrupted communications is a profound national duty







Left: Omar Al-Omar with Bader Al-Kharafi, Dr. Khalid Al-Zamel, and Zain's executive management at Zain HQ. Center: Al-Kharafi briefs Al-Omar on the operational readiness of Zain's Network Operations Center. Right: Zain remains in direct and ongoing coordination with government entities to ensure emergency plans are aligned with the national preparedness framework.

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi welcomed received H.E. Minister of State for Communications Affairs and Acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar, as well as Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Dr. Khaled Al-Zamel, during a visit to the company's HQ, where they reviewed the Network Operations Center's readiness and the approved operational plans to ensure the continuity of telecommunications services in the nation amid the current regional developments.

The visit came as part of an ongoing coordination between state institutions and the private sector to reinforce the integration of national efforts at this critical stage. During the tour, Zain presented a comprehensive overview of the preparedness framework it has adopted to raise network readiness and activate work teams around the clock, ensuring the preservation of service efficiency and stability under various conditions.

The company affirmed the continuation of its direct coordination with the relevant government entities, foremost among them CITRA, to ensure that its emergency plans are aligned with the national preparedness framework and that it can respond to any developments quickly and effectively.

Bader Al-Kharafi said: "This step reflects the value of public-private partnership during uncertain times and underscores the trust placed in the pivotal role that telecom operators play in strengthening national readiness and safeguarding the continuity of vital services on which the community depends."

Al-Kharafi added: "Ensuring the continuity of communications under such circumstances is not merely an operational responsibility, but a profound national duty. In times like these, the service becomes an essential lifeline that supports security and stability and amplifies our commitment to the nation."

- We trust the state's efforts, commend the sacrifices of the frontliners, and pray that God protects Kuwait under the wise leadership of H.H. the Amir
- Zain in close coordination with CITRAand other government entities to ensure it can respond to any developments quickly and effectively
- Free roaming internet and calls for customers outside Kuwait to help them stay connected with their loved ones during this time

He concluded: "The safety of our staff and the continuity of services to customers will remain at the forefront of our priorities. We affirm our full confidence in the efforts of all state institutions and the competence of their agencies, and we extend our sincere appreciation to the heroes of the frontlines for their efforts and sacrifices, praying to God to protect Kuwait and its people under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah."

Zain's continued investment in infrastructure development over the years have enabled it to build a more resilient and responsive network, ensuring business continuity and service delivery even under the most challenging circumstances.

The company's technical and administrative teams are fully prepared to deal with various scenarios through a flexible operating model based on multiple routes and technical alternatives, while continuously updating internal response plans in line with developments and maintaining the highest levels of communication and coordination with the relevant authorities.

Zain also places particular importance on safeguarding its systems and strengthening cybersecurity in parallel with operational readiness, in order to ensure the network's safety and the stability of services at all times.

The company views its responsibility during this phase through a comprehensive national lens, based on its commitment to placing all of its technical and human capabilities at the service of Kuwait and working in full harmony with the relevant entities to ensure integrated efforts, swift response, and effective execution. Zain's previous experience in crisis management, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, helped establish a more flexible, efficient, and prepared operating model.

As part of its proactive measures during the current crisis, Zain has activated remote work for most of its employees in a way that ensures their safety and the continuity of its operational and administrative functions with high efficiency. The company has also provided psychological support services through free counseling and therapy sessions in collaboration with Kuwait Counseling Center (KCC).

Zain has also offered free roaming internet, local and international calls, and SMS benefits to its customers outside Kuwait through Thursday, helping them stay connected with their loved ones during this period and enabling them to remain in touch with their families and follow developments with ease and peace of mind.

In addition, Zain launched an awareness initiative in cooperation with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank to raise awareness of the importance of blood donation and support the national blood supply during this period, through its social media platforms and SMS messages. This step reflects the company's commitment to its national and community role and its keenness to leverage its channels and capabilities in support of the country's humanitarian and official efforts.

Treasury faces challenge funding massive tariff refunds

Federal Court clears path for Trump tariff refund process

WASHINGTON, March 3, (AP): A federal court on Monday rejected the Trump administration's attempt to slow the process of refunding billions of dollars' worth of tariffs the Supreme Court struck down as illegal last month.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit started the next phase in the refund process by sending it to a lower court to sort out.

In a court filing Friday, Trump's Justice Department had urged the Federal Circuit to proceed cautiously and hold off for 90 days. But the judges refused.

The Supreme Court ruled Feb. 20 that Trump's sweeping tariffs on most countries in the world were illegal, clearing the way for the importers who paid them to seek refunds.

The government had collected more than $130 billion from the tariffs by mid-December, and could ultimately be on the hook for refunds worth $175 billion, according to calculations by the Penn Wharton Budget Model.

But the Supreme Court offered no guidance on refunds; its decision did not even mention them. Now the U.S. Court of International Trade in New York will decide how the complicated refund process should proceed.

"I would expect the Court of International Trade to quickly issue an order requesting a status update from the government on their plans with respect to refunds (or expedited briefing)," said trade lawyer Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former U.S. trade official. "I expect the court to take an aggressive posture, asking the government to justify how they intend to comply with the Supreme Court's ruling."

Siddartha Rao, a partner at law firm Hoguet Newman Regal & Kenney, said he has been getting a lot of calls from clients with questions.

"We are somewhat in uncharted territory," he said.

The Trump administration has been reaching for new tariffs to replace the ones the Supreme Court struck down.

One question, he said, is how the government might actually pay for these refunds.

"Everyone is sort of cognizant of the fact that it's not like there's over a hundred billion dollars sitting in, you know, in a room somewhere to just cut checks," Rao said. "So, you know, this is a Treasury problem, and it may very well be that the administration is reimposing tariffs for the reasons that it's cited ... it's important for strategic trade agreements and for bargaining power and all of that. But it also might be that they need to raise revenue to pay out refunds."

Retailer faces pressure

Target sales slip again

MINNEAPOLIS, March 3, (AP): Target reported another quarter of declining sales and profits as the retailer struggles to regain its footing with its customers contending with higher prices almost everywhere.

But the Minneapolis company on Tuesday offered a solid annual profit outlook that was better than Wall Street had been projecting, It also said it believes net sales will grow every quarter this year.

Target also said comparable-store sales rose to start the current quarter.

Shares jumped more than 4% before the opening bell.

The company earned $2.30 per share, or $1.05 billion, for the three-month period ended Jan. 31. That compares with $2.41 per share, or $1.10 billion, during the year-ago period. Adjusted earnings per share for the most recent quarter was $2.44.

Sales fell 1.5% to $30.45 billion during the latest period. For the full year, sales fell nearly 2% to $104.78 billion.

Analysts were expecting $2.16 per share on sales of $30.46 billion, according to a survey by FactSet.

Comparable sales - sales at established stores and online channels - fell 2.5%, followed by a 2.7% dip in the fiscal third quarter. The latest figure marks 11 quarters out of the past 13 that Target has posted either declines or flattish growth for this measure.

Target's performance underscores the challenges faced by new CEO Michael Fiddelke, a 20-year company veteran, who succeeded longtime CEO Brian Cornell last month.

Fiddelke is expected to reveal details about his plans to turn around Target on Tuesday during the company's annual meeting in Minneapolis. Investors are hungry for a return to Target's former dominance in affordable chic for which it earned it the nickname "Tarzhay" in years past.

Fiddelke takes over with Target's hometown of Minneapolis a front line of sorts in President Donald Trump's campaign to curb illegal immigration. Some of the company's stores have become a flashpoint in a push-back against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The company has faced pressure to take a public stand against the immigration crackdown.

Even before the immigration clashes, Target had been facing protests and boycotts over the company's decision to roll back its diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Critics believe it's a betrayal of Target's retail giant's philanthropic commitment to fighting racial disparities and promoting progressive values in liberal Minneapolis and beyond.

That is outside of a volatile economic and political environment that has been intensified by an aggressive trade campaign under Trump. The White House is now seeking a global tariff of 15%, after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down many of the far-reaching taxes on imports that he had imposed over the last year.

While the pace of inflation has cooled, consumer prices have soared about 25% over the past five years. U.S. companies are facing a hazy outlook with American households hurting, and the Trump administration is trying to work around the Supreme Court ruling to keep his duties in place.

And Target customers have soured on what they see as untended and messy stores with lackluster merchandise.

As the company's nearly 2,000 store locations have become shipping hubs for online operations, customers say the shopping experience within stores has suffered with staff fulfilling digital orders rather than tending to store aisles.

Target is also facing stiffer competition from Walmart, which has stepped up its focus on fashion and other goods. As many Americans trade down because of inflation, Walmart has gained market share, particularly among households with annual income above $100,000.

Joe Feldman, a senior managing director and the assistant director of research at Telsey Advisory Group, believes that shopper boycotts over its pullback from DEI and its lack of a forceful stand against ICE cut into sales. But he said overall, Fiddelke seems to be willing to make changes to improve its operations.

Fiddelke has already reshuffled the leadership team at Target, boosted spending on in-store store staffing and made cuts at distribution facilities and regional offices, according to a memo sent to employees in February.

The company is also reworking its store label brands such as its home goods brand called Threshold and announced a merchandise collaboration with Roller Rabbit, a brand known for its 1960s-inspired silhouettes and colorful playful prints. The collection of clothing, pajamas and accessories is expected to make its debut at Target this month for a limited time.

Tuesday's report offered some hopeful signs for the business. Target said that sales and customer traffic accelerated in the final two months of the quarter. And it saw sales growth in food and beverage, beauty and toys for the latest quarter.

Target said that it expects net sales for the year to increase by 2%, which would mean it expects sales to reach $106.88 billion. That's a bit above analysts' expectations of $106.7 billion. Target also anticipates earnings per share to be in the range of $7.50 to $8.50. Analysts are expecting $7.30 per share for the year, according to analysts polled by FactSet.



The Target logo displayed on a sign outside a store, Nov. 18, 2025, in Salem, N.H. (AP)

Airlines and energy stocks hit hard

Global stocks slide as Iran war spurs oil surge

TOKYO, March 3, (AP): Global shares mostly declined and oil prices surged Tuesday as investors eyed threats to world energy supplies from the Iran war.

U.S. futures also declined, with the contract for the S&P 500 down 1.5% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.6%.

In early European trading, France's CAC 40 dropped 2.2% to 8,207.10, while in Germany the DAX sank 2.9% to 23,935.62. Britain's FTSE 100 declined 2.2% to 10,546.30.

In South Korea, a big energy importer, the Kospi plunged 7.2% as markets reopened after a holiday on Monday, closing at 5,791.91.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose $3.24 to $74.47 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, added $3.56 to $81.30 a barrel. Oil prices jumped Monday over worries that the war could clog the global flow of crude.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 sank 3.1% to finish at 56,279.05. Like other resource-poor countries in the region, Japan could be especially hit by the lack of access to the Strait of Hormuz, since much of its oil and natural gas imports are shipped through there.

Analysts say Japan has a sizable stockpile lasting more than 200 days, and so the threat isn't immediate.

Japanese energy stocks plunged, with Eneos Corp. down 3.4% and Idemitsu Kosan down 3.1%. Defense-related issues, which have risen recently on expectations of more military spending by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, sank back as traders sold to lock in gains from the day before. Mitsubishi Heavy plunged 5.3%, and IHI lost 4.9%.

In the rest of the region, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 1.3% to 9,077.30, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 1.1% to 25,768.08. The Shanghai Composite index lost 1.4% to 4,122.68.

Stocks of airlines, including American Airlines, United and Delta, were some of Monday's biggest losers on Wall Street. Higher oil prices threaten their already big fuel bills, while the fighting in the Middle East also has closed airports and left travelers stranded.

The losses cascaded in Asia, with ANA stock down 3.3%, while Japan Airlines fell 6.4%. Korean Air declined 10.3% and Qantas Airways lost 1.8%.

Despite the retreats in many markets, the reactions to the war have been moderated by the fact that past military conflicts in the Middle East haven't caused long-term declines. For this war to knock down U.S. stocks in a significant and sustained way, the price of oil would perhaps need to jump above $100 per barrel, according to strategists at Morgan Stanley led by Michael Wilson.

"Since 2000, there have been 22 one-day oil price spikes of more than 10%," said Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management. "In other words, energy shocks do not automatically derail equities unless they are severe and sustained. The market is well aware of that playbook."

On Monday, the S&P 500 fell as much as 1.2% but finished with a gain of less than 0.1%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 0.1% and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.4%. Both also recovered from steep early losses.

In currency trading early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar edged up to 157.53 Japanese yen from 157.47 yen. The euro cost $1.1627, down from $1.1692.

Brent spike and gas doubles hit inflation outlook

Iran war casts a pall over UK economic update

LONDON, March 3, (AP): With oil prices soaring and stocks tanking, the fast-evolving Iran war has cast a pall over the economic forecasts that British Treasury chief Rachel Reeves is set to unveil on Tuesday.

Reeves had hoped her statement to the House of Commons would be a relatively low-key affair, with the forecasts showing the key economic numbers broadly heading in the right direction. No tax and spending decisions are anticipated.

However, economists are warning that the Iran war could upend the forecasts within her Spring Statement, depressing growth, stoking inflation and increasing debt.

Perhaps most significantly, the price of Brent international oil standard has spiked by more than 15% this week to over $80 a barrel, while global gas prices, which the U.K. is particularly reliant on, have nearly doubled. If sustained, both would certainly lead to higher energy bills for businesses and households, fuelling inflation and keeping a lid on growth.

"With the world plunged into fresh uncertainty, she is likely to strike a highly cautious tone, focusing on maintaining stability and sticking to fiscal rules amid heightened tensions," said Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club, an investment service.

Ahead of her statement, the Treasury said Reeves will stress the importance of economic stability in an increasingly uncertain world.

Reflecting on the decisions the government has taken, Reeves is expected to point to already falling inflation and interest rate cuts, which are easing the cost of living pressures on family finances.

"This government has the right economic plan for our country, in a world that has become yet more uncertain," she is expected to tell lawmakers.

Britain's Labour government, which has lost significant support since it won the general election in 2024 , has been hoping that 2026 would be the year that it was clear the British economy was on a sounder footing than it has been for years.

Some recent economic indicators have pointed to a pickup in growth in the early part of 2026. Inflation is also set to fall sharply in the coming months, prompting the Bank of England to cut interest rates further. Last month, the bank kept its main rate unchanged at 3.75%.

Overcapacity and subsidies fuel China's economic divide

China's high-tech vision clashes with economic reality

BEIJING, March 3, (AP): China's progress in building a modern economy, evident in its kung-fu fighting robots and self-parking cars, is hitting limits as a downturn in its housing industry drags on, small businesses suffer and young peoplae struggle to find jobs.

The gap between Chinese leader Xi Jinping's high-tech, artificial intelligence-driven ambitions and the hard realities of slowing growth is the backdrop for the annual meeting of the country's largely ceremonial national legislature, the National People's Congress, which begins Thursday.

During the meetings, which draw about 3,000 deputies to Beijing, top leaders will outline China's annual target for growth and the congress will endorse a five-year blueprint of policy priorities until 2030.

"What we'll see is the trade-off between whether it's going to be industry and tech, or looking after domestic demand," said Alexander Davey, an analyst at the Mercator Institute for China Studies. "These are the two priorities that are juggling for Xi Jinping right now."

In a city in southern China's Guangdong, families were cutting back on big purchases during last month's Lunar New Year holidays. Even for auspicious houseplants like orchids, used as a symbol of abundance and prosperity, prices were slashed by as much as 40% from last year.

The penny pinching has small business owners complaining about hard times.

China reported it reached "around 5%" economic growth in 2025, but economists question some official data.

The relatively robust pace of growth was supported by strong manufacturing as exports surged, despite U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hikes and other disruptions to trade.

"Hitting the 2025 growth target is hardly reassuring as the Chinese economy is losing growth momentum, with rising imbalances and enormous structural problems being papered over by a surge in export-driven growth," Eswar Prasad, a professor of economics and trade policy at Cornell University, told The Associated Press in emailed comments.

A downturn in China's housing market began several years ago and piecemeal efforts to revive the industry have made only fitful progress. Dozens of property developers defaulted on their debts as authorities cracked down on excessive borrowing. With overall home prices down 20% or more from 2021, a recovery remains elusive.

The meltdown in one of the country's biggest industries eliminated hundreds of thousands of jobs and with 12.7 million graduates entering the job market this year, more than 16% of young Chinese are unemployed. Some just are giving up and opting out of the rat race, or "lying flat."

Families whose main assets are their homes have grown cautious about spending, weakening consumer demand and confounding longstanding efforts to shift the economy to greater reliance on domestic investment.

The congress may bring some fresh moves to beef up social welfare and other support, measures economists say are overdue and necessary for sustained, steady growth.

Reliance on exports is what help keeps China's economy buzzing, at least for now. China recorded a $1.2 trillion trade surplus in 2025, as exports kept its factories humming. Despite the China-U.S. trade war, it has been shipping more to regions including Europe and Latin America. But it's facing pushback from its trading partners.

Under leader Xi, China has prioritized developing advanced technologies such as AI, robotics, computer chips, electric vehicles and renewable energy. Massive state support has companies churning out more EVs, TVs, solar panels and other products than China and its trading partners need.

"To achieve those goals, the government is going to have to continue to provide subsidies and preferential support for high-tech and strategic industries," said Leah Fahy, a China economist at Capital Economics. "(That) will, in turn, continue to fuel overcapacity."

In a recent report, the International Monetary Fund urged China to cut massive state subsidies and other support for industries that many Western countries say give its companies an unfair advantage over foreign rivals. At the same time, social welfare and other areas of the economy lag behind.

The focus on what the ruling Communist Party has dubbed "high quality development" is bound to continue under the five-year plan for 2026-2030 that lawmakers are due to endorse at the congress.

Over the past few decades, China's transformation into a manufacturing superpower was underpinned by booming construction of homes, office buildings, roads, ports and railways. But tech supply chains are narrower, providing fewer jobs. So the trickle down effect is much weaker, said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING Bank.

"If anything, the more successful the so-called future industries become, the more they will draw resources away from the traditional sectors that still provide the bulk of employment and livelihoods for most people," said Henry Gao, a professor of law at Singapore Management University.

The annual congress is an impressive show. Thousands of delegates fill the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing. A military band performs and delegates from various ethnic groups attend in traditional clothing.

For all the pomp, the meeting is largely a set piece. The congress lasts only one week and its near-unanimous votes on the final day formalize decisions made ahead of time by party leaders. It's a show of unity reaffirming the polices and direction they have set.

Increasingly that leadership has centered on one person, Xi, who has consolidated power since taking the helm in 2012. Now 72, he is one of modern China's most powerful leaders. Some analysts think Xi will emulate Mao Zedong, the revolutionary leader who founded communist China, and rule for life.

Annual reports presented at the congress are replete with references to the party's crucial role, "with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core."

After ascending to power, Xi doubled down on longstanding anti-corruption campaigns, forcing many officials to step down to face investigation and prosecution, including top military brass.

Days before the congress opened, the national legislature removed nine military officers from its ranks, widening a years long military purge. Last month, Gen. Zhang Youxia, the highest ranking military member just below Xi, was ousted over suspected disciplinary violations.

Xi's actions may weaken China's military readiness in coming years, but he is also ensuring the force would be more politically reliable in the longer run, a report by Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank suggested.

The anti-corruption drives have eradicated potential political rivals, and his iron grasp on power makes it much less likely other officials will challenge his vision to build China into a self-sufficient tech leader and 21st-century global power.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?

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

'United by stories, powered by knowledge'

Fadia Survive & Thrive marks 10 years with inspiring World Cancer Day event

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Fadia Survive & Thrive proudly marked its annual flagship World Cancer Day on February 7, 2026, at The Hub—a venue that elegantly merges contemporary design with Kuwaiti heritage. This year's gathering carried added meaning, celebrating a decade since the organization's founding and revisiting The Hub after seven years, noted Dr. Rania Azmi, President of Fadia Survive & Thrive.

In alignment with the Union for International Cancer Control's (UICC) "United by Unique" campaign, the organization unveiled its 2026 theme: "United by Stories, Powered by Knowledge." As a member of UICC (Switzerland), ABC Global Alliance (Portugal), and the World Patients Alliance (US), Fadia Survive & Thrive continues to champion cancer awareness, prevention, and advocacy both globally and locally in Kuwait.

A Day of Learning, Sharing, and Empowerment

The event welcomed a diverse audience—patients, caregivers, advocates, diplomats, volunteers, and community partners—alongside prominent National TV hosts and international visitors in Kuwait during the celebratory month of National and Liberation Days.

The program highlighted prevention, wellbeing, and quality of life, featuring voices of those directly impacted by cancer, international advocacy leaders, and a trauma-sensitive movement instructor.

■ Opening Remarks: Dr. Azmi warmly greeted attendees, saying, "I am thrilled and humbled to welcome you all, and grateful for your belief in the importance of doing this together." She extended heartfelt thanks to patients courageously attending despite ongoing treatment, their families, and distinguished guests including H.E. Noshrevan Lomtatidze, Ambassador of Georgia to Kuwait, distinguished presenters from Kuwait National TV, members of the local press, and distinguished medical professionals, including leading oncologists and physicians from diverse specialties.



Event reunites community at The Hub after seven years.

Program Highlights:

■ Ms. Giorgia Teofilo, Yoga Teacher and Trauma-Sensitive Facilitator, spoke on the empowering role of trauma-sensitive yoga, emphasizing participant agency over instructor authority.

■ Ms. Sara Bojanić, Patient Advocate from Europa Donna Serbia, joined live from Belgrade to stress the importance of cross-border advocacy, transparent information, and evidence-based policy. She introduced Serbia's first patient navigation app for women with breast cancer, set to launch in March.

■ Mr. Fares Al Shammari shared his personal journey with cancer, inspiring attendees to "pay it forward" by offering emotional support and reliable information to others.

■ Dr. Rania Azmi engaged participants in a one-page activity to encourage ongoing sharing, followed by her presentation on prevention, wellbeing, and quality of life. She highlighted Fadia's advocacy work, including the inspiration from the Advanced Breast Cancer Consensus Conference in Portugal, moderated a Q&A session before closing with gratitude to all contributors.

Closing with Hope and Healing

The day concluded with an uplifting trauma-sensitive yoga practice led by Ms. Giorgia, framed by Fadia banners promoting wellbeing and prevention. The program also spotlighted the ABC Global Alliance's Global Decade Report and Global Charter, including its Arabic translation from earlier editions.

To ensure inclusivity, the event was conducted in both Arabic and English.

Reflecting on the day, Dr. Azmi remarked: "Events like these empower us with knowledge, dispel misconceptions, and remind us that quality of life and wellbeing are not only central to the cancer journey, but truly essential for every one of us."

For your kind information, the agenda was as follows:

■ Welcome & Opening Remarks by Fadia Survive & Thrive President

■ Featured Speakers for the 2026 Fadia Survive & Thrive World Cancer Day:

■ Ms. Giorgia Teofilo, Yoga Teacher and Trauma Sensitive Yoga Facilitator

■ Ms. Sara Bojanić, National Delegate of Serbia to Europa Donna - The European Breast Cancer Coalition, Patient Advocate, the Serbian Breast Cancer Forum

■ Mr. Mr Fares Al Shammari, Life Coach and Patient Advocate

■ Dr. Rania Azmi, Fadia Survive & Thrive President, and International Patient Advocate, Peer Review Board member, Journal of Patient Experience

■ Q& A, and short uplifting trauma sensitive yoga practice with Ms. Giorgia, followed by general friendly discussions and public awareness.



Photo during the event.

'Find your voice, shape your future'

Desert Pioneers Toastmasters organizes 'Speechcraft' finale

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: On 21st February 2026, the Desert Pioneers Toastmasters Club in Kuwait hosted the much-anticipated Grand Finale of the Speechcraft Program "Find Your Voice, Shape Your Future" at the Kuwait Science Club. This remarkable evening marked the culmination of a six-week journey that began on 19th January 2026 at Bright Planet Institute, Madinaty Tower, Salmiya, where a diverse group of participants embarked on a transformative path toward effective communication and confident leadership.

Speechcraft, often celebrated within the Toastmasters community as the "magic wand" for personal development, offers non-members a structured and supportive platform to overcome the fear of public speaking, sharpen organizational skills, and cultivate leadership presence. Under the careful coordination of TM Dinesh and TM Wafiq, the program unfolded with a series of thoughtfully designed sessions, each building on the previous one to create a seamless progression of skill and confidence.

The Journey from Hesitation to Confidence

The transformation of the participants was both profound and inspiring. In the initial sessions, many struggled to approach the lectern; their voices trembled, pauses felt long, and notes were held tightly as a source of reassurance. Yet, week by week, guided practice, constructive evaluations, and persistent encouragement transformed hesitation into composure. Familiarity gave way to comfort, and comfort blossomed into confidence.

By the Grand Finale, participants who had once hesitated to introduce themselves were now delivering structured speeches, evaluating with insight, and debating with conviction. Their growth was a living testament to the power of practice, mentorship, and supportive learning.

Personal Stories of Transformation

Several participants emerged as shining examples of progress. Dr. Shaheela Abdul Majeed and Ahmed Usaama Naufel consistently demonstrated remarkable development, earning multiple session recognition. Stephen Khumalo became a confident and agile impromptu speaker, while MohamedAzam refined his evaluation skills with poise. Prince U. Cheria steadily improved in Table Topics, reflecting both persistence and dedication. Other Speechcrafters — Bijumon K. R., Maheswari Ponnusamy, Shahul Hameed, Jemal Mohammed, Muhammad Izzath, Abdul Manaf, Mohamed Hasith, Mohamed Saleem, and Shadab Alji — exhibited significant growth in clarity, stage presence, and delivery style, embodying the transformative essence of Speechcraft.

Guided by Experienced Toastmasters

This remarkable progress was underpinned by a series of expert-led workshops. TM Venkatakrishnan Nurani addressed the fear of public speaking, laying a foundation of confidence and mindset. DTM Rajesh Venugopal emphasized the importance of structured speech organization, while DTM Bindu John introduced vocal variety to enhance expressiveness. DTM Raymond Pereira demonstrated the power of precise word choice, and TM Francis Sam guided participants in purposeful body language. TM Mohammed Hussain Shaik trained participants in giving and receiving constructive feedback, DTM Priscilla Dias introduced effective visual aids, and DTM Mohammed Shiraz highlighted the intrinsic connection between communication skills and leadership. Together, these sessions provided a holistic learning experience that nurtured both competence and confidence.

A Grand Finale of Excellence

The evening was further honored by the presence of Area 20 Director Dr. Sahar Helmi, whose inspiring words added distinction to the occasion. TM Hussain Shaikh served as Master of Ceremonies for the entire event, ensuring seamless transitions and maintaining the flow of the program. He also took on the role of Toastmaster of the Day for the demonstration meeting, supported by Dreamweavers Toastmasters Club.

The demonstration included a prepared speech by Speechcrafter Maheswari, evaluated by TM Aboobacker, followed by an engaging Table Topics session. The General Evaluation, led by TM Elvis Noronha and his TAG (timer, Ah-Counter, Grammarian) team, provided thoughtful insights and completed the learning & experience of a Toastmasters Regular meeting.

The highlight of the evening was the debate on the motion, "Technology connects people" versus "Technology isolates people," moderated by TM Wafiq. Both teams demonstrated well-structured arguments and persuasive rebuttals, reflecting the participants' newfound confidence and eloquence. While the audience could not easily declare a winner, the true triumph was evident — the transformation of each Speechcrafter from hesitant speakers to articulate communicators.

Celebration and Fellowship

The formal program concluded with an award ceremony recognizing the dedication of participants, mentors, workshop facilitators, and coordinators. The ceremony was followed by a warm Iftar gathering, featuring fresh fruits, crispy samosas, fish cutlets, comforting kanji (porridge with chicken), and attipathiri — a layered pancake filled with flavorful chicken. The gathering offered a moment of fellowship, celebration, and reflection on six weeks of shared learning.

Beyond the Program

Speechcraft 2026 was more than a training program; it was a journey of self-discovery, courage, and empowerment. It demonstrated how structured guidance, persistent practice, and supportive mentorship can transform fear into confidence, hesitation into clarity, and potential into achievement. The Grand Finale marked not the end, but the beginning of a confident new chapter — one in which each participant has found their voice and is poised to shape their future.

Strong home-school partnership key to Grade X success

Indian School of Excellence hosts Grade X Parent Orientation for 2026–27 batch

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: The Indian School of Excellence conducted Grade X Parent Orientation for 2026–27 batch, focusing on the academic roadmap for CBSE board examination.

The session was led by Dr. Sherly Dennis, Director, Indian School of Excellence, who shared valuable insights on curriculum planning, assessment patterns, effective study plans, and key academic timelines. She highlighted that Grade X is a crucial year requiring discipline, consistency, and strong support from both school and home. She emphasized the importance of teamwork and the shared role of parents, teachers, and students in ensuring student success.



Dr. Sherly Dennis, Director, Indian School of Excellence, sharing valuable insights on curriculum planning, assessment patterns, effective study plans, and key academic timelines.

Parents were given a detailed curriculum overview and guidance on how to support students academically and emotionally during this demanding phase.

The orientation concluded with a strong message encouraging parents to maintain regular communication with teachers and closely monitor students' academic progress. The session reinforced the school's commitment to guiding students towards achieving excellent results in the Grade X board examination.

Hamza Ali Abbasi graces Shaukat Khanum Iftaar

SKMH&RC Iftaar brings community together in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital & Research Centre (Kuwait Chapter) hosted a well-attended Iftaar Dinner in Kuwait, bringing together distinguished members of the Pakistani community.The event was graced by the presence Renowned actor and public figure Hamza Ali Abbasi was the star guest of the evening. Dr. Asif Loya, Consultant Pathologist and Medical Director of Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital & Research Centre, travelled all the way from Pakistan to attend the event.

The program commenced with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Engineer Hassan Ali, setting a spiritual tone for the evening. Muhammad Tahir Bashir, Shaukat Khanum Overseas Community Ambassador in Kuwait (SKOCA), delivered the welcome address and thanked Hamza Ali Abbassi for being star of the event. He then invited Aziz Mamuuji, DMD Gulf Consult, who served as the Master of Ceremony and conducted the proceedings.

Mamuuji invited Dr. Asif Loya to present an overview of the hospital's mission, achievements, and ongoing efforts in providing state-of-the-art cancer treatment to patients, particularly those unable to afford care.



Photo during the event.

The presentation was followed by a speech from Eng. Obed Ur Rehman Arain, who shared his reflections on the noble initiative and shared with guests about the events hosted by him in 1993. He also prayed for the prosperity of the beloved homeland.

Pir Amjad Hussain then addressed the audience, reaffirming his long-standing support for the cause. He expressed his appreciation to Hamza Ali Abbasi and Dr. Asif Loya for travelling from Pakistan to attend the event. He also acknowledged the dedicated efforts of Muhammad Tahir (SKOCA) in organizing the successful gathering.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Mamuuji highlighted the vital role of Shaukat Khanum in serving underprivileged patients. The program concluded with a collective Dua, followed by a sumptuous Iftaar dinner served to the guests.

The event witnessed the participation of a large number of respected members and dignitaries from the Pakistani community in Kuwait.

Neville's film offers experience over insight

'Man on the Run' charts McCartney's post-Beatles journey

LOS ANGELES, March 3, (AP): If Peter Jackson's "The Beatles: Get Back" was the supreme document of the Beatles' final moments together and of their dissolution, Morgan Neville's "Man on the Run" is a kind of sequel.

It begins in late 1969, just months after Savile Row rooftop concert. The Beatles have broken up. Paul McCartney has seemingly disappeared. There are even rumors that he's dead. On a remote farm in Scotland, a confused and distraught McCartney wonders whether he'll write "another note, ever."

But the most surprising thing about revisiting this tumultuous, tabloid-ready period of McCartney's life is a simple fact. When the Beatles broke up, McCartney was 27 years old. To say he had lived a lifetime by then would be an understatement. By just the sheer enormity of their production and colossal cultural impact, you might easily mistakenly put McCartney in middle age by then.

"Man on the Run," streaming on Prime Video, is the story of everything that came after. McCartney, an executive producer, is never seen sitting for an interview, but his off-camera musings mark the movie, a chronicle of self renewal. For McCartney, kept boyish by the Beatles, the band's end meant a sudden coming of age.

"I had to look inside myself and find something that wasn't the Beatles," McCartney says in the film.

How you feel about McCartney's post-Beatles career might inform how you feel about "Man on the Run." For Neville, the celebrated documentary filmmaker of "Won't You Be My Neighbor," "Piece by Piece" and "20 Feet From Stardom," it's a period that offers no neat narrative, but - quite unlike the mythic Beatles years - something more like the ups and down of life, with regrets and triumphs along the way.

It didn't get off to a good start. McCartney, blamed for the Beatles breakup, was guilt-ridden. His first records were a disappointment. Singing with Linda McCartney, his wife, wasn't greeted well. A 1973 TV special that included a rendition of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" was, to put it a mildly, a misjudgment. A curious feature of McCartney's largely sunny disposition is a nagging self-loathing.

"If I hear someone damning Paul McCartney, I tend to believe them," he says, referencing the Beatles split.

"Get Back" offered a revelatory window into the group's dynamics that put many of the old views of McCartney to bed. Comparisons are tough - "Get Back" is one of the greatest docs of the century - but Jackson's film, drawn largely from footage shot by Michael Lindsay-Hogg, was also incredibly intimate. It captured not only the band's individual



Paul McCartney, of Paul McCartney and Wings, performs at the Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y. on May 21, 1976. (AP)

relationships but the songwriting process in real time. (The emergence of "Get Back" from McCartney's strumming and humming stands as one of the great sequences in documentary film.)

"Man on the Run" lacks that sense of closeness. By keeping the film in archival - the documentary is full of family photos and home movies - and without present-day talking heads, Neville lets us experience McCartney's post-Beatles years as he did. It comes as a sacrifice, though, to a nearness to McCartney - and to the creation of his solo songs - that might have deepened the film.

The real arc of "Man on the Run" is building toward the creation of McCartney's first post-Beatles band, Wings. It's in some ways an unlikely centerpiece. In the revolving makeup of the band, Denny Laine was the only permanent member outside Paul and Linda. On the other hand, Wings' "Band on the Run" is the best album McCartney produced after the Beatles, and the clear culmination of years of struggle. If you needed one, this is your cue to go play "Jet" loud.

It turns out, to no one's surprise, it's hard to move on after being in the Beatles - especially for someone like McCartney who believed so sincerely in the band. Like its subject, "Man on the Run" inevitably pales next to films of the Beatles heyday. But it's a meaningful companion piece about the end of an era and the start of a long and winding road.

"Man on the Run," an Amazon MGM release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for language. Running time: 126 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

People

Protect privacy

Timberlake sues to stop '24 arrest video

NEW YORK, March 3, (AP): **Justin Timberlake** is suing to block the release of police body camera footage from his drunken driving arrest in New York's Hamptons in 2024.

The pop star's lawyers argued in a lawsuit filed Monday against the village of Sag Harbor and its police department that release of the video would "devastate" Timberlake's privacy by revealing "intimate, highly personal, and sensitive details."

They also said it would cause "severe and irreparable harm" to his reputation by subjecting him to "public ridicule and harassment."



Timberlake

"The footage at issue depicts Petitioner in an acutely vulnerable state during a roadside encounter with law enforcement, capturing intimate details of Petitioner's physical appearance, demeanor, speech, and conduct during field sobriety testing, the subsequent arrest, and Petitioner's confinement following arrest over the next several hours," the lawsuit reads.

A judge didn't immediately rule following a Monday hearing in state court in Riverhead, according to Vincent Toomey, a lawyer for Sag Harbor. Instead, Judge Joseph Farneti asked the two sides to confer on a possible resolution and report back later in the week, he said.

Timberlake's lawyers didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment.

The NSYNC singer-turned-solo artist and actor pleaded guilty to impaired driving in September 2024. Police said he ran a stop sign in the village center, veered out of his lane and got out of his BMW smelling of alcohol that June.

The Tennessee native told officers he had had one martini and had been following some friends home in Sag Harbor, a former whaling village among the affluent beach towns of the Hamptons, some 100 miles (160 kilometers) east of New York City.

Timberlake agreed to give a public safety announcement against the perils of drunken driving as part of the plea deal that knocked down his initial misdemeanor charge to a noncriminal traffic violation. He was also sentenced to a $500 fine, 25 hours of community service and a 90-day suspension of his license.

"Even if you've had one drink, don't get behind the wheel of a car," Timberlake said following his court appearance. "This is a mistake that I made, but I'm hoping that whoever is watching and listening right now can learn from this mistake. I know that I certainly have."

In their suit, Timberlake's lawyers say they were notified Sunday that village officials intended to release some of the footage, with certain redactions, to comply with public records requests.

They say the total footage runs roughly eight hours and includes Timberlake's initial stop, police questioning, the administration of field sobriety tests and his arrest.

The Associated Press was among several media outlets that filed a records request seeking the release of the video.

Sag Harbor Mayor Thomas Gardella said village officials have carefully reviewed the footage to ensure nothing would be released that could put police or the public at risk.

"We're trying to be as transparent as can be with this footage," he said, noting that the state's public records law generally requires release of police body camera footage.

'One Battle After Another' adds PGA to awards haul

NEW YORK, March 3, (AP): "One Battle After Another" remains undefeated.

Paul Thomas Anderson's ragtag revolutionary drama took top honors Saturday night at the 37th annual Producers Guild Awards, setting it on course to triumph in two weeks at the Academy Awards.

In winning the guild's Daryl F. Zanuck award for best feature film, "One Battle After Another" is poised to sweep the major prizes of awards season. It's won at the Directors Guild, the Golden Globes and the BAFTAs. The Screen Actors Guild is to present its awards on Sunday night.

The PGA Awards and the Academy Awards have a long history of correlating. Since 2009, both groups have used a preferential ballot to pick a winner from 10 nominees. For five years running, the PGA winner has matched the best picture winner at the Oscars. In the last 10 years, they've diverged only twice.

Accepting the award, Anderson alluded to the recent sale of Warner Bros. Discovery to Paramount Skydance while thanking Warner Bros. film chiefs Michael De Luca and Pam Abdy.

"Long may you wave, whatever the future holds," said Anderson. "It is one battle after another."

The PGA Awards were held at the Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood.

Television



Izzy Meikle-Small attends the STARZ premiere of 'Outlander' season eight at Alice Tully Hall on Monday, March 2, in New York. (AP)

Film pulls heartstrings amid lighthearted chaos

Pixar delivers with action-packed 'Hoppers'

LOS ANGELES, March 3, (AP): "Hoppers" might be built with familiar parts, but Pixar's latest isn't trying to hide its various influences. Instead, this buoyant, freewheeling adventure about a spirited 19-year-old environmental activist who infiltrates the animal world in the body a robotic beaver wears its references for all to see. Sometimes it's with a wink; Sometimes it's more overt, like Kathy Najimy's flustered scientist shouting, "This is nothing like 'Avatar!'"

Of course, "Hoppers," directed by Daniel Chong, is a little like "Avatar," but who can blame her for being defensive? She's figured out how to transport human consciousness into a robotic animal that can not only pass as a real one - in this case a beaver - but communicate with all varieties of mammals, insects and amphibians too. Is it also a "Simpsons already did it" reference? That might be getting a little too meta, but the point is "Hoppers" is having fun with its own chaos.

Najimy's Dr. Fairfax is a relatively minor character in the world of "Hoppers," but she, and everyone else around Beaverton (both animal and human), are rendered with the kind of specificity, care and goofiness that make them memorable regardless of screen time. This is an especially good thing when the supporting voice cast includes people like Meryl Streep, Sam Richardson, Dave Franco, Ego Nwodim and Vanessa



This image released by Disney shows Dr. Sam, voiced by Kathy Najimy, left, and Nisha, voiced by Aparna Nancherla, (right), in a scene from the animated film 'Hoppers.' (AP)

Bayer. The last time I felt so singularly connected to the ensemble of a Pixar movie was "Luca," which was also written by Jesse Andrews.

The hero at the heart of "Hoppers," Mabel Tanaka (Piper Curda), is actually a kind of spiritual sister to "Luca's" Giulia Marcovaldo - impassioned (some might ungenerously say "too much") and a bit of an outcast because of it.

Mabel's focus has always been animals: She was the kid who tried to free the pets in her elementary school (several times). As a young adult, she's the one who shows up on the mayor's lawn to debate. When Mayor Jerry (Jon Hamm) comes to tear down a particularly sentimental spot, the glade, in the name of finishing a highway overpass that will save his constituents four minutes on their commutes, she goes full terminator in her mission to save it - or, you know, as much as a 19-year-old in the body of a mechanical beaver can.

As a beaver, Mabel forms a friendship with King George (Bobby Moynihan), an optimistic, 80s-music loving beaver who oversees a superdam for all the displaced wildlife.

The various species live in relative harmony and peace but still abide by dryly practical "pond rules" like "when you've gotta eat, eat." Her gung-ho, apologize later attitude has some positive effects. It also gets her and her new friends in over their heads when she inadvertently incites a war. For a PG-rated Pixar movie, the stakes get rather, uh, real. It is worth remembering that time in "Toy Story 3" where Woody and his pals seemed prepared for imminent incineration. This is decidedly tamer.

Don't think too hard about how "Hoppers" gets you from a little tale about a girl trying to save a patch of land to a truly helter-skelter third act involving a flying assassin shark, a Machiavellian insect prince and more body swapping than "Freakier Friday." Just enjoy the adorable and slightly manic ride.

Somehow, amid all the lighthearted anarchy, "Hoppers" manages to pull a few emotional strings too. After the heavy-handed "Elio" misfire, "Hoppers" might still feel fairly distant from the heights of peak Pixar; It's also a big, joyful leap in the right direction.

"Hoppers," a Walt Disney Co. release in theaters Friday, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for "some scary images, mild language and action/peril." Running time: 105 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Variety

TUCSON, Ariz.: "Today" show host **Savannah Guthrie** and her sister returned to their mother's home outside Tucson on Monday in their first sighting at the house since Nancy Guthrie went missing a month ago.

In video captured by NewsNation and FOX News Digital, the NBC anchor, her sister Annie Guthrie and brother-in-law Tommaso Cioni can be seen walking arm-in-arm down the driveway, placing down yellow flowers and embracing each other in a tearful scene.

The makeshift tribute at the edge of the property includes flowers, yellow ribbons, crosses, prayers, a sign that read "Let Nancy Come Home" and a statuette of an angel.

Later on Monday, Savannah Guthrie posted a photo of flowers at the tribute.



Guthrie

"we feel the love and prayers from our neighbors, from the Tucson community and from around the country," Guthrie wrote, ending the sentence with a heart emoji. "please don't stop praying and hoping with us. bring her home."

Nancy Guthrie's children have previously appeared in videos in which they pleaded for their mother's return, most recently with a social media posting from Savannah Guthrie in which she said the family was offering a $1 million reward for information leading to the recovery of their mother.

Nancy Guthrie was last seen at her home Jan. 31 and was reported missing the following day. Authorities believe the 84-year-old was kidnapped, abducted or otherwise taken against her will.

Drops of her blood were found on the front porch. The FBI released surveillance footage on Feb. 10 that showed a masked man at Guthrie's doorstep the night she disappeared. Authorities otherwise have released little evidence publicly.

Last week, FOX News Digital reported that a Ring camera about 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) from Guthrie's home had captured 12 vehicles passing around the time she went missing.

The Pima County Sheriff's Department declined to say whether any of the passing vehicles in the videos were found to have been involved in Guthrie's disappearance. The agency said investigators are reviewing hundreds of hours of surveillance footage.

Nancy Guthrie's home has been turned back over to her family. "No trespassing" signs have been posted on the property. (AP)

De Niro to recite Glass' Lincoln symphony at Carnegie Hall

In a first as president, Trump to attend WH correspondents' dinner

WASHINGTON, March 3, (AP): President Donald Trump says he'll attend this year's White House Correspondent Association dinner on April 25, marking the first time he's done so as commander-in-chief.

"The White House Correspondents Association has asked me, very nicely, to be the Honoree at this year's Dinner, a long and storied tradition since it began in 1924, under then President Calvin Coolidge," Trump posted on his social media site on Monday evening.

He noted that the latest installment comes amid celebrations marking America's 250th birthday, adding that it "will be my Honor to accept their invitation."

Trump was invited annually, but never attended the dinner during his first term and also skipped last year's gathering.

"For more than 100 years, the journalists of the White House Correspondents' Association have enjoyed an evening with the president," the association's president, Weijia Jiang, said in a statement. "We're happy the president has accepted our invitation and look forward to hosting him."

The event was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and 2021, but President Joe Biden attended each of the dinners during his term's final three years. Every president since Coolidge had attended except Trump - until now. In his post Trump wrote that, "Because the Press was extraordinarily bad to me" he had "boycotted the event, and never went."

"However, I look forward to being with everyone this year. Hopefully, it will be something very Special."

The correspondents' dinner debuted in 1921. Three years later, Coolidge became the first president to attend.

While all presidents but Trump went, not all did every year of their terms. Jimmy Carter and Richard Nixon opted not to, and Ronald Reagan - then recovering from an assassination attempt - missed the 1981 installment, but called in from Camp David.

Trump attended the correspondents dinner before he was president, and was the subject of mocking by then-President Barack Obama in 2011. Obama joked: "Say what you will about Mr. Trump, he certainly would bring some change to the White House. Let's see what we've got up there."



President Donald Trump arrives for a Medal of Honor ceremony in the East Room of the White House, Monday, March 2, in Washington. (AP)

The screens then flashed to a White House featuring a massive neon sign reading "Trump White House Hotel Casino Golf Course" featuring golden columns and a massive chandelier blocking the front entrance.

Made years before Trump became a politician, that joke has proved prophetic. Trump has leaned on his construction background to make over the White House in unprecedented ways during his second term.

Those remodeling efforts include paving over the lawn near the Rose Garden to install a patio reminiscent of his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida and affixing partisan plaques to portraits of all the presidents on a Walk of Fame along the Colonnade. He's also adorned the Oval Office in copious amounts of gold decorations and demolished the East Wing to begin work on a massive ballroom.

Arriving back from a weekend at Mar-a-Lago on Sunday, Trump stopped to admire two new additions to the area around the Rose Garden, statues of Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin that were erected there while he was away.

"Unbelievable statues. Come and look at them," Trump told a pack of reporters nearby.

❑ ❑ ❑

Robert De Niro will appear this week at Carnegie Hall, where he will recite excerpts from a Philip Glass symphony about Abraham Lincoln that the composer once intended to stage at the Kennedy Center.

Glass announced in January that he called off a scheduled premiere of Symphony No. 15, "Lincoln," in protest of President Donald Trump's ouster of the center's leadership.

Glass' symphony will be part of a benefit Tuesday night for Tibet House US, a nonprofit educational institution which announced the participation of De Niro, a prominent critic of Trump. Glass and Laurie Anderson are the evening's artistic directors.

"Lincoln" is based in part on one of Lincoln's earliest major speeches, the 1838 "Lyceum Address," when the future president assailed mob violence and warned of its dangers to democracy.

"I am so pleased Robert De Niro is going to read the Lincoln speech," Glass said in a statement. "He is absolutely the right person."

Renée Fleming, Lin-Manuel Miranda and Bela Fleck are among the many other artists who have canceled Kennedy Center events.

Trump has renamed the facility as the Trump Kennedy Center, a change scholars say can only be enacted by Congress. The president, who has made the center a key part of his campaign against so-called "woke" culture, announced last month that the facility will be shut down in July for construction, a project he expects to last for two years.

Music

Back to form

Blackpink serves hits on 'Deadline'

LOS ANGELES, March 3, (AP): For those who love the K-pop girl group: Has a more thrilling phrase than "Blackpink in your area!" ever been uttered by an artist?

Blinks, the moniker for fans of Blackpink, have been waiting for a proper group comeback from the foursome for more than three years. Jisoo, Jennie, Rosé and Lisa have been busy with solo projects, but they only had to say "Jump" last summer for fans to gobble up the hardstyle, Eurodance extravaganza of a single.

Eight months later, they've released a third EP, "Deadline." At five tracks (four solid hits, "Jump" included) it is not nothing, but for Blinks it is like giving steak once every few years to a starving lion.

Compared with other K-pop bands, Blackpink, debuting in 2016, has had relatively fewer comebacks (in K-pop industry lingo, a "comeback" is each time an artist releases a new single or album). However, Blackpink's catchy songs, energetic choreography and undeniable charisma have propelled the group to a level of incredible stardom.

With "Deadline," they serve, serve, serve, serve and swerve. As a group known for quick tempo tracks, Blackpink should know by now to avoid the sob section. The sole ballad, titled "Fxxxboy," features emotional lyrics and beautiful voices, but doesn't quite land musically with its simple guitar line.

Contributions

In a surprising twist of events, Coldplay frontman Chris Martin is credited on "Go" - a song with an industrial sound underscored by bone-vibrating bass - for both lyrics and music. His contributions become clear at the bridge, when the track morphs into the most Coldplay sound ever, led by Jennie's voice.

"Me and My" is a classic slow R&B jam featuring a very subtle Latin jazz trumpet. It is co-produced and written by controversial hitmaker Dr. Luke, as is "Champion," a puzzling yet hypnotizing anthemic rock single that cycles through '70s strings, '90s smooth rock and a bit of pop-punk.

As a globally famous K-pop band, Blackpink has begun experimenting more with singing entirely in English with Korean lyrics peppered in. The culmination of that approach is "Deadline," where the only song to feature some Korean-language lyrics is "Jump." It's a practical choice for international music markets, but purists might grumble that the "K" is slowly disappearing from the "pop."



This album cover image released by The Orchard shows 'Deadline' by Blackpink. (AP)

Fashion



Models wear creations from the Giorgio Armani Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection presented in Milan, Italy, Sunday, March 1. (AP)



A model presents Giorgio Armani Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection creation. (AP)



A model wears a creation from the Bottega Veneta Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection. (AP)

Suits, eco-fur, brutalist coats lead runways

Gucci, Fendi, Marni show new directions at Milan

MILAN, March 3, (AP): It was a season of fresh starts and superstars across Milan Fashion Week. New creative directors shared their visions for Fendi, Gucci and Marni, while Madonna, Kate Moss and, most unexpectedly, Mark Zuckerberg lit up the runways and front rows.

Trends for the next cold-weather season from six days of runway previews that ended Sunday include suits to accompany women on back-to-work mandates and brutalist outerwear as an investment in uncertain times, with hints of feathers, (eco) fur and animal prints to lighten up the mood.

Zuckerberg caused a minor furor when he was ushered into the Prada runway show with presidential-style security. He sat next to Prada heir Lorenzo Bertelli, but the long-rumored pairing of Prada with Meta's smart glasses was not revealed.

There was much buzz around new directions at multiple fashion houses: Gucci under Demna, Fendi under Maria Grazia Chiuri, Marni under Meryll Rogge, and Giorgio Armani under Silvana Armani, following the iconic Milanese designer's death last September. Louise Trotter at Bottega Veneta and Simone Bellotti at Jil Sander had sophomore outings, often trickier than debuts.

A glance at five womenswear trends and buzzwords for next season:

With just 15 models, instead of the usual 60 or more, Prada offered a masterclass in layering, with models removing garments with each backstage pass.

Trenches, knit jackets and leather bombers gave way to long-cuffed men's shirts, archival house coats and dresses that frayed into underlayers like sartorial archaeology, before arriving at cotton bloomers, sheer, embroidered slip dresses and bralettes.

Miuccia Prada, who designed the collection with Raf Simons, said in notes that the collection was meant to represent "layers of lives, of feeling.'' She added backstage that it brought "minimalism and opulence together."

Prada's self-described obsession with history was underpinned by a showroom decorated with artifacts spanning centuries: 16th-century tapestries, 18th-century Venetian mirrors and paintings from the 1900s.

Back-to-work mandates are penetrating the runway, sometimes in unexpected places.

At Fendi, fur was worn over practical suiting and quarter-button collared shirts, best exemplified by front-row guest Uma Thurman.

At Jill Sander, Bellotti played with tiny, off-skew lapels contrasting with excess fabric that created volume in the back, Alice-in-Wonderland suiting that modernized the brand's minimalist aesthetic and tested the idea of whether the superfluous can be essential. Skirts had side slits that closed at the hems, while the silhouette of dresses traced a curve - detail without decoration.

Suits were in short supply at Gucci, where Demna veered dramatically from the brand's failed attempt at quiet luxury with clingy daywear and plunging crystal-encrusted evening gowns.

Fendi's designer Chiuri embraced the brand's heritage as a furrier and leather goods maker, but with a twist: the furs were mostly upcycled, in a silent rebuff of the very noisy anti-fur demonstrators outside.

Chiuri had worked for a decade alongside the five Fendi sisters before creative director stints at Valentino and Dior.

Animal prints were glimpsed on many runways, including an eco-fur with the suggestion of a cow print at Dolce & Gabbana.

Prada featured laced-up boots fantastically covered with feathers, an antique touch that complemented beaded satin booties and pumps.

Louise Trotter said she aimed to lighten up her second Bottega Veneta outing. She embraced Milan as her inspiration, opening with a series of architectural overcoats in sturdy blue and grays that were meant to exemplify Milan's Brutalist architecture, before an explosion of energy and color in outerwear constructed from fiberglass that shimmied kinetically with every step.

Variety

NEW YORK: **Dolly Parton**'s name might inspire full-throated sing-alongs to her working woman's anthem "9 to 5," or evoke memories of thrilling days spent at her Dollywood theme park.

Now, the Grammy-winning country music superstar is lending her name to a new cause: advancing pediatric health care in her home state. The East Tennessee Children's Hospital announced Thursday that it will now be known as Dolly Parton Children's Hospital.



Parton

"Ever since I've been in a position to do my part, to help others, I have tried to do just that. Especially when children and families need it most," Parton said in a video announcement. "I've always believed that every child deserves a fair chance to grow up healthy, hopeful and surrounded with love."

The impact of Parton's philanthropy is already felt across Tennessee and beyond. Her Imagination Library initiative reports to send 3 million free books every month to children whose parents request them. She donated $1 million to Vanderbilt University's Medical Center for research that helped produce Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine. And her charitable foundation provides numerous college scholarships and offers disaster relief. (AP)

❑ ❑ ❑

THE HAGUE: Dutch online abuse expertise center Offlimits and the independent civil society group Victim Support Fund announced on Thursday that they have initiated summary proceedings against the AI tool Grok on social media platform X.

The two organizations are seeking an immediate ban on the AI tool, alleging that it enables users to partially or fully undress individuals without their consent and to generate and distribute images depicting the sexual abuse of minors.

In a joint press release, Offlimits and the Victim Support Fund said the number of victims is growing at an alarming rate, and swift action is needed to prevent new victims.

Grok users can not only ask the chatbot questions, but also request the creation of fake nude or pornographic images based on photos posted online. According to the organizations, users can also generate images of scantily clad minors. (Xinhua)

❑ ❑ ❑

SAO PAULO: A jacket worn by football legend Pelé in the 1966 World Cup has become a hit among fans of pop singer Bad Bunny since he borrowed it from a collector's sports merchandise store and used it in his recent concerts in Sao Paulo, in his first performances on Brazilian soil.

Bad Bunny's tribute to the three-time World Cup winner, who died in 2022 at age 82, also included a change in the lyrics of the song MONACO, sung by the Puerto Rican artist as "scoring a goal after Pelé and Maradona" instead of "Messi and Maradona."

Cássio Brandão, the owner of the Alambrado Futebol e Cultura store, seeks historical soccer memorabilia and jerseys and has more than 7,000 of them. He owns 115 items that belonged to Pelé and was involved in Bad Bunny's choice for the jacket. (AP)

'Needle in a haystack' confirmation made of Rembrandt painting

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, March 3, (AP): A painting that was once rejected as a work by Rembrandt van Rijn has now been acknowledged as a work by the Dutch master, thanks to two years of scrutiny in the city where the then-27-year-old artist painted it in 1633, a museum announced Monday.

The Netherlands' national art and history museum, the Rijksmuseum, unveiled the work, "Vision of Zacharias in the Temple," and said painstaking analysis including high-tech scans has confirmed it was painted by Rembrandt after he moved to the capital, Amsterdam.

The painting hasn't been on public display in decades after being bought by a private collector in 1961, a year after it was deemed not to be a Rembrandt, the museum said in a statement. From Wednesday, will go on show among other masterpieces at the Rijksmusuem, where it is on long-term loan.

Director Taco Dibbits said the museum often gets emails from people asking if the painting they own might just be by the Golden Age master.

"We always hope to find a new Rembrandt, but this happens rarely," he told The Associated Press. He said making such a discovery "is just like (finding) a needle in a haystack."

The owner, who has remained anonymous, initially asked the museum only if the painting was Dutch.

"He really didn't know what he had. And then to discover that it's a Rembrandt is something that's amazing to experience," Dibbits said.

The painting depicts a biblical story in which high priest Zacharias is visited by the Archangel Gabriel, who tells the priest that he and his wife will have a son: John the Baptist. Zacharias' surprised expression is highlighted by light heralding the arrival of Gabriel, the museum said.

An in-depth study of the work, including macro X-ray fluorescence scans and comparisons with other works by the artist, confirmed Rembrandt painted it, said the museum's curator of 17th century Dutch paintings, Jonathan Bikker.

"So the wood that was used for the panel on which it's painted, that is definitely from a tree that was cut down before 1633, the date on the painting," he said.

"All the pigments, the paint in the painting were used by Rembrandt in other paintings. And the layers of paint and how he painted it, that is also precisely the same as in other works by Rembrandt," he added.

The work joins about 350 known Rembrandt paintings and raised the hope that there may be more.

"We're not actively looking for new paintings by Rembrandt, but I think this gives us hope - not just us, but everyone who's interested in Rembrandt," Bikker said.



The Rijksmuseum unveiled the work 'Vision of Zacharias in the Temple' during a press preview in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Monday, March 2, and said two years of analysis has confirmed it was painted by Rembrandt. (AP)

‘Hair care is about process, not product choice’

Are expensive shampoos worth it? Here’s what the experts say

NEW YORK, March 3, (AP): Ornate packaging paired with enticing advertisements that claim expensive shampoos are elixirs to all hair woes can leave one wondering: Are the higher prices really worth it? Should I abandon my $8 drugstore mainstay for a $42 premium brand?

Experts say affordable shampoos and conditioners found in grocery stores and pharmacies can do the job as well as the pricey versions with tempting messaging and testimonials on social media. They advise consumers to evaluate the ingredients in products, their own scalp and hair concerns, and their entire hair care routine - and to check with a doctor when in doubt.

Premium brands can work well, and some have active ingredients that cost more, according to dermatologists. Other factors influencing the price include the size of the company and whether it has invested in organic ingredients, sustainable agriculture and recycled materials.

Dr. Crystal Aguh, dermatologist and director of the Ethnic Skin Program at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, said she generally categorizes people into two hair types: damage-prone and damage-resistant.

Damage-prone includes people with very curly hair, people who chemically treat their hair and those who use hot tools to style it. She said damage-resistant attributes include oily hair and straight hair.

People with damage-prone hair should avoid shampoos that have sodium lauryl sulfate as the main ingredient, Aguh said. It removes a lot of sebum, a natural oil that coats and protects hair. Without sebum, hair could feel very dry and break easily.

For curly or dyed hair, Aguh recommends washing less frequently to avoid removing too much sebum. She said people with tightly curled or coily hair should only wash their hair once a week. People with wavy hair that is dyed might find it best to wash every two to three days.

Damage-resistant hair that is oily and straight can be washed every day.

Expensive shampoos and conditioners can work well, but there are affordable products that perform just as well, Aguh said. She tells patients that “it’s not the products, it’s the process” that affects hair health the most, including how often hair is washed, dyed or treated with heat.



Carol Young has her hair washed and is treated by Ashleah Walker at McCabe Studio at Union Market in Washington, March, 17, 2020. (AP)

“Instead of spending hundreds of dollars thinking, ‘If I just find the right shampoo, right conditioner, all of my troubles will go away,’ you also have to just look at what your process looks like … because that will often do the trick,” she said.

She said it is fine to mix high-end and mass market products and that people shouldn’t feel compelled to buy an entire line of expensive products.

Aguh said some common brands are more affordable because they are made by large corporations that can achieve economies of scale. Sometimes expensive brands have a smaller team and lack the workforce and resources to reach those same cost advantages.

When treating dandruff, for example, Aguh often recommends over-the-counter shampoos instead of prescription formulas. But she added people should see a doctor for lingering dandruff problems.

Dr. Joe Tung, a dermatologist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, said people should think of shampoo as skincare for the scalp, not just a cosmetic product.

“Hair itself is biologically inactive once it grows out, but underneath the surface of the skin on the scalp is a full ecosystem with stem cells, immune cells, oil glands, nerve endings,” he said. “When that ecosystem is balanced, the scalp feels comfortable and hair grows optimally; when it is disrupted, people can experience itching, flaking, excess oil, or hair loss.”

Tung said people should consider what their scalp needs when choosing shampoo, and a conditioner should be chosen based on hair texture and damage level. He said dandruff and itchiness benefit from shampoos that address inflammation and microbial imbalance, whereas dry or chemically treated hair could benefit from a gentle cleanser with a rich conditioner.

Tung said expensive shampoos and conditioners are sometimes worth the price, but a product’s effectiveness is determined by active ingredients and not branding. “An antifungal ingredient works because of its molecular activity, not because it comes in a luxury bottle or from a prestigious brand,” he said.

Expensive shampoos typically rely on more refined conditioning agents and soothing ingredients that may make frequent hair washing more comfortable, Tung said. But some luxury products contain fragrances or botanical extracts that can irritate sensitive skin, he said. Simpler formulas are often better tolerated by people with sensitive skin.



A firefighter extinguishes a fire at a destroyed building that was hit by an Israeli airstrike in Dahiyeh, a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, March 3. (AP)

Bee losses threaten agriculture, food security

Lebanese beekeepers struggle amid conflict, climate change pressures

BEIRUT, March 3, (Xinhua): On the western slopes of Jabal al-Wastani overlooking Lebanon’s southern border, 60-year-old beekeeper Jalal Daher stood before rows of blackened hives.

He lifted the wooden lid of one box. Burned wax crumbled to the ground. The steady hum that had accompanied him for more than 25 years was gone.

Daher said months of shelling and fires during cross-border hostilities destroyed colonies he had built over decades. Since conflict escalated in October 2023, access to bee yards in several border areas has been dangerous or, at times, impossible, preventing beekeepers from feeding or protecting their hives during peak production periods.

Around 8,000 beekeepers manage more than 417,000 hives in Lebanon, with annual honey production reaching about 1,500 tonnes under normal conditions, data from the country’s Ministry of Agriculture shows.

However, according to World Bank estimates, around 5,000 beehives were completely destroyed in Lebanon between Oct. 8, 2023, and Dec. 20, 2024, with damages valued at approximately 800,000 US dollars.

As hostilities intensified, many beekeepers relocated their hives from border regions and highlands to safer areas.

Omar Awad, a beekeeper from Rashaya in eastern Lebanon, said apiarists traditionally move hives in winter to the country’s warmer coastal regions, where citrus orchards provide essential nectar.

This year, however, expanding military operations pushed many toward colder eastern and northern areas, where limited flowering and sub-zero temperatures disrupted production cycles and further colony losses.

Munir Othman, a beekeeper from Baalbek, said that even relocated apiaries in eastern mountain areas were affected by continued hostilities, further weakening the sector.

In Hasbaya, Majed al-Halabi, head of a local beekeepers’ cooperative, said some areas recorded losses of between 60 and 70 percent of their hives due to inaccessibility and interrupted care, adding that actual losses may exceed officially reported figures.

Beyond conflict, climate change has further strained the sector.

Kamel Khair, a university lecturer specializing in environmental studies, said bees are highly sensitive to climate fluctuations. Rising temperatures, recurring drought and forest fires have reduced woodland areas and shortened flowering seasons, directly affecting honey yields and colony survival.

Reports by the Food and Agriculture Organization indicate that climate instability contributes to declining bee health and productivity. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that continued disruptions could pose a threat to primary pollinators.

The impact has been reflected in local markets, where honey prices have risen from about 15 dollars per kg to 25 due to reduced supply and rising production costs.

Beekeepers say Lebanon’s prolonged economic crisis has compounded their difficulties.

Adel al-Khatib, another beekeeper, noted that feed prices and costs of treatments against the Varroa mite and honey extraction equipment have increased significantly. However, production has fallen by nearly half compared to previous years, leaving many unable to cover expenses.

He emphasized that bees play a crucial role not only in honey production but also in pollinating fruit and vegetable crops, meaning any decline in bee populations directly affects agricultural output and local food security.

Nizar Hani, Lebanon’s minister of agriculture, told Xinhua that organizing and developing the sector is a priority to enhance its contribution to the national economy. He stressed the importance of establishing regulatory frameworks to ensure environmental balance and sector sustainability.

The United Nations marks May 20 each year as World Bee Day to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and the threats they face worldwide.

‘Avoid obsessive doomscrolling’

Experts talk navigating distressing news, finding coping mechanisms

BATON ROUGE, La., March 3, (AP): As people awoke to headlines over the weekend about deadly US-Israeli strikes on Iran and potential of widening conflict, alerts, social media and conversations at the dining room table were consumed by the news.

While medical experts say it is normal for people to experience stress and anxiety - or feeling that the world descended into chaos overnight - it is important to find coping mechanisms and ways to responsibly take in the news in order to protect one’s mental health.

“Fear, sadness, confusion... these are very normal reactions to very extreme circumstances,” Michael S. Ziffra, a Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine professor and psychiatrist, told The Associated Press. “People shouldn’t feel guilty, or they shouldn’t feel like it’s wrong to feel anxiety. It’s a very normal human response. The key is to know how to manage it.”

Since 2020 - a year marked by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, social and political unrest and weather-related disasters - Ziffra said he has “absolutely, without question” seen an uptick in patients bringing up increased anxiety provoked by current news.

Some patients vent, some talk about obsessively scrolling on social media and others discuss feeling helpless and frustrated.

But, psychiatrists say those feelings are absolutely normal and to be expected. In fact, sometimes they can result in something positive - from getting involved in advocacy, joining a social or political organization or just contacting lawmakers.

Other’s may seek to learn more about what is going on. But like with most things in life, moderation is important.

“The problem is, for a lot of people, they just kind of wallow in it. They ruminate and obsess and just sort of stew in it,” Ziffra said.

In today’s world, people are just a click away from learning about practically anything they want - sometimes even less, with a predetermined algorithm on social media pushing posts or alerts on their phone interrupting their day. People have access to 24/7 news cycles and phone cameras can capture, and disseminate, videos and images of disasters within seconds.

For years, Dana Rose Garfin, a psychologist and professor at University of California, Los Angeles, has been studying “cascading collective traumas” and researched how the media’s continuous coverage of COVID increased anxiety. Garfin said the reality is that people don’t consume the news how they used to. Instead of reading a newspaper or flipping on the evening news once a day, people are “much more exposed” to current events.



A student views her cell phone at Ronald McNair Sr. High School, Aug. 7, 2025, in Atlanta. (AP)

And as people learn about disasters or breaking news, they become distressed.

“In terms of any kind of crisis, people turn to the media for information. And that’s a very logical, rational and helpful reaction,” Garfin said.

“But, what we’ve seen in our research is there’s this sort of reciprocal effect. An event happens, people learn about it, they turn to the media to learn more about it, and they’re really distressed,” Garfin said, adding that what occurs next is a cycle that people have a hard time removing themselves from. “It sort of activates these processes where then they’re both more distressed and want to know more about this event because they’re distressed.”

While experts said they understand people’s need to continue to seek out news, there is a way to do it responsibly without becoming overwhelmed and emotionally exhausted. Their top suggestion was to eliminate or cut down on social media and obsessive “doomscrolling.”

“I don’t immerse myself in social media, and that’s a very conscious decision on my part to protect my own mental, and physical, health,” said Roxane Cohen Silver, a psychologist at the University of California, Irvine, and who co-authored the study with Garfin. She specifically raised concerns about graphic images and video that quickly circulate on social media that can cause distress and long-term anxiety when seen repeatedly.

“I think that one can stay informed without immersing oneself in graphic images,” she said.

Garfin suggested finding more “enjoyable” ways to consume news, such as an informative news article, listening to a podcast or watching a news segment. “That’s different than this kind of letting the algorithm suck you in for eternity in a mindless fashion.”

Experts also urged people to set timers, when scrolling on their phone. Both iPhones and Android devices have controls to help regulate screen time.

Ziffra suggested choosing neutral news sources. “Try to avoid things where it’s very partisan and where there’s going to be a lot of inflammatory content, because that’s going to likely exacerbate your anxiety and make you feel anxious, angry, scared.”

Even if a worrisome news event is happening thousands of miles away, and even if it doesn’t directly impact a person reading about it, it can still cause intense stress and anxiety. For that reason, medical experts urge people to identify other ways to cope.

“People have a lot of inherent knowledge of what helps them... and things that they find comfort in, which is different for everybody,” Garfin said.

From breathing exercises, going for a walk, leaning into hobbies, getting together with friends, talking to a therapist, creative pursuits and self care, psychiatrists say it is important to redirect your attention in other ways.

“Things that are going to get your mind off of all of the obsessing and worrying and really putting your thoughts on something more positive,” Ziffra said.

Experts find brain link between inflammation, stress

New study explains why chronic stress can worsen inflammatory conditions

MANHASSET, N.Y., March 3, (AP): What if there was a switch in the brain that could turn on or off the body’s physical response to stress? New research from scientists at Northwell Health’s Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research has identified a specific brain circuit that acts as a control center for both inflammation and stress responses. Published in the Journal of Experimental Medicine, the study shows that a specific group of brain cells is capable of controlling inflammation and stress responses. The discovery helps explain why psychological stress can have such powerful effects on physical health — and promises to drive future developments in bioelectronic medicine.

This discovery, led by Sangeeta S. Chavan, PhD, professor in the Institute of Bioelectronic Medicine, and Tatyana and Alan Forman Distinguished Chair in Biomedical Sciences, with Okito Hashimoto, MD, PhD and Tyler Hepler, BS, advances understanding of the intricate connection between the brain and the immune system.

While the brain continuously monitors the body’s health and immune responses, the precise neural code that translates immune signals into physiological responses — such as inflammation, fever, changes in heart rate and stress hormone release — has largely remained a mystery. By identifying specific neurons within a critical brain region that integrate immune information and trigger widespread responses, the research opens new avenues for developing bioelectronic therapies for inflammatory and stress-related conditions.

“These neurons act as a shared pathway where immune signals and stress converge,” said Dr. Chavan. “This helps explain why chronic stress can worsen inflammatory diseases and why inflammation and mental health conditions are so closely linked.”

Using advanced neuroscience techniques, the research team focused on interleukin-1beta (IL-1beta), a key inflammatory molecule. They discovered that IL-1beta activates a specific group of neurons in a stress-processing region of the brain that produces corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH). Direct activation of these neurons in experimental models reproduced the full physiological effects of inflammation, while disrupting the circuit blocked many of these responses. Importantly, the same neurons were also activated during psychological stress. Ablation of these neurons protected from inflammation or changes in heart rate in response to stress, even though stress hormones were still present. These findings show that the brain uses distinct but overlapping pathways to control different components of the stress response.

These results also suggest the concept of an “immune engram,” a neural memory of inflammatory experiences, allowing it to rapidly recall and respond to future threats. This discovery has important implications for bioelectronic medicine, a field that treats disease by targeting neural circuits with electrical signals rather than drugs.

“The brain and the immune system are in constant communication, and understanding this dialogue is essential for advancing bioelectronic medicine,” said Kevin J. Tracey, MD, president and CEO of the Feinstein Institutes and Karches Family Distinguished Chair in Medical Research.”

Natural fix for erosion

Sandstorms enhance desert concrete reinforcement: study

LANZHOU, March 3, (Xinhua): Whenever sandstorms are mentioned, people often think of air pollution and strong wind erosion damage to buildings and traffic lines. A study by Chinese researchers has proposed a new insight that moderate wind and sand erosion can actually make the surface of materials more “solid.”

Researchers have recently investigated the interface performance of wind- and sand-eroded concrete in desert environments and have proposed scientific evidence to improve concrete reinforcement methods, said the Northwest Institute of Eco-Environment and Resources (NIEER) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In collaboration with researchers from the NIEER and Lanzhou Jiaotong University, this new study has been published in the journal Composites Part B: Engineering. It proposes mechanisms and reinforcement strategies for wind- and sand-eroded concrete infrastructure using carbon fiber-reinforced polymer (CFRP).

Concrete infrastructure in desert environments is subject to continuous wind and sand erosion, which accelerates its degradation. When reinforced with CFRP, such structures often exhibit uneven surface damage caused by erosion, according to NIEER researcher Liu Benli.

“Comparing with previous studies, which mostly focused on ideal flat interfaces, our study simulated different wind-sand environments by combining mechanical tests with microscopic analysis. Our study has, for the first time, proposed, from a mechanical perspective, the mechanism that moderate abrasion can form a microstructure conducive to the bonding of the reinforcing layer,” Liu said.

He explained that, in a more vivid description, the process was similar to a sculptor carving out rough textures on stone for subsequent reinforcement. The moderate impact of wind and sand can also “carve” tiny grooves into the material’s surface, providing natural “handles” for coatings or protective materials and significantly enhancing interfacial bonding.

The study results showed that, overall, sand erosion increased the interface ultimate bearing capacity of CFRP-concrete specimens by 31 percent and increased surface roughness by a factor of 10 compared with uneroded specimens.

Moreover, the study team developed predictive models for interfacial bearing capacity and the bond-slip relationship that incorporate abrasion effects, which showed good agreement with experimental data.

Chikungunya cases

FMD outbreak in Cyprus expands

NICOSIA, March 3, (Xinhua): Cyprus has confirmed additional cases of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in the Larnaca district in the island’s southeast, bringing the total number of affected livestock units to 22, authorities said on Sunday.

Senior veterinary officer Sotiria Georgiadou said 11 new cases were detected in Livadia and Oroklini, both located east of Larnaca city on the southeastern coast of Cyprus. The newly identified cases involve about 2,200 animals, in addition to approximately 13,000 infections previously recorded. The total number of affected animals could rise to around 16,000 depending on new births, according to the Cyprus Mail.

Veterinary authorities confirmed the first case of FMD on Feb. 20 at a cow-breeding unit in Livadia. The outbreak is centered in Oroklini, a village about 6 km northeast of Larnaca.

❑ ❑ ❑

Chikungunya: Latvia has confirmed three cases of Chikungunya virus this year in individuals who had traveled to Seychelles, the Latvian Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (SPKC) said on Monday.

Two of the cases involved members of the same family, while the third is not epidemiologically linked to the others.

Leonard stars, Clippers roar back from 17 down to top Warriors

Celtics spoil Antetokounmpo's return to trounce Bucks

SAN FRANCISCO, March 3, (AP): Kawhi Leonard had 23 points, eight rebounds and four assists, and the Los Angeles Clippers erased a 17-point deficit to beat the short-handed Golden State Warriors 114-101.

Darius Garland scored 12 points in his Clippers debut, coming off the bench to play nearly 23 minutes in his first game since being acquired from Cleveland at the trade deadline last month in a deal that sent James Harden to the Cavaliers.

Garland had been nursing a toe injury, then he went down with 1:26 left in the second quarter after a collision with Moses Moody when they both went for a loose ball and Moody's right shoulder appeared to get Garland in the face. Both players were shaken but stayed in the game.

Garland's 3-pointer with 3:09 left in the third pulled the Clippers within 75-68, then Kris Dunn had a steal and layup to make it a five-point game. Los Angeles was within 79-77 going into the final 12 minutes.

Dunn finished with 16 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Clippers, who shot just 9 for 31 from 3-point range. Los Angeles used a 9-4 spurt to start the fourth quarter and go ahead 88-81.

Brandin Podziemski scored 22 points for the Warriors with Stephen Curry sidelined for an 11th straight game with a right knee injury, big man Kristaps Porzingis out for his fifth consecutive contest because of an illness coach Steve Kerr called "mysterious." Rookie Will Richard was in a walking boot for his sprained right ankle he hurt in Saturday's blowout home loss to the Lakers.

Celtics 108, Bucks 81

In Milwaukee, Payton Pritchard scored 25 points, rookie Hugo González had career highs of 18 points and 16 rebounds, and the Boston Celtics beat Milwaukee to spoil Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo's return from a right calf strain.



Boston Celtics' Payton Pritchard (11) drives to the basket against Milwaukee Bucks' Cam Thomas during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Milwaukee. (AP)

Derrick White also scored 18 points for the Celtics, who have won three straight and seven of eight. White and Pritchard each had nine assists.

Antetokounmpo had 19 points and 11 rebounds in 25 minutes in his first action since getting injured on Jan. 23. The Bucks went 8-7 during his absence.

Overall this season, the Bucks are 15-16 with Antetokounmpo and 11-18 without him.

Boston was missing five-time All-Star Jaylen Brown due to an illness. The Celtics also rested Neemias Queta, who scored a career-high 27 points in a 114-98 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday night.

González started for just the third time. The 28th overall pick in the 2025 draft came in averaging 3.9 points and 3.3 rebounds.

Nikola Vucevic had 10 points, seven assists and five rebounds in his first start since the Celtics acquired the two-time All-Star from Chicago at the trade deadline.

Nuggets 128, Jazz 125

In Salt Lake City, Jamal Murray scored 45 points and made the go-ahead free throws with 31.8 seconds remaining to help the Denver Nuggets hold off the depleted Utah Jazz .

Utah's Keyonte George scored 36 points, but was denied two free throws that could have given the Jazz the lead on what would have been Nikola Jokic's sixth foul with 16.3 seconds remaining - a shooting foul that was reversed to a blocked shot after a lengthy review.

Jokic, who had 22 points and 12 rebounds, made two free throws with 6.1 seconds left and George missed a last-second 3-pointer as the Nuggets escaped with the win.

Cam Johnson was a late scratch with a hurt ankle, but Julian Strawther scored 15 points and Jonas Valanciunas added 13 for Denver.

With Jokic on the bench and most of his teammates lacking energy in the second game of a back to back, Murray made five 3s and scored 18 points in the third quarter to push the Nuggets to a 100-93 lead entering the fourth. Murray was 13 of 19 from the field and had eight 3s along with seven turnovers.

Rockets 123, Wizards118

In Washington, Alperen Sengun had 32 points and 13 rebounds, Kevin Durant scored 30 and the Houston Rockets beat the Washington Wizards.

Trae Young was ejected from the game after leaving the bench to come on the court to complain to a referee, days before he is expected to make his Wizards debut.

Durant made all 11 free throws and added seven assists and six rebounds in his only game close to his Maryland home this season. Amen Thompson had 22 points and 12 rebounds, while Reed Sheppard finished with 19 points, 10 assists, seven rebounds and six steals in his first career double-double.

Bilal Coulibaly scored 23 points and Sharife Cooper had 21 for the Wizards.

Washington coach Brian Keefe said before the game that Young was trending toward being ready to play Thursday against Utah. The All-Star point guard was limited to just 10 games this season with Atlanta and was sidelined by knee and quadriceps injuries when the Wizards acquired him in January.

No changes in revenue sharing model

New offer boosts pay & fast-tracks max deals for stars like Caitlin Clark



In this file photo, the WNBA logo is seen near a hoop before an WNBA basketball game at Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn. (AP)

NEW YORK, March 3, (AP): The WNBA sent a new CBA proposal to the players' union Sunday night that includes allowing some of its young stars like Caitlin Clark and Paige Bueckers a chance to earn a maximum salary quicker, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity on Monday because of the sensitive nature of negotiations.

The new offer, which came two days after the latest proposal from the union, would allow players on rookie contracts who were first or second team all-league to become eligible to sign a maximum contract in their fourth year and would not be eligible for a franchise tag designation following that extension.

For example, Clark would be eligible for a maximum contract in 2027, Bueckers in 2028. Aliyah Boston would be eligible this year.

The salary cap in the first year would be $5.75 million - up 280% from last year's $1.5 million. That would grow to $8.5 million by the sixth year of the deal. The deal would result in maximum salaries increasing by more than $1 million - from $249,000 to $1.3 million - and average salaries increasing from $120,000 to $540,000 in the first year.

The league didn't make changes in its revenue sharing model from its previous offer. The WNBA has proposed giving players more than 70% of net revenue with that number going up as the league continues to grow. The union in its offer earlier this week asked for an average of 26% of the gross revenue - revenue before expenses - over the course of the CBA. That would include only 25% in the first year of the new deal. The league has said that number is unrealistic.

Kelsey Plum, who is a vice president of the union, said Monday while preparing for the Unrivaled semifinals that getting the league to agree to a revenue sharing system for the first time is something "we fought really hard for," and a "significant win". The WNBPA can continue to negotiate the expense credits the league would get.

"I've always been someone that's focused on the gain, not the gap." Plum said. "And to be honest, I think if you look at where we've come from, shoot, since I came into the league until now, and now that we're in a revenue share, it's a tremendous win.

"Obviously, we're going to continue to negotiate. I can't emphasize that enough. Like we're not just settling. I want to be very clear about that. But I'm super proud to be a part of this opportunity to change women's sports."

Breanna Stewart, who was the first to say that the league had sent a new offer, agreed with Plum.

"I think that while we still are fighting for a lot of different things, we have to realize that the rev share is a win, especially just even coming from the 2020 CBA and the ones before that," said Stewart, who is also a vice president of the union. "I don't think a strike is good for anyone, because as the league loses money, or if we have a delay, we also lose money. That's not just me as a player. That's me thinking as, like an overall business person. Nobody wants to lose money, so how can we try to prevent that in all ways possible?"

For the first time, the league is giving $8 million from revenue sharing to the players from last season as the league generated enough to trigger it for the first time in its history. There's also $8 million going to player marketing from the money made last season.

The two sides still differ on housing. The league had offered that its teams would pay for all housing this season. Then franchises would pay for housing for players on minimum salary contracts as well as rookies in their first season, the person said. They'd also pay for the housing of the two developmental players that teams would be allowed to have.

The union in its last offer asked teams to provide housing for all players in the first few years of the deal, but in the latter part of the CBA teams wouldn't have to provide housing for players making at least 75% of the maximum salary.

The WNBA had told the players' union that it needs to get a deal in place by March 10 to start the season on time at a virtual collective bargaining agreement negotiating session a week ago, a different person familiar with the discussions told The Associated Press.

That person also spoke spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of negotiations.

If a labor deal is agreed to by March 10, it probably would be signed by the end of the month. Under that timeline, the expansion draft for new franchises in Portland and Toronto would be held sometime between April 1 and 6, according to a timetable obtained by the AP.

Pakistan cricketers fined after failing to reach semifinals

ISLAMABAD, March 3, (AP): The Pakistan Cricket Board has reportedly fined players around $18,000 each after the team failed to qualify for Twenty20 World Cup semifinals.

PCB "officials have clearly told the players that enough pampering has been done - from now on, financial benefits will only come with performance," the Express Tribune reported Tuesday.

According to the report, the PCB decided to fine the players after Pakistan lost a group-stage match to archrival India on Feb. 15. However, after the team qualified for the Super Eight stage the players were told the fine could be waived if Pakistan reached the semifinals.

Pakistan needed to beat co-host Sri Lanka by 65 runs in the last group match to qualify for final four ahead of New Zealand, but instead it narrowly scraped to a five-run win.

The report said PCB officials told the playing group that if they accepted rewards for good performances, "they must also pay penalties for poor ones."

The fines reportedly included at least one outstanding performer - Sahibzada Farhan - who broke India great Virat Kohli's record for most runs in a T20 World Cup and finished the tournament with 383 runs, featuring two centuries and two half centuries.

The sport's national governing body did not respond to a request for comment.

It was the fourth successive major ICC tournament where Pakistan has missed the semifinals. Pakistan also hasn't beaten India in a major event since 2022.

Soon after losing the last year's Asia Cup final to India, the PCB briefly suspended permission for players participating in T20 leagues around the world but later allowed the players to compete in tournaments like Australia's Big Bash.

Last year, the PCB abolished category A in its list of 30 centrally contracted players, and demoted both Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam in category B.

One asks officials to 'make it right'

Half marathon leaders guided off course in error

ATLANTA, March 3, (AP): The runner who was leading the women's race at the U.S. half marathon championships until she was mistakenly led off the course by a guide vehicle is calling for USA Track & Field to make right an outcome that cost her a spot in the world road running championships this fall.

Jess McClain was ahead by a wide margin with about 1.5 miles to go when she and three other runners followed the guide vehicle on a wrong turn.

McClain said in an Instagram post that she followed a police escort, official lead vehicle and a media motorcycle off the course for about one kilometer.

"I had to come to a stop, make a tight & complete u-turn & run back onto course as a national championship title & a world team spot slipped away," she wrote. "I'm going try my hardest to walk away from this weekend remembering the joy I felt in those moments where I thought I was on my way to becoming a National Champion & finally make Team USA outright."

McClain, who is from Phoenix, ended up finishing ninth. The next two runners who followed her off the course - Emma Hurley of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Ednah Kurgat of Roswell, Georgia - were 12th and 13th, respectively.

Molly Born of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, crossed the finish line first in 1 hour, 9 minutes, 43 seconds.

"I don't really feel like the U.S. champion just because of the whole situation that went down at the end," Born said in an interview with the Fast Women YouTube channel.

McClain and three other runners who followed the lead vehicle appealed after their protest of the order of finish was rejected. USATF said in a statement the jury of appeals found "the event did not meet USATF Rule 243 and that the course was not adequately marked at the point of misdirection. This violation contributed to the misdirection taken by the athletes within the top four at the time of misdirection. However, the jury of appeals finds no recourse within the USATF rulebook to alter the results order of finish. The results order of finish as posted is considered final."



In this file photo, United States' Susanna Sullivan, left, and United States' Jessica McClain race in the women's marathon at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo. (AP)

The top three finishers qualify for the world championships Sept. 20 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The USATF noted that the American team would not be officially selected until May and that the governing body would continue to review what took place in Atlanta.

"While we understand athletes are eager to resolve this issue expeditiously, our process will ensure an ultimate decision is in the best interest of all the athletes involved," the USATF said.

The USATF said lead vehicles are provided and managed by the local organizing committee, which was the Atlanta Track Club.

"Mistakes happen & I am sure those who were leading us feel terrible about the outcome," McClain wrote. "I just hate that the athletes are ALWAYS the ones who pay the price (literally $$$)… time & time again."

She said she trusts USATF and the Atlanta Track Club "can somehow make it right for the athletes who were led off course... It sounds like conversations are still being had, so I am choosing to remain hopeful that we'll soon have a little more clarity than what we left Atlanta with & actionable steps forward."

Coudet poised to take River helm

Velez edges reigning champion Estudiantes to stay top

BUENOS AIRES, March 3, (Xinhua): Striker Florian Monzon scored in the second half as Group A leader Velez Sarsfield edged to a 1-0 away win over reigning champion Estudiantes in Argentina's Apertura tournament.

Monzon broke the deadlock just before the hour in La Plata when he bundled in from close range after a scramble in the 18-yard box.

The hosts controlled 57 percent of possession but managed only one shot on target.

The result leaves Velez with 18 points, three clear of second-placed Estudiantes after eight games.

"It was an even contest but we took control when we needed to," Velez manager Guillermo Barros Schelotto told reporters.

"You have to have personality to play like we did today. We've been switched on from the first match of the season and we've created a lot of chances via our buildup play. We're doing a lot of things well."

Elsewhere on Monday, River Plate drew 1-1 at Independiente Rivadavia, Banfield won 2-0 at home to Aldosivi, and Deportivo Riestra was held to a goalless home draw by Platense.

❑ ❑ ❑

River Plate is set to appoint Eduardo Coudet as its new manager, according to widespread media reports in Argentina.

Coudet, who represented River as a player from 1999 to 2004, parted ways with Alaves on Monday after the Spanish club reportedly agreed to a one-million-euro (1.17 million U.S. dollars) release fee.

The 51-year-old is expected to arrive in Buenos Aires this week to finalize details of a contract running until December 2027.

The former Celta Vigo and Atletico Mineiro boss led Alaves to 17 wins, 16 draws and 22 losses after taking charge of the Basque side in December 2024.

River has been searching for a new manager since Marcelo Gallardo ended his second spell in charge last Thursday. The club is currently sixth in Argentina's 15-team Apertura Group B standings.

❑ ❑ ❑

New Costa Rica manager Fernando Batista said that his team will prioritize attacking football as he begins planning for the 2030 FIFA World Cup qualifying cycle.

Batista made the comments during his official presentation to the media at the National Theater in the capital San Jose.

"I am very happy to be in charge of such an important national team," the Argentine said. "I'm motivated and feel a sense of responsibility to do well." "It will be a team that takes the initiative on any pitch, in any country. We'll be an intense team that knows what it has to do on the pitch, with players who make good decisions regardless of any system or tactics that we may adopt in different matches." Batista replaces Miguel Herrera, who was sacked in November 2025 after the team's failure to qualify for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

It marks the first time the Central American team has missed the tournament since the 2010 edition in South Africa.

"I feel like this opportunity has come at a good time," the 55-year-old said. "I've gained more experience with different national teams that have helped me grow a great deal. I feel ready for the challenge of this project that begins today." Batista had been out of work since parting ways with Venezuela's national team in September 2025. He has also had spells in charge of youth teams for Argentina, Venezuela and Armenia over a managerial career spanning more than two decades.

Messi's Finalissima at risk as war shakes soccer and F1 schedules



Inter Miami CF forward Lionel Messi, right, controls the ball as he is defended by Orlando City SC midfielder Colin Guske, left, during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

Al-Nassr affected by a wave of cancellations

ABU DHABI, March 3, (AP): Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lewis Hamilton are among the sports stars whose schedules are in doubt because of the spreading war in the Middle East.

Cancellations and travel shutdowns are already affecting events since the United States and Israel launched a wave of strikes on Iran on Saturday. Organizers of Formula 1 and major soccer games will face decisions soon on whether the competitions can go ahead as scheduled.

Middle Eastern nations have become crucial to the world sports landscape over the last decade as event hosts, financial backers and employers for some of the world's top athletes.

The clock is ticking for a decision on whether to cancel or move the Finalissima soccer game on March 27 in Qatar between Spain and Argentina, the champions of Europe and South America. That match would offer Messi a chance to win yet another trophy in a glittering career.

Qatar suspended all soccer games until further notice Sunday. Argentina was also scheduled to play Qatar in a friendly March 31.

"UEFA is monitoring and carefully assessing all developments of the situation in cooperation with (South American soccer body) CONMEBOL and the (local organizing committee)," European soccer body UEFA told The Associated Press on Monday.



In this file photo, Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring at the King Saud University Stadium, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Ronaldo's soccer team, Saudi club Al-Nassr, has already been affected by a wave of cancellations of Asian Champions League games. His team was scheduled to play Wednesday in Dubai.

F1 has races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia next month. F1 and its teams typically start to fly in staff and freight weeks in advance, limiting the time to make a decision on whether to go ahead. Governing body FIA says its priority is "safety and wellbeing."

The men's and women's tennis tours and golf's European tour have just finished their Middle East tournament swings and aren't due back for months. The LPGA Tour is playing a golf tournament in China this week, then most of the players will head east back to North America so their travel should be unaffected.

Iran is due to send its men's soccer team to the U.S. for the World Cup in just over three months, with a first game June 16 against New Zealand in Inglewood, California.

There's doubt over whether Iran can or will take part in the tournament. Iranian soccer federation president Mehdi Taj has said "we cannot be expected to look forward to the World Cup with hope."

The U.S. government has promised exemptions from its travel bans for athletes and coaches at events like the World Cup and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Even if some events go ahead, a major concern for athletes and teams will be how they can travel in and out of the region safely.

Former U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev is among a group of tennis players waiting in Dubai for a chance to fly out after a tournament there concluded last week. If they can't travel soon, it will affect the BNP Paribas Open starting Wednesday in Indian Wells, California.

There are also travel difficulties for some athletes heading to the Winter Paralympics, which start Friday in Italy. The International Paralympic Committee says most teams are already in Europe for training and it's helping out others with travel. Iran is due to have one skier at the Paralympics.

Cricket and basketball players were facing challenges, too, along with thousands of foreign tourists. The West Indies cricket team that participated in the Twenty20 World Cup has been stranded in India while awaiting clearance to head back to the Caribbean.

Formula 1 personnel were also seeking alternative travel to avoid the region on their way to this week's Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.

The Middle East's influence on world sports has surged in recent years as countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have hosted major events and become crucial financial backers.

Besides soccer and auto racing, Qatar has a World Endurance Championship sportscar race this month, a MotoGP motorcycle race, a gymnastics World Cup next month and hosts the first Diamond League track meet of the year in May. Qatar also owns Champions League-winning soccer team Paris Saint-Germain.

Saudi Arabia, which will host the 2034 World Cup in men's soccer, has funded the LIV Golf breakaway league and become a major player in world boxing.

FIFA has Iraq next in line

Iran's World Cup place put in doubt by war

GENEVA, March 3, (AP): Iran's place at the men's World Cup in three months was put in doubt Monday amid an escalating Middle East conflict sparked by the soccer tournament's co-host the United States.

Iran is due to play its three group stage games in the U.S. - two in Inglewood, California, then in Seattle - from June 15-26. Cities in Canada and Mexico also will host some of the 104 games.

The U.S. and Israel have targeted Iran in coordinated attacks since Saturday.

It provoked an Iranian response that aimed missiles at U.S. allies including 2022 World Cup host Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which FIFA has picked to stage the 2034 edition.

"What is certain is that after this attack, we cannot be expected to look forward to the World Cup with hope," said Iran's top soccer official Mehdi Taj, a vice president of the Asian Football Confederation.

It is unclear if the state-backed Iranian soccer federation could refuse to send its team to the 48-nation tournament that starts June 11, or the U.S. government could effectively block the team.

FIFA has declined comment since Saturday, when secretary general Mattias Grafström said it would "monitor developments around all issues around the world."

The White House's top official overseeing World Cup preparations, Andrew Guiliani, seemed unconcerned Saturday in a social media post.

"We'll deal with soccer games tomorrow," Guiliani wrote about Iran, "tonight, we celebrate their opportunity for freedom."

Here is a look at the issues in play:

Iran has one of the best national teams in Asia and has qualified for six of the past eight World Cups.

It is No. 20 in the FIFA world rankings of 211 teams, and has not been lower than No. 24 since the last World Cup in Qatar.

Iran was among the second-seeded teams in the World Cup draw held in Washington, D.C. in December, minutes after U.S. President Donald Trump was presented with the inaugural FIFA Peace Prize.

Though Taj and other Iranian soccer officials were denied visas to enter the U.S., the draw outcome was favorable for Iran, especially in the expanded format where most third-place teams advance to the knockout rounds.

Iran starts against low-ranked New Zealand, then plays one of the weaker top-seeded nations, Belgium, and finishes against Egypt.

Iran is likely to be supported in stadiums by its diaspora in the U.S., though residents of the Middle East nation are subject to a ban on entering the country.

Trump's government has promised exemptions from its travels bans for athletes and coaches arriving for major sports events like the World Cup.

Politics around Iran inside World Cup stadiums is nothing new. Protests over domestic issues were aired by Iran fans at the last World Cup.

FIFA's World Cup regulations envisage a team withdrawing, or being excluded, from the tournament though the legal language is vague.

In that scenario, according to Article 6.7, "FIFA shall decide on the matter at its sole discretion and take whatever action is deemed necessary."

"FIFA may decide to replace the Participating Member Association in question with another association," the rules say.



The image of Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is reflected on the World Cup trophy, during the presentation ceremony of the FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour, at the Planalto presidential palace in Brasilia, Brazil. (AP)

That legal framing seems to give FIFA president Gianni Infantino wide powers to shape any decision relating to Iran.

Just 18 months ago, the decision announced by Infantino to add Lionel Messi's team Inter Miami to the 2025 Club World Cup lineup appeared to have no basis in formal tournament rules.

Should Iran pull out of the World Cup - still hugely speculative - its soccer federation would forfeit at least $10.5 million.

FIFA pays $9 million in prize money to each of the 16 federations whose teams fail to advance from the group stage, and all 48 qualified teams get $1.5 million "to cover preparation costs."

The Iranian federation also would face disciplinary fines from FIFA - at least 250,000 Swiss francs ($321,000) for withdrawing up to 30 days before the tournament, and at least 500,000 Swiss francs ($642,000) if the decision is in the last month before kickoff.

Iran would risk being excluded by FIFA from qualifying for the next World Cup in 2030 as well.

Iran was a fast World Cup qualifier last March, earning one of eight guaranteed places allocated to the Asian Football Confederation.

Should Iran pull out, the likely replacement from Asia should be Iraq or the United Arab Emirates.

Iraq and the UAE were effectively the ninth and 10th-ranked Asian teams through the various qualifying groups and advanced to a two-leg playoff last November.

Iraq won 3-2 on aggregate - eliminating the UAE - to advance to the intercontinental playoffs in Mexico and, on March 31, it is scheduled to play an elimination game against Bolivia or Suriname with a World Cup place at stake.

One possible element of uncertainty is the language of the World Cup tournament rules.

FIFA wrote that it can decide to replace a withdrawn team "with another association," though without specifying the replacement must come from the same continental confederation.

Denmark famously won the 1992 European Championship after getting a late invitation from UEFA, European soccer's ruling body.

Yugoslavia won a qualifying group ahead of the Danes but was removed by UEFA less than two weeks before the tournament because of a United Nations sanctions resolution during the widening Balkans conflict.

McKennie has Juventus contract extended through 2030

Fiorentina, Pisa lose on grim night for clubs fighting Serie A relegation

PISA, Italy, March 3, (AP): Fiorentina went down to Udinese 3-0 and Pisa lost to Bologna 1-0 on an unhappy night for the relegation-threatened sides in Serie A.

In Udine, the home side went ahead after 10 minutes when Christian Kabasele nodded in a Nicolo Zaniolo corner.

Udinese's leading goal-scorer Kelman Davis made it 2-0 from the penalty spot in the second half. And Adam Buksa added a third in stoppage time to decisively halt Fiorentina's recent revival and torpedo its hopes of winning three games in a row for the first time this season.



Fiorentina's Nicolo Fagioli, center, fights for the ball with Udinese's Jordan Zemura during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Udinese and Fiorentina in Udine, Italy. (AP)

It remained fifth from bottom of the league, but equal on points with Cremonese and Lecce, the club occupying the third relegation spot.

One of the two teams below it, Pisa, lost at home to Bologna and remained joint last with Verona.

Pisa had three shots on target while Bologna had only one, but it was that 90th-minute strike from Jens Odgaard that decided the match.

The Danish forward hit the net from around 25 meters out to break the home fans' hearts and ensure Pisa was still looking for a second win in the league.

The result leaves it on the same points as bottom club Verona. Both are nine points from safety with 11 league matches remaining. The win was Bologna's third in a row and lifted it above Sassuolo into ninth place. It has not lost a league game at home to Pisa since February 1985.

Meanwhile, United States midfielder Weston McKennie had his contract at Juventus extended on Monday so that he can spend a decade with the Turin club.

The new deal expires in 2030 - 10 years after McKennie signed with Juventus.

The extension was announced by Juventus and comes three months before a home World Cup for McKennie. It also comes with a reported salary increase from 2.5 million euros ($3 million) to 4 million euros ($4.7 million) per season, according to the Gazzetta dello Sport.

The 27-year-old McKennie has 26 goals and provided 26 assists in 220 appearances for Juventus. He has also become a favorite of new Juventus coach Luciano Spalletti, who appreciates McKennie's versatility - even fielding him at striker recently.

McKennie has eight goals since Spalletti was hired in October - more than any other player in the squad.





Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray (27) shoots at the buzzer during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Utah Jazz in Salt Lake City. (AP) — See Page 14

Sports

Madrid title hopes hit after second straight loss

Getafe holds on to secure historic win

MADRID, March 3, (AP): Real Madrid lost a second straight La Liga match when a stunning volley from Martín Satriano gave Getafe a shock 1-0 win at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

The result prevented the capital club from cutting the four-point gap to leader Barcelona.

Getafe had lost all eight of its previous league encounters with Real Madrid and early saves from goalkeeper David Soria kept it from falling behind.



Getafe's Satriano fights for the ball against Real Madrid's Dani Carvajal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Getafe in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Soria turned over a shot from Arda Güler midway through the first half, not long after frustrating Vinicius Junior when he was through on goal.

Madrid had more of the ball but lacked punch up front and it paid a price for its profligacy six minutes before halftime when Getafe took the lead.

A hopeful cross from the right was headed clear but it fell to the feet of Satriano, who volleyed into the roof of the net from 20 meters out.

It was the second goal in three games for the Uruguayan, who joined on loan from Lyon during the last transfer window.

Madrid continued to dominate possession in the second half and Antonio Rüdiger and substitute Rodrygo were among those who came close to grabbing an equalizer.

But it could not find a way past Getafe's stuffy rearguard and an inform Soria.

Madrid's task became even harder when Franco Mastantuono was sent off for dissent in stoppage time and although the numbers were evened up in the last minute when Getafe's Adrian Liso was also shown a red card it came too late to make any impact.

Getafe held on to secure a historic win, its first at the Santiago Bernabeu since 2008, and a vital three points in its bid to stay in La Liga.

"Coming here is always very difficult," Getafe defender Kiko Femenía told broadcaster DAZN. "We have to congratulate the team, we did a superb job at the back and we scored when had the chance. We might even have scored more on the counterattack."



Real Madrid's Gonzalo Garcia fights for the ball against Getafe's Z. Romero, during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Getafe in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

It jumped three league places into 11th and were eight points above the relegation zone.

Myong Yu Jong completes first-half hat trick

China beats Bangladesh, North Korea wins on return to Women's Asian Cup

SYDNEY, March 3, (AP): Myong Yu Jong completed a first-half hat trick to set North Korea on course for a 3-0 win over Uzbekistan in its first Women's Asian Cup appearance since 2010.

Defending champion China followed up by beating tournament debutant Bangladesh 2-0.

Both Group B games at Western Sydney Stadium were scoreless in the second half. In the nightcap, what Bangladesh gave away to nine-time champion China in experience, size and skill, it made up for with energy.

On Wednesday, Group C kicks of with Japan against Taiwan and Vietnam against India in Perth.

Coach Ri Song Ho has a young North Korea squad including players he guided to the Under-20 Women's World Cup title in 2024.

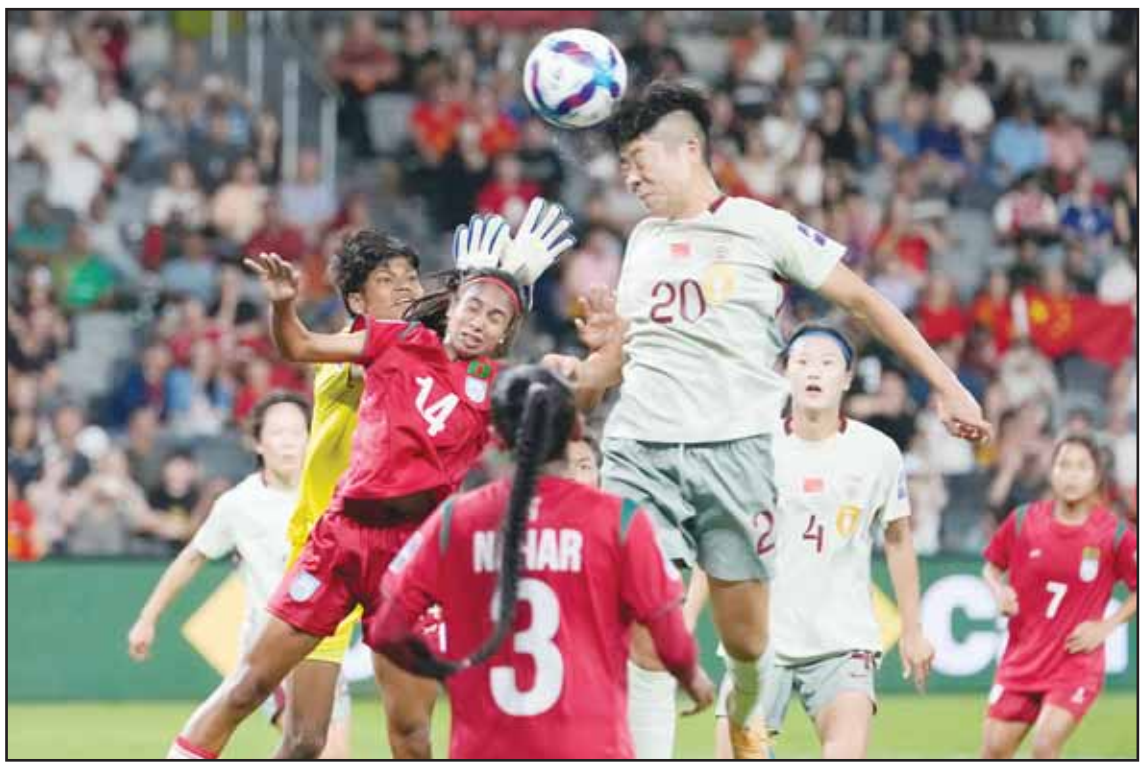
North Korea won continental titles in 2001, 2003 and 2008 but hasn't played at the Women's Asian Cup since losing the 2010 final to Australia.

A ban following doping infringements at the 2011 Women's World Cup resulted in North Korea missing the 2014 Asian Cup. It failed to qualify for 2018 and missed the 2022 tournament because of travel restrictions imposed in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strong recent results at the youth level - Under-17 World Cup titles in 2024 and 2025 and the under-20 title - have increased the confidence within North Korea's squad.

Myong's opening strike in the sixth minute followed a well-worked combination on the right. Kim Kyong Yong passed wide for Chae Un Yong and angled back into the box to meet a cross with a diving header. That deflected off an Uzbek defender and bounced perfectly for Myong to fire in over the goalkeeper.

Within minutes, Uzbek goalkeeper Maftuna Jonimqulova collided heavily with a teammate and needed treatment on her head and neck. She was carried off in a protective neck brace.



China's Zhang Chengxue heads the ball at goal during the Women's Asia Cup soccer match between China and Bangladesh in Sydney. (AP)

Myong added penalties in the 24th and 41st minutes to make it 3-0 at halftime.

China dominated early possession but wasn't able to capitalize until just before halftime.

After having a goal overturned by VAR, Wang Shuang drilled a shot inside the left post in the 44th to finally convert possession and pressure into a lead.

Zhang Rui's strike from just outside the area two minutes later doubled the lead, but Bangladesh held firm for the remainder.

China had 24 shots at goal but only 10 on target. Bangladesh had two shots on target, including a surprising long-range shot on a counterattack by Ritu Chakma that China keeper Chen Chen tipped over the crossbar in the 14th.

Zahra Ghanbari and her Iran lost their opening game to South Korea 3-0 on Monday at the Gold Coast, a long way from the war that started on the weekend.

Head coach Marziyeh Jafari and players have declined to comment on the war, saying the squad needed to focus on the tournament.

The Iranian women will next play Thursday against host Australia, which opened with a 1-0 win over the Philippines in front of a tournament record crowd of 44,379 in Perth.

Australia midfielder Amy Sayer said Iran deserved sympathy and respect for continuing to play the tournament.

"Our heart goes out to them and their families. It's a difficult situation and it's really brave of them to be able to be here and to perform," Sayer said Tuesday. "They put on a really strong performance (against South Korea), even with the political climate that's going on and the struggles that they might be going through.

"The best we can do to contribute is to just give them the best game of football that we're able and to show them the respect on the field."

Kuwait Club squad boosted with return of Berhama and Doumbia

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

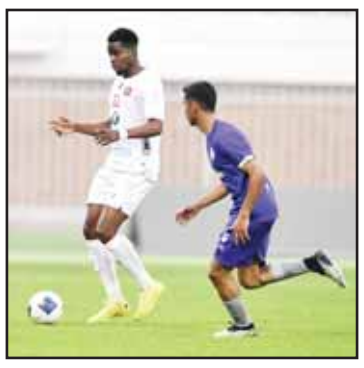
KUWAIT CITY, March 3: Kuwait Club's Moroccan star Mahdi Berhama and Ivorian midfielder Idrissa Doumbia are fully fit and ready to rejoin the team whenever sports activities resume.

Kuwait Club was originally scheduled to travel to Muscat, Oman, last Sunday to prepare for its quarter-final clash against Al-Shabab, which was set for Wednesday in the Asian Challenge League. However, ongoing regional tensions and the suspension of sports activities in Kuwait since last Saturday have cast doubt over the match, now scheduled for March 11.

Meanwhile, Qadsia SC was set to host Qatar's Al-Rayyan on March 4 and 11 in the Gulf Champions League semi-finals, but its fixtures have also been affected.

Berhama and Doumbia had missed recent games after sustaining injuries in Kuwait Club's preliminary-round Amir Cup match against Al-Jazeera in February. They sat out the 14th round Zain Premier League match against Al-Shabab, as well as the Amir Cup quarter-final clash with Al-Nasr.

Several other key players, including Mishari Ghanem, Ibrahim Kamil, Mohsen Falah, Khaled Al-Kharqawi, and Ahmed Alaa, have also been sidelined due to injuries in recent weeks.



Idrissa Doumbia controls the ball as Al Jazeera player looks on.

Kuwait Club aims to utilize the current break to fully prepare its squad for the remaining season. The team currently leads the Zain Premier League with 36 points, 12 points ahead of its closest rival, with nine rounds to go. They have also secured a place in the Crown Prince Cup final, the Amir Cup semi-finals, and continue to compete in the Asian Challenge League.

Al-Qadsia's Algerian defender Sofiane Boushar is nearing a return after completing rehabilitation for a thigh muscle strain. Boushar left the pitch in the 4th minute of Qadsia's postponed preliminary-round Amir Cup match against Burgan last Friday but is now ready to rejoin the team.

'World Cup in South Africa not viable any time soon'

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, March 3, (AP): Reigning champion South Africa will not be staging a men's Rugby World Cup any time soon, SA Rugby chief executive Rian Oberholzer said.

New Zealand won't be either.

Together, the countries have won seven of the 10 Rugby World Cups and contested the most recent men's final in 2023. But Oberholzer believed neither of the game's greatest nations can make hosting financially viable and generate the World Cup revenue needed by the game.

"We have moved away from that philosophy that everybody must get an equal chance to host a World Cup," Oberholzer said at a news conference.

"New Zealand and South Africa will not make the money out of a World Cup that World Rugby needs. I don't think it is a negative on us, it is more what is more important for the best interests of World Rugby.

"The World Cup is the only revenue streak for World Rugby. It must fund the game's entire ecosystem."

In their most recent financial reports for 2024, New Zealand Rugby had a deficit of US$11.5 million and SA Rugby a deficit of US$5.3 million.

New Zealand co-hosted the first World Cup in 1987 and hosted alone in 2011. South Africa staged the tournament in 1995, the last before the game turned professional. All three tournaments were highly acclaimed festivals of the game but not great money-makers.

South Africa bid unsuccessfully for the World Cups in 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023. France in 2023 reportedly generated revenue of 500 million euros for World Rugby, the most lucrative ever.

"I can never see that the same money can be generated in South Africa as it can in Europe, or maybe somewhere in the Middle East," Oberholzer said. "World Rugby will drive World Cups to where they believe they can make the most money, and we all have to understand that.

"You cannot complain and ask for a World Cup in your country, make less money, and then want the biggest slice of the cake when it comes to the annual grant that we get from World Rugby."

Australia stages the next men's tournament in 2027 and the United States in 2031.

Arson attempt at Macclesfield stadium under probe

MACCLESFIELD, England, March 3, (AP): English sixth-tier club Macclesfield claimed someone tried to burn down its stadium on Tuesday, two months after it pulled off the biggest upset in FA Cup history by knocking out titleholder Crystal Palace.

The "suspected arson attempt" on Leasing.com Stadium took place overnight and there were no casualties, the club said.

"Emergency services have responded immediately and are on site tackling the blaze in the affected areas," Macclesfield said in a statement.

It still urged "anyone nearby to keep windows shut and not to approach the stadium."

Authorities were investigating the cause of the fire and the club said it was not commenting further for now. The stadium dates to 1891. It has a capacity of 6,355 spectators.

Led by the younger brother of England and Manchester United icon Wayne Rooney, the tiny club from England's northwest stunned Premier League 's Palace 2-1 on Jan. 11 in Macclesfield and created one of the most iconic moments in soccer's oldest knockout competition.

With 117 places separating National League North team Macclesfield and Palace when they played, it was the biggest upset in the FA Cup's 155-year history. Macclesfield was knocked out in the next round - the fourth - by the Premier League's Brentford.

ARAB TIMES
THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN FREE KUWAIT
Published by: Arab Times Publishing House
Editor-in-Chief
AHMED AL JARALLAH
Editorial Office:
Tel: 24826912 - Airport Road, Shuwaikh
P.O. Box: 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait
E-mail: arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
Advertising:
Tel: 99659717 - 50232062
E-mail: advt@arabtimesonline.com
Annual Subscriptions:
Individuals KD 30, Companies & Official Departments KD 45
Airmail charges extra for overseas
Tel: 51526559 - 51508991