



IRAN APOLOGIZES, SAYS NEIGHBORS SAFE UNLESS PROVOKED

Kuwait foils 212 missiles, 394 drones amid ongoing attacks



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan and Director-General of Kuwait Ports Authority Sheikh Khaled Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, tours Shuwaikh Ports on Friday.

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: Official spokesperson of the Defense Ministry Colonel Saud Al-Atwan disclosed that the number of ballistic missiles detected and dealt with as a result of the attacks on Kuwaiti airspace has reached 212, in addition to 394 drones.

In the first media briefing by the Government Communication Center regarding the recent developments, Al-Atwan confirmed that the Armed Forces successfully intercepted the missiles and drones within the area of ongoing operations.

Al-Atwan stated that Kuwait has been subjected to a series of attacks in a blatant violation of its sovereignty and international conventions and laws. He said the attacks included the use of ballistic missiles and drones, affecting some civilian facilities, infrastructure, vital installations and residential areas. He indicated that this resulted in the martyrdom of two members of the Armed Forces and a child, as well as a number of injuries and material losses.

He revealed that since noon on Feb 28, the Kuwaiti Army units and formations have commenced their missions to defend the airspace and territory of the country.

- PM tours strategic facilities
- Health sector on full alert
- Kuwait trains shelter staff, expats
- Trump warns Iran of powerful strike

He said the armed forces and air defense systems have been monitoring and tracking hostile targets and engaging them according to established operational procedures. He clarified that the sounds of explosions are the result of the interception of the hostile missiles and drones.

He commended the vital role played by Kuwaiti men and women in the military and security services, as well as in various State institutions, who have been performing their duties responsibly and faithfully since the beginning of this brutal aggression, reflecting the unity of national efforts to maintain national security and stability.

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Kuwait's Crown Prince rallies Gulf unity; Belgium King voices support

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held a series of telephone contacts late Thursday with Gulf leaders to discuss recent developments in the region and affirm Kuwait's solidarity with its sisterly countries.

His Highness spoke separately with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman, Bahraini Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Qatari Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani, and UAE Vice President and Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

During the conversations, His Highness conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the leaders of the sisterly Gulf states, and inquired about the safety of their leaderships and peoples.

His Highness reaffirmed Kuwait's strong condemnation of the aggressions targeting countries in the Gulf region, describing them as blatant violations of international law that pose serious threats to regional and global security.

He underscored the importance of maintaining common security and joint defense, expressing confidence that the Gulf Cooperation Council states would overcome the current challenges through the wisdom and unity of their leaders.

Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince received a telephone call on Friday from His Majesty King Philippe of Belgium, who strongly condemned the recent Iranian attacks on Kuwait's territory. King Philippe described the as-



HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah



Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman

saults as a flagrant breach of sovereignty and international law, voicing his country's full support for Kuwait in all measures it undertakes to safeguard its security and territorial integrity.

His Highness expressed appreciation for the King's solidarity and conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir, thanking Belgium for its supportive stance toward Kuwait's stability and sovereignty.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah made a phone call with his Saudi counterpart Prince Khaled bin Salman to discuss the latest regional situation and ongoing security developments.

During the phone conversation, they also tackled aspects of joint cooperation and coordination between both sisterly countries in defensive and military fields, the

Army General Staff said in a press release.

The Kuwaiti minister reiterated his country's support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, backing its measures to maintain its security and stability, underlining the significance of promoting coordination and cooperation in a way that maintains regional security and stability.

Also on Saturday, Kuwaiti Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and UAE Minister of State for Defense Affairs Mohammed bin Mubarak Al-Mazrouei discussed bilateral coordination and cooperation between both countries in a way that bolsters security and stability.

This came during a telephone call between both ministers late Friday, which focused on the latest regional situation, the Ministry of Defense said in a press release.

Other Voices

When speech becomes fear: Understanding the crime of undermining public morale under Kuwaiti law

By Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb

In times of regional tension and rapid information flow, a single post on social media can travel across thousands of screens within minutes. But when does a message cross the line from opinion into criminal conduct? Recent developments in Kuwait, where authorities detained several individuals accused of publishing content that may "undermine public morale," have brought this question into public debate.

To understand the issue properly, it is important to examine the legal concept often referred to in Arabic as *إضعاف الجسد* - literally translated as weakening public resolve or morale.

The Legal Meaning Behind the Term

In legal context, the concept refers to the publication or dissemination of information that could weaken societal resilience, spread fear among the public, or create a sense of panic or despair within the community.

This does not refer to ordinary criticism, political opinion, or legitimate



Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb

debate. Rather, it concerns content that intentionally or recklessly spreads false information or misleading narratives capable of destabilizing public confidence or provoking fear among the population.

In today's digital environment, such conduct most frequently occurs through social media platforms, where misinformation can circulate rapidly without verification.

The Legal Framework in Kuwait

Kuwaiti law criminalizes the dissemination of false news, rumors, or misleading information when such acts are capable of causing public

panic, harming national unity, or undermining public order and security.

Several legal provisions may apply depending on the nature of the conduct, including:

■ Provisions of the Kuwaiti Penal Code, particularly those addressing acts that threaten public order or national stability.

■ Law No. 63 of 2015 on Combating Cybercrime, which regulates the misuse of electronic platforms and criminalizes the dissemination of false information that harms the public interest.

■ In certain circumstances, provisions relating to national security or public safety may also apply where the conduct affects the stability of the state or the safety of the community.

The underlying legal principle is straightforward: freedom of expression must not be used as a vehicle to spread panic or misinformation that harms society.

Freedom of Expression vs. Criminal Conduct

It is important to emphasize that freedom of opinion and expression is

constitutionally protected in Kuwait. Citizens have the right to discuss public affairs, criticize policies, and express their views openly. However, as in most legal systems around the world, this freedom is not absolute. The law distinguishes between legitimate expression of opinion, which is protected and dissemination of false or misleading information that creates public panic, which constitute a criminal offense. The distinction often lies in intent, the accuracy of the information, and the potential societal impact of the message. In legal terms, the threshold is crossed when communication moves from commentary to misinformation capable of causing public harm.

Criticism, debate, and diverse opinions remain essential elements of healthy public dialogue. However, deliberately spreading fear or misinformation is treated differently under the law. The law protects free speech but it does not protect the spread of panic.

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Day by Day

THE Saturday mouse is the mouse that lived among the books in neglected libraries. This mouse peeks, gnaws at the books, and ruins them.

It used to dominate several libraries with the help of a few officials, but they were referred to the public prosecution in that country.

This mouse neither permits nor forbids, and it still refrains from giving people their rights after having relied on them, following its scandals of manipulating people's benefits.

O Saturday mouse, give the people their rights.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Ramadan Timings

Imsak	Sunday	04:48
Iftar	Sunday	17:52
Imsak	Monday	04:47



Al-Jarallah offers insight on key local and regional developments

Cybercrime Department warns residents

Kuwait debunks fake shelter link info

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The Ministry of Interior issued a statement on Friday to deny any connection to a message circulating on social media that falsely claimed to be from the ministry and urged people to access a link to view shelter locations.

The ministry confirmed that it did not send the message, and urged the public to exercise caution and avoid being misled by communications from unknown sources.

It emphasized that all official information and guidance will be announced exclusively through accredited and official channels in the country.

Meanwhile, the Cybercrime Department has issued a warning to all residents and individuals in Kuwait against publishing or sharing any online content related to wars, military operations, or missiles.

The department cautioned against posting any videos or images that incite sectarianism or provoke sedition, stating that such actions constitute a clear violation of Kuwaiti law and may result in legal accountability for those responsible.

All residents are urged to remain fully neutral and avoid engaging with provocative content to help preserve national security, unity, and the country's social fabric.

Kuwait arrests 3 over video mocking 'crisis'

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: Kuwait's Ministry of Interior on Sunday arrested three individuals after a video circulated on social media showing them mocking the current situation in the country.

In a press statement, the ministry said the suspects were detained following monitoring of content shared across social media, noting that the video constituted offenses including spreading false news and harming the country's national interests.

The ministry affirmed that the behavior was unacceptable and that the relevant authorities

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Extra Kuwait Airways flights aid returnees

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Kuwait Airways announced the operation of additional flights from several international destinations as part of its plan to facilitate the return of citizens and residents to Kuwait through the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In a press statement Saturday, the national carrier said flight (KU418D) will depart from Manila, the capital of the Philippines, to Dammam, Saudi Arabia, with a stopover in Bangkok, Thailand. The flight is scheduled to depart Manila at 10:00 p.m. Saturday (Manila time) and arrive in Bangkok at 12:30 a.m. Monday, before taking off again at 2:30 a.m. and landing in Dammam at 6:30 a.m. Monday.

The airline advised passengers wishing to travel on this flight to contact its customer service via phone number 171 or on WhatsApp at +9651802050.

Kuwait Airways also announced that flight (KU136D) will operate from Barcelona, Spain, to Dammam, departing at 10:00 a.m. Monday (local time) and arriving at 6:10 p.m. the same day. Passengers may contact the same customer service lines for further details or assistance.

The carrier further confirmed that passengers arriving from London on a recent flight landed in Dammam and continued their journey home by land, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, and other relevant authorities, Acting Chief Executive Officer Abdulwahab Al-Shatti told KUNA late Friday.

Al-Shatti said the airline has mobilized all its operational resources and staff to assist in returning citizens safely under current conditions. The ongoing repatriation flights form part of a comprehensive plan to ensure an organized and secure return process, he noted.

"The return operation will proceed in phases, according to an approved schedule, to accommodate the largest possible number of citizens while ensuring compliance with all regulatory measures," Al-Shatti said. He reaffirmed Kuwait Airways' commitment to maintaining the highest safety and security standards for passengers, crew, and aircraft.

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Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:48	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	06:07	Maghrib ..	17:52
Zohr	11:59	Isha	19:08

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Warm with light to northwesterly wind to light wind, with speed of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Weather

By Night: Rather cold to cold with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speed of 08-32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	22	05
Abdaly	22	07
Jahra	23	08

Crown Prince hails KNG rapid response

Defense forces sacrifices win leadership applause

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visited the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) headquarters on Saturday, accompanied by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Upon arrival, His Highness the Crown Prince was welcomed by the KNG's Deputy Chairman Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, KNG's Undersecretary Maj. Gen. Hamad Salem Al-Barjas and other KNG commanders.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and commended the KNG's great efforts in addressing rapid regional developments.

He was also briefed on the KNG forces' response to heinous aggressions on the State of Kuwait, along with their decisive security measures to protect the country's vital sources and promote security and stability.

His Highness the Crown Prince lauded the KNG personnel's sincere efforts and great sacrifices in doing their national duties as well as their courage and vigilance to defend the nation and safeguard its stability and sources.

His Highness underlined that the KNG personnel's dedication and field efficiency reflect the best meanings of loyalty and belonging to the nation and its wise leadership.

His Highness wished the dear homeland perpetual secu-



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visit headquarters of the Kuwait National Guard.

...rity, safety, stability and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy upon the souls of the martyrs who have sacrificed themselves while defending the nation.

His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister were accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Chief of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Minister of Defense Sheikh

Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Ministry of Defense

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, accompanied by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, visited the Ministry of Defense on Thursday.

Upon his arrival, His Highness the Crown Prince was received by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, Lieutenant General Khaled Daraj Saad Al-Shuraiaan.

During the visit, His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

He lauded the Ministry's significant efforts in maintaining a high state of readiness amidst the rapid and critical developments currently unfolding in the region.

His Highness was briefed on the latest operational field reports and the mechanisms employed by the Armed Forces in responding to recent heinous attacks targeting the State of Kuwait.

The briefing focused on defensive measures implemented to secure the nation's airspace and fortify national stability.

His Highness Sheikh Sabah Khaled praised the "sincere efforts and great sacrifices" made by the personnel of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces, commending their vigilance in defending the nation's sovereignty and safeguarding its vital resources.

He emphasized that the dedication shown by the military embodies the highest ideals of loyalty to the homeland and its leadership.

Concluding his visit, His Highness prayed to Almighty Allah to bestow His mercy upon Kuwait's righteous martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defense of the nation. He further prayed for the continued security, safety, and prosperity of the State of Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.

His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister were accompanied during the visit by the Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and the Head of the Crown Prince's Diwan, Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Al-Shamaimari Diwan hosts Ramadan well-wishers



Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and a number of ambassadors extend Ramadan greetings.



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times Ahmed Al-Jarallah and colleague Saud Al-Farhan offer congratulations to Yousef Al-Shamaimari.



Russian Ambassador offering congratulations.



Belgian Ambassador Christian Doms offering congratulations.



EU Ambassador Anne-Marie Koistinen offering congratulations.



Mazen Abu Al-Hassan, Lebanese Consul Maya Al-Adham, and Nisreen Rabiean



Photos by Rizk Taufiq Khaled and Abdulaziz Al-Dughashim and Tariq Al-Shamaimari

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The Al-Shamaimari Diwan in Adailiya hosted a gathering of well-wishers for the holy month of Ramadan, including sheikhs, social figures, and local residents, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The atmosphere was warm and full of camaraderie, reflecting the spirit of Kuwaiti gatherings during this blessed month.

The Diwaniya witnessed a remarkable turnout of family, friends, and regular attendees, all eager to exchange Ramadan greetings and pray to God Almighty to bless Kuwait, its leadership, and its people with prosperity, goodness, and blessings, and to grant the country continued security and stability.

Attendees emphasized that Ramadan is an

annual occasion to strengthen social bonds and reinforce the values of communication and compassion within society.

This gathering reflects the deeply rooted social customs and traditions of Kuwaiti society, where families and diwaniyas (traditional Kuwaiti gathering places) eagerly open their doors to welcome well-wishers and exchange greetings.

Kuwait begins blood donation drive to support health sector

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Social Reform Society (SRS), represented in the Islamic cooperation bureau, launched on Friday a blood donation campaign to back the health sector and enhance the values of societal integration and solidarity.

In cooperation with the Central Blood Bank in Jabriya and with the participation of several donors, this campaign stems from the society's faith in its humanitarian and national role, as well as its dedication to fostering the values of collaboration among individuals, head of society Dr. Khaled Al-Mathkour told KUNA.

Through such initiatives, the SRS

is keen on cementing the values of voluntary action and boosting societal participation with the state's bodies, he added.

He affirmed integrating efforts among official bodies and civil society organizations is a main pillar in backing the health system and raising readiness in the face of different challenges.

The society continues the State's support in multiple fields, including taking part in preparing shelters, as part of initiatives aiming to raise societal readiness and cement the culture of collaboration in the face of emergencies to maintain the safety and stability of the society, he elaborated.

PUC designates safe areas at educational institutions

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): The General Secretariat of the Private Universities Council (PUC) announced Friday, designating safe areas within private universities and colleges as part of emergency plans aimed at enhancing preparedness and ensuring that educational institutions are ready to deal with various circumstances.

In a press statement, the Council's Secretary-General Dr. Jassem Al-Ali said that the Secretariat is continuously monitoring the current developments in coordination with the relevant state authorities to ensure the readiness of private universities, to contribute to safeguarding students as well as academic and administrative staff and help reassure members of those institutions.

The Secretariat continues to monitor security measures being implemented and the activation of emergency plans at private universities and colleges, while also verifying the readiness of facilities and the application of approved requirements for such situations, Al-Ali added. Al-Ali affirmed that the Secretariat is closely following the implementation of these measures and will continue coordinating with higher education institutions and the relevant authorities in the country to ensure everyone's safety and the continuation of the educational process in accordance with the approved regulatory frameworks.

Kuwait limits 'Taraweeh' prayers to 20 minutes, 'Qiyam' to 30 min

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Islamic Affairs announced on Saturday that Taraweeh and Qiyam prayers will be held in all mosques across the country.

In a press statement, the ministry said that the duration of Taraweeh prayers will not exceed 20 minutes after the Isha prayer.

Qiyam prayers will be held for 30 minutes, starting at 12:00 am and ending at 12:30 am, it added.

The ministry noted that the measures come in light of the current circumstances facing the country and in the interest of ensuring the safety of worshippers and serving the public interest.

GCC eyes unified press strategy in prevailing regional scenario

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): GCC Information and Media Ministries' undersecretaries discussed on Friday via video conference strengthening cooperation and unifying the media discourse in light of the current circumstances in the region.

This came during the preparatory meeting of the GCC Information ministries' undersecretaries ahead of the extraordinary gathering of information ministers in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The Kuwaiti delegation participating in the meeting was headed by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Dr. Nasser Muhaisen.

The meeting also included the participation of Director-General of the GCC Joint Program Production Institution Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The meeting focused on the unified Gulf media strategy for coordinating media message during crises, which aims to unify the media discourse of GCC countries when

dealing with crises and regional developments.

The strategy seeks to enhance media coordination among member states, and counter misleading media campaigns and rumours that may target state's security and stability.

The meeting also addressed activating the role of GCC news agencies in publishing news and media materials that reflect the joint Gulf position, as well as mechanisms for unifying media messages issued by official media institutions.

Discussions also covered boosting coordination among television channels, radio stations, and digital platforms in the GCC states to exchange media content related to ongoing events.

Additionally, the meeting reviewed media responses to misleading information related to the current crisis, and ways to strengthen the Gulf media presence in international media through joint interviews and reports, while unifying key media messages.

Other Voices

Closing the PAAET University

By Ahmad alsarraf

There is no mistake in the article's title. Indeed, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has become a parallel university with an unwieldy administrative structure, a staggering number of PhD holders, and enormous salaries and privileges, most of which serve little purpose, as the original mission of the institution has been neglected.

PAAET is absolutely incapable of supplying the labor market with the practical skills it needs. Instead, it floods the job market with graduates in administrative fields who prefer sitting behind desks. I was not surprised by what PAAET proudly published on its website, celebrating that some electrical trainees had contracted a graduate from the same department to do electrical work in their homes. I fail to see the source of this pride. How can trainee students even have homes requiring electrical contracts?

Currently, Kuwait has two public universities that accommodate most high school graduates in all the specializations needed by the Kuwaiti market, in addition to offering both local and overseas scholarships.

The Ministry of Higher Education has ignored the importance of applied education for over 70 years. I believe this responsibility falls under the Ministry of Education, not the Ministry of Higher Education, especially after specialized education strayed from its original purpose and became a third university.



alsarraf

A new vision for specialized education is urgently needed, one that fully overhauls the applied education law and prioritizes vocational training, enabling students and trainees to earn a diploma in just two academic years. All bachelor's degree programs and overseas scholarships for higher studies at applied education institutes should be abolished, as they do not align with the original purpose of establishing PAAET.

Kuwait urgently needs skilled workers in dozens of fields, far more than it needs holders of advanced academic degrees. First of all, Kuwait needs to reform its curricula and change the negative stereotypes surrounding those who practice handicrafts. Society must learn to respect and value the image of the Kuwaiti craftsman, rather than look down upon him.

The journey of applied education and training in Kuwait began seventy years ago with the establishment of the Industrial Institute. Since then, thousands have completed their studies, but almost all have moved on to other work due to persistent negative perceptions. Without changing this societal view of manual trades, no effort will succeed. Restoring the applied education institute to its former role, amending the law, or extending the academic program to two years will all be ineffective.

Graduates of the nursing institute, established 60 years ago, provide a clear example. I have never met a Kuwaiti nurse in my life. Studying this noble and highly important profession is admirable, and receiving a rewarding salary afterward is appealing, but actually working in the field tells a completely different story.

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Kuwait steadfast between the clouds and projectiles

"KUWAIT is not merely a land we live on, nor a piece of soil marked on a map. It is a hidden pulse coursing through the souls of its people, the salt of the sea lingering in memory, and the call to prayer echoing at dawn like a promise of life." Kuwaiti writer **Fatima Nasser Al-Muzayel** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"It is a story that begins in a mother's heart when she teaches her child its first song and continues to the last breath of pride in the chest of a man standing guard over its borders. Kuwait is a spirit that dwells within us, a pulse that flows in our blood, and a memory that runs deep in the heart long before it appears on any map.



Fatima Al-Muzayel

"It is not simply a geographical boundary, but a tale of resilience written by generations and a covenant of love signed by its people with the sincerity of belonging. Every time threats arise, and missiles or poisoned words are aimed at it, the heart of Kuwait does not tremble, because behind it stands a people who know no defeat. A people raised on the principle that homeland is not a choice, but destiny; not a slogan to be uttered, but a covenant to be upheld. We, the sons and daughters of Kuwait, do not measure our love for her by peaceful days, but by our steadfastness in adversity. If fear touches her, we will be her refuge; if the hand of evil reaches for her, we will stand as one, like a wall, unshaken by winds and unbroken by trials.

"A homeland watered by the sweat of fathers and preserved by the prayers of mothers cannot be shaken by missiles, nor harmed by threats. Kuwait is too great to be intimidated by the echoes of missiles, too resilient to be unsettled by the noise of meddling adversaries, too noble to be harmed by the sounds of shells, too steadfast to be shaken by the clamor of threats, and too firm to be disturbed by storms. Kuwait, which has endured trials and emerged even stronger, is a land not made to be inhabited by fear. It is a homeland where fear finds no place in its heart. It is a homeland where we learned that dignity is not negotiable, and that sovereignty is not a word in a hymn, but a stance in times of trial. We will continue to proclaim it with all our hearts before our tongues - Kuwait is our soul, and we are its shield, carrying it in our prayers, in our loyalty, and in our steadfastness when the world around us trembles.

"If the homeland needs us, we will be its sacrifice. If it needs our voice, we will raise it with a love that reassures the heart, not with fear that confuses it, and with steadfastness, not defiance. We will not abandon our patriotism, for it is not a garment we can take off, but a skin we live in. No threat will weaken our unity, for when Kuwait is called upon, the hearts of its people unite before their feet. Kuwait will endure, for it is not a fleeting moment in history, but roots deeply embedded in the conscience of its children.

"It will endure because its people understand that a homeland is not protected by loud voices, but by steadfast hearts, discerning minds, and united ranks. With every passing storm, our certainty grows stronger that this land is safeguarded by ceaseless prayers and hearts that have vowed to remain its unbreakable shield and unwavering loyalty. May God preserve Kuwait, its leadership, and its people, and grant it lasting security. May He make its men guardians of truth and a bulwark for the nation, and have mercy on its righteous martyrs, making their blood a light that protects the country and an enduring source of glory."

Also:

"The leaders of the Gulf states believe their peoples stand united with them in times of hardship, and that internal unity is the cornerstone for confronting external challenges." Kuwaiti lawyer **Dr. Abdullah Al-Turajji** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Since the outbreak of the recent tensions, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have dealt with the Iranian attacks with wisdom and restraint, placing the interests of their nations and the stability of their peoples above all else. The positions of the GCC states were clear from the outset. They were not party to the escalation. In fact, they expressed their rejection of any aggression or expansion of the conflict and sought to spare the region the consequences of a war that serves no one.

"On the other hand, the Iranian attack on the Gulf states was a grave political error because it targeted countries that opposed striking Iran and called for prioritizing reason

and dialogue. The attempt to drag the GCC states into a war they have nothing to do with reveals a lack of understanding of the firmness of their positions and a disregard for the strength of their people's support for their leadership. The Gulf states have accumulated experience through successfully overcoming past crises. They understand that politics should not be based on reactions, but that restraint, combined with balanced diplomacy, is sometimes the best response.

"Today, Gulf citizens stand behind their leadership with the understanding that their countries' strength lies in unity and that their stability is a red line. Thanks to the wisdom of the leaders, the solidarity of the people, and prioritizing the greater good, this crisis will, God willing, pass, and the Gulf will remain an oasis of security and stability despite attempts to undermine its security and stability."

"The crisis of confidence in British politics appears to be steadily widening, oscillating between a fragile and fragmented right wing and a left wing with blurred vision and weak cohesion. This situation reflects a simultaneous crisis of personal trust and a crisis of political principles," columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The wave of political and party disintegration in Britain can be interpreted from multiple perspectives and has many facets, but at its core it appears to be as much a crisis of principles as it is a personal crisis, especially after the rise of the Reform Party led by the outspoken media figure Nigel Farage.

"The Reform Party has succeeded in disrupting traditional political and party affiliations, encouraging party defections from both the right and the left. It has capitalized on the erosion of convictions and the fluctuation of political loyalties, where the bonds of political belonging are cracking and personal crises are taking precedence over political principles.

"Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch viewed the defections from her party as expressions of personal crises rather than principled stances, at a time when reservations about the ruling Labour Party were also growing due to the leadership's rigidity and perhaps an overemphasis on party discipline.

"Nigel Farage, leader of the Reform Party, spearheaded a successful media and parliamentary campaign, relying on protest-driven rhetoric that enabled him to outmaneuver both the Conservative right and the Labour left. This led to a popular and parliamentary reaction and resulted in defections within the House of Commons.

"In Britain, organized public protest and party defections are seen as legitimate and socially accepted political behaviors. The political environment is characterized by its capacity to absorb and accommodate profound change, sharp criticism, and dramatic shifts without the constraints of accountability and investigation.

"In this context, the repercussions of the Jeffrey Epstein scandal have recently resurfaced within the House of Lords. Lord Mandelson, the former British ambassador to Washington, announced his resignation from the Labour Party due to his connection to financial and behavioral scandals linked to Epstein, who committed suicide in prison in 2019.

"In response, Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Labour Party leader, called for Mandelson to be stripped of his title of "Lord" and for him to be investigated by the US Congress. In the West, politics is multifaceted, involving diverse audiences, and is governed by a press and media that are not subject to party dictates. This makes media content more engaging and closer to professional standards, avoiding the fabrication of scandals or the distortion of facts, while also legitimizing the revocation of titles.

"A careful observer of the Western political and party arena will find much that is missing in the East, both politically and in the media, and from which lessons can be drawn in a rapidly changing world that is reshaping the rules of political action and the media environment without descending into arbitrariness or authoritarianism.

"The crisis of political principles continues to be a chronic problem in the Greater Middle East, where personal interests continue to exert a strong influence on the political and media landscape."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

France offers Kuwait 'defensive reinforcement'

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Sabah received a telephone call on Friday from French Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs Catherine Vautrin.

Both sides discussed several topics of common interest, including the possibility of offering defensive reinforcement as part of the

current military cooperation between the two friendly countries, Kuwait's Ministry of Defense said in a statement.

Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah commended the deep-rooted relations between Kuwait and France, affirming the depth of strategic partnership between the two friendly countries, it added.



Sheikh Abdullah



KUNA photo
Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council Justice Dr. Adel Bouresli visits the Farwaniya Courts Complex.

Bouresli inspects flow of work, eyes staff welfare

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council Justice Dr. Adel Bouresli visited the Complex of Courts in Farwaniya to see first-hand procedures and work flow amidst emergency conditions in Kuwait.

Bouresli, also Chairman of the Court of Cassation, inquired about safety of members of the judicial authority, lawyers and clients, the Council said in a statement.

He was briefed about how smooth services were in order to make sure the public were well served.

Drugs found on trooper

All brothers held as sister locked in room for months

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The Drug Control General Department (DCGD) apprehended a suspect, who is employed as a soldier in the Ministry of Interior, in possession of psychotropic substances "Chemical," along with cash and other materials used for trafficking and personal use.

Following his arrest, officers were carrying out a search of his residence in Al-Oyoun when they heard cries for help from a locked room. They discovered that the suspect and his brothers had held their sister captive in the room for approximately ten months.

The room's window had been completely sealed with building materials to prevent it from being opened, effectively turning the space into a prison and preventing the captive woman from escaping.

All the brothers present at the scene were detained and referred to the appropriate authorities for legal action.

The Ministry of Interior affirmed that enforcing the law and maintaining security is the sole responsibility of the state, and no one will be allowed to violate the law or take it into their own hands under any circumstances.

The ministry emphasized that the State of Kuwait is a country of law and institutions, where the law applies to everyone without exception.

Emergencies discussed

Water supply networks under control: minister

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem met with the ministry's officials and members of the emergency committee in the Water Facilities Operation and Maintenance Department to follow up on the latest developments in light of the exceptional circumstances.

The meeting aims to evaluate and assess the level of readiness and preparedness to ensure the stability of the electricity and water systems in various regions of the country, the ministry of said in a statement.

Following the meeting, Minister Al-Mukhaizeem, accompanied by Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, inspected the National Water Control Center to review the progress of work, ensure the stability of the water network, and monitor the readiness of the work teams to deal with any emergency.

During the visit, the minister was briefed by specialists about the mechanisms for managing and operating the water network and the monitoring and control systems for tracking pressures and flows in the main lines, pumping stations and strategic reservoirs, in addition to the procedures followed to ensure the continuity of water supplies with high efficiency and reliability.

Al-Mukhaizeem was also briefed on the approved emergency plans and coordination mechanisms between the technical and field teams to ensure a rapid response to any emergency malfunctions, which contributes to maintaining the stability of the network and the continuous delivery of water to consumers without interruption.

He emphasized the vital role of the National Water Control Center in monitoring and operating the water system around the clock, praising the efforts of the national workforce of engineers, technicians, and employees in the sector.

He stressed the need to continue raising the level of preparedness and strengthening preventive measures to ensure the highest levels of efficiency and reliability in operating the water network.

Al-Mukhaizeem expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all ministry employees, affirming the continued support of the senior leadership to develop the infrastructure of the electricity and water sectors and enhance the security and sustainability of vital resources in the country.

Kuwait counters rise in cyber hits

No harm to digital services

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Engineer Abeer Al-Awadhi, head of the National Cybersecurity Center, confirmed recently that the center has detected a number of cyber activities and threats targeting some digital systems in the country under the current circumstances.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Awadhi said these attempts were dealt with immediately in accordance with approved protocols and procedures, reflecting the center's readiness to confront cyber threats and strengthen the stability of digital systems.

She explained that the center's monitoring and follow-up system was able to detect these attempts early, after which technical teams took immediate measures to contain them efficiently, without affecting the continuity of services or the country's vital digital infrastructure.

She added that the National Cybersecurity Center continues its ongoing efforts to monitor the national cyberspace using advanced systems and technologies to detect and analyze threats and address them proactively.

She noted that the center's specialized teams possess the necessary technical readiness and work around the clock to monitor developments in cyberspace. She affirmed that the center coordinates with government entities and vital facilities in the country to ensure the highest levels of protection and rapid response to any emergency.

Al-Awadhi called on citizens and residents to verify information and obtain it from approved official sources, and not to pay attention to rumors or unreliable news circulating on social media platforms. She stressed that public awareness and cooperation with relevant authorities is an important pillar in strengthening the cybersecurity system.

She said that the National Cybersecurity Center will continue performing its national role in protecting cyberspace in the State of Kuwait and ensuring the stability and continuity of digital services, thereby strengthening trust and security in the country's digital environment.

Soldiers sacked, expats to be deported

5 yrs jail in revenge entrapment

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The Court of Appeals sentenced an officer and three soldiers -- a stateless resident (Bedoun) and two Syrians -- to five years in prison with hard labor for arresting a Syrian and planting drugs in his vehicle as an act of revenge, instigated by his ex-wife.

The court also ordered the dismissal of the soldiers and deportation of the non-Kuwaiti defendants after serving prison time.

Case details indicate that a thorough investigation by the Drug Control Gen-

eral Department revealed that the defendants planned to stop the victim and plant drugs in his vehicle to entrap him, motivated by personal vengeance.

Following the arrest of the defendants and their referral to the Public Prosecution, the Ministry of Interior issued a statement affirming that no one is above the law.

The ministry stressed that the primary mission of security personnel includes maintaining security, uncovering the truth, and ensuring justice for all, while reaffirming its commitment to uphold the law and guarantee justice for everyone.

Essential goods supply stable in co-ops: MoSA

Al-Huwaila inspects Juvenile Care Center



Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila during an inspection tour of the Abdullah Al-Salem and Mansouriya Cooperative Society.



Minister of Social Affairs inspects the juvenile welfare home and confirms the readiness of emergency plans.

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Minister of Social, Family and Children Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila confirmed on Thursday the availability and stability of basic goods and foodstuffs in co-operative societies to meet consumer needs.

Following an inspection of Abdullah Al-Salem and Al-Mansouriya Co-operative Societies, Minister Al-Huwaila said to KUNA that the ministry is directly monitoring co-op societies to ensure the continued availability and stability of goods.

She added that during the inspection, accompanied by the Ministry's Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi and Assistant Undersecretary for Co-operative Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa, she reviewed the work inside the co-op societies and the mechanisms for supplying them with enough goods.

Minister of Social, Family and Children Affairs Amthal Al-Huwaila, accompanied by several ministry leaders, toured the Juvenile Care Center on Thursday, inspecting the level of preparedness and approved emergency plans.

According to a ministry statement, Al-Huwaila was briefed on details of the emergency plan and procedures in place for handling various situations. She listened from officials regarding operational mechanisms and the level of readiness to ensure the safety of residents and the continued provision of services efficiently.

Al-Huwaila emphasized the ministry's commitment to providing care and attention to this group, especially in current times.

MoSA photos

Kuwait TV interviews Dean of Journalism

Al-Jarallah offers insight on key local and regional developments

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: A team from the News and Political Programs Department at Kuwait TV recorded a special television interview with Dean of Kuwaiti journalism and Editor-in-Chief of the Al-Seyassah and Arab Times newspapers.

This interview will be featured in a news program that will be broadcasted on the official television channel soon. It focuses on the most important developments in the local and regional arenas. It includes the analytical perspective of Al-Jarallah on a number of major issues and their implications on the future, as well as their expected repercussions on the Kuwaiti political and media landscapes.

The interview is conducted and recorded by Hashem Hajieh, Dhari Al-Otaibi and Hamed Al-Rajhi. It is part of the ongoing efforts of the News and Political Programs Department at Kuwait TV to provide live analytical coverage that sheds light on the most important current issues.



Dean of Kuwaiti journalism Al-Jarallah shares insights on local and regional developments during an exclusive interview with Kuwait TV.



Hashim Hajieh, Dhari Al-Otaibi, and Hamed Al-Rajhi

Minister stresses efficiency and sustainability

Kuwait food security stable: Al-Fulaij

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij has affirmed that Kuwait's food security is "stable and maintains a high degree of readiness," with relevant authorities ensuring the continuous flow of supplies to the local market.

This came in a statement by Al-Fulaij to KUNA during an inspection visit to the food testing laboratory and land import port in Sulaibiya, to review the examination and control of imported food, in compliance

with approved health requirements.

Al-Fulaij, who also supervises the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), added that the tour ensures that food control systems are running with efficiency, and that "all food shipments entering the country are subject to precise inspection."

She called for "promoting a culture of smart food consumption and reducing food waste," considering it an important part of the sustainable food system, stressed that "responsible food use contributes to conserving resources."



Ministry of Development and Sustainability Affairs photo Minister of State for Development and Sustainability, Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, who oversees the work of the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, during the inspection tour.

Continued from Page 1

Extra Kuwait

Al-Shatti also expressed appreciation to Saudi authorities for their cooperation and support in facilitating flight and land transit operations through various Saudi airports.

Earlier, Kuwait Airways had announced that citizens wishing to return home via Saudi Arabia by land could register for flights from London, Manchester, Paris, Milan, Barcelona, Munich, Istanbul, Cairo, Amman, and Manila, in coordination with the relevant bodies.

The airline added that residents seeking to return to Kuwait through Saudi Arabia must obtain a Saudi transit visa. It also confirmed that flights to destinations including Barcelona, Milan, Paris, Munich, and Bangkok were available for those holding existing bookings or wishing to make new reservations.

For more information, travelers are urged to contact customer service at 171 or via WhatsApp at +9651802050.

Kuwait arrests

immediately initiated legal procedures, placing the suspects in custody and taking the necessary steps to refer them to the competent authorities.

The Ministry of Interior reiterated the need to abide by laws and regulations governing the use of social media and refrain from publishing or circulating content that could harm the interests of the state.

It also urged the public to act responsibly and uphold their national duties, stressing that the law will be firmly applied against anyone who violates it, particularly considering the current circumstances facing the country and the region.

The ministry concluded by praying for the continued safety and security of Kuwait

and its people.

Also, the Public Prosecution investigated 13 individuals in separate cases involving the spread of malicious rumors, false news, and harmful content on digital platforms, and detained them in custody pending referral to criminal trial.

The content circulated by the defendants reportedly included calls to spread sectarian strife, incite acts of violence, and undermine social cohesion, as well as sow division among the public. Some posts were found to target the defensive preparedness of the Kuwait Armed Forces, posing a direct threat to national security and unity amid the current challenges facing the country.

Investigations were conducted under the supervision of Attorney General Counselor Saad Al-Safran, who issued directives to form multiple investigation teams. These teams immediately began questioning the suspects and carried out the necessary procedures to complete the investigations.

The Public Prosecution affirmed that safeguarding national unity and maintaining public order are fundamental objectives guaranteed by Kuwaiti law. It stressed that it exercises its powers within this framework to ensure law enforcement, maintain public order, and preserve societal security and stability.

The Public Prosecution urged both citizens and expatriates to be mindful of their national responsibilities during this critical period, exercise the utmost awareness and discipline when using information technology and digital platforms, and continue supporting the homeland, its leadership, and institutions.

It also warned the public against spreading or being misled by rumors, fake news, or content intended to incite panic.

The Public Prosecution confirmed that all necessary legal measures are being taken to address these cases and safeguard the country's security and stability.



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LOCAL



Sheikh Ahmed Al-Nawaf, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah, Lieutenant General Engineer Thabit Al-Muhanna, Jawad and Emad Boukhamsin



HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed, Sheikh Sabah and Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed, Sheikh Mohammed Al-Ahmad, and Sheikh Bader Al-Sabah



Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled and Sheikh Jawad Boukhamsin

Boukhamsin Diwan hosts warm Ramadan gathering

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: Boukhamsin Diwan welcomed well-wishers on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, in an atmosphere that reflected the spirit of camaraderie and connection that defines Kuwaiti society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

A number of sheikhs, ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, and public figures attended to offer their congratulations and blessings for the arrival of the holy month. Participants prayed to God to perpetuate the blessings of security and stability upon the country. They emphasized that Ramadan is an annual occasion to strengthen the values of compassion and solidarity and to reinforce the bonds of love and communication among members of society. These gatherings highlight the depth of social ties and uphold the national and humanitarian values for which Kuwaitis have been known, generation after generation.



Emad Boukhamsin welcoming Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber. Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait foils

Regarding the sequence of events since the start of operations, he said that starting at 12:30 on Feb 28 and continuing for the first 24 hours until noon on March 1, the operations focused on several vital locations in the North and South of the country, where air defense systems engaged the first wave of hostile aerial targets. He stated that on this day, 86 ballistic missiles were detected, 68 of which were intercepted, while 18 ballistic missiles did not pose any threat as they were outside the threat zone, and 30 out of 53 drones were engaged. He added that on the second day, from Sunday afternoon until Monday afternoon, the aerial attacks continued towards the central regions of the country. He confirmed that the Armed Forces engaged an additional wave of missiles and drones, detecting 62 ballistic missiles – 54 of which were intercepted, while eight posed no threat as they were outside the threat zone, and 72 out of 132 drones were engaged.

He affirmed that during these operations, while performing their national duty, two members of the Armed Forces were martyred while carrying out their defensive missions to protect the homeland. "On the third day, from noon on Monday until noon on Tuesday, the monitoring and interception operations continued within the air defense system to protect the airspace of the country. During this period, 37 ballistic missiles were detected, 23 of which were intercepted, while 14 ballistic missiles posed no threat as they were outside the threat zone, and 42 out of 100 drones were engaged. Some interceptions resulted in debris falling in residential areas, causing material damage and civilian casualties, including the death of a child and injuries to four other people. On the fourth day, from noon on Tuesday until noon on Wednesday, the armed forces continued to engage additional waves of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones detected in Kuwaiti airspace. During this phase, 27 ballistic missiles were detected, all of which were successfully intercepted, while 33 out of 109 drones were engaged within the air defense system to protect the country's airspace," he narrated.

Regarding injuries among members of the Armed Forces, Al-Atwan stated that 67 injuries have been recorded among Kuwaiti Army personnel since the start of operations. "The injured received the necessary medical care, and all are in stable condition, with two cases currently under medical observation," he said.

He affirmed that the Kuwait Armed Forces is at the highest level of readiness, operating round the clock with close and continuous monitoring of all field developments. "This is being done in full coordination with military and security agencies and various State institutions within a comprehensive national framework aimed at maintaining the security of the country and the safety of citizens and expatriates," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Director of the Directorate General of Public Relations and Security Media at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier General Nasser Bouslaib confirmed the stability of the security situation in the country, stressing the importance of obtaining information from reliable sources, such as official State media accounts, while disregarding or refraining from spreading rumors.

Bouslaib stated that the security and defense systems are operating at the highest level of readiness within an integrated system of joint operations rooms and continuous monitoring.

He attributed this to the constant field presence of all concerned State sectors, which operate according to comprehensive proactive plans that ensure rapid response and precise handling of any emergency, thus, maintaining national security and territorial integrity.

He added that the Directorate General of Civil Defense has activated its sirens 50 times since the beginning of the attacks. He indicated that the field teams for explosive ordnance disposal, comprised of the Kuwait Army, Ministry of Interior and National Guard, have responded to 148 reports of falling shrapnel in accordance with the response plan for dealing with such incidents.

He explained that the Ministry of Interior, in its commitment to disseminate warnings to all segments of society, activated sirens throughout the country and issued alerts through the official television channels and radio stations, in coordination with the concerned authorities.

He added that alert notifications were sent through the unified government e-services application (Sahel), benefiting about 6,800 deaf and mute individuals. He pointed out this ensures that warning messages reach everyone and enhances awareness and response in such situations.

He urged everyone to cooperate and obtain information only from reliable sources like the official government social media accounts, and to disregard or refrain from spreading rumors.

He also stressed the importance of staying away from suspicious objects or unidentified debris and reporting them through the emergency hotline.

He disclosed that the ministry has observed several individuals moving shrapnel or other suspicious objects and gathering around them, in addition to gatherings, which pose a danger.

He asserted that no videos of security and military movements or of the sites where the incident is being handled should be filmed or published in order to avoid

legal repercussions and to protect national interests.

He reiterated the ban on taking pleasure and fishing boats out to sea and the prohibition of being in camps during this period as a precautionary measure to ensure everyone's safety, in addition to the ban on using or operating aerial photography equipment (drones).

He issued instructions to be followed upon the sounding of sirens, which include remaining calm and immediately proceeding to safe places inside buildings (such as basements or cellars, if available), staying away from windows and open areas, and following instructions issued by official authorities.

Also, official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad stressed that the healthcare system is operating with full efficiency and readiness within an integrated network of State institutions, praising the efforts of medical, nursing, technical and administrative staff.

Al-Sanad pointed out that the ministry took the initiative to activate the health emergency plans and raise the level of preparedness in various health facilities. He said the Health Operations Room is working continuously to monitor developments and coordinate the medical response, in parallel with raising the level of preparedness in emergency and intensive care units and reviewing operational plans in hospitals and health centers.

He stated that primary healthcare centers have started operating according to the emergency plans, with a number of centers operating on a 12 and 24-hour schedule at full operational capacity, while ensuring sufficient stocks of medicines and medical supplies.

He revealed that in public hospitals, scheduled non-emergency surgeries have been temporarily suspended to enhance preparedness, while hospitals, specialized centers and dental centers continue to provide their services normally.

He said the Kuwait Poison Control Center has activated its emergency plan and is prepared to handle any incidents related to toxicology or chemical exposure, affirming its readiness to provide potassium iodine as needed.

He added the emergency plan has also been activated at the Jaber Hospital Trauma Center, which consists of 12 resuscitation beds, eight operating rooms, 50 intensive care beds, and 50 trauma beds, in addition to radiology, laboratory, blood bank and helipad for air ambulance services.

He confirmed that the public health sector has intensified environmental and preventative monitoring measures, including testing radiation levels in seawater, drinking water and airborne particles, as well as checking 13 radiation monitoring stations round the clock in coordination with the relevant authorities.

He added that the blood reserves are at a comfortable and reassuring level, indicating that the blood donation campaign launched by the ministry witnessed a large turnout, with nearly 2,000 units of blood collected since its launching – a manifestation of the solidarity and social responsibility in the State of Kuwait.

He reported that the emergency medical system operates through 79 centers and ambulance points in the governorates, supported by 222 ambulances, including 193 emergency ambulances and 29 non-emergency ambulances, in addition to 20 first responder vehicles, while a total of 453 specialized technical personnel work within this system round the clock.

He indicated that the bed occupancy rate in government hospitals is around 49 percent, a comfortable capacity and operational efficiency that enable the health system to deal with any health developments.

He asserted that this level of preparedness is based on an integrated network comprising seven public hospitals, 14 specialized centers and 118 primary healthcare centers throughout the country.

He stated that the health system relies on a qualified workforce of 66,969 employees in the government health sector, including doctors, nurses, technicians and administrative staff, all working as a unified team to provide healthcare according to the highest professional standards.

He then emphasized the importance of remaining calm, while avoiding the spread of rumors.

On Friday, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Minister of Public Works Noura Al-Mashaan and Director-General of Kuwait Ports Authority Sheikh Khaled Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, toured Shuwaikh Ports'.

His Highness the Prime Minister listened to an explanation from port officials about the container area, various operations at docks, importing and stevedoring procedures and cargo flow.

His Highness the Prime Minister voiced much appreciation to Shuwaikh Port's personnel for their sincere efforts and dedication in doing their missions amid such exceptional circumstances in a way that ensures the continued port movement with high efficiency.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also visited Friday the National Water Control Center, accompanied by Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeh Al-Mukhaizeem and Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel.

His Highness the Prime Minister saw first-hand water system operations, and was briefed by officials about stability of the water network and readiness of ministry teams to deal with any emergency.

His Highness the Prime Minister thanked the staff of the National Water Control Center for their dedication during these exceptional circumstances in order to guarantee stable and efficient water network.

In line with its commitment to maintaining the highest safety and security standards in shelters for expatriate workers, and in accordance with approved emergency plans, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) conducted a comprehensive training program for both male and female staff and residents to prepare them for emergency situations.

The initiative was launched in response to the current circumstances and the need to strengthen overall preparedness and readiness.

PAM explained that the program included training staff on emergency response procedures in the shelters and educating residents on the steps to take upon hearing an emergency alarm, helping to build their confidence and provide reassurance. It is part of a comprehensive plan to periodically review and update safety procedures, ensuring both facility readiness and staff competence.

It reflects PAM's humanitarian and professional commitment to providing a safe environment that preserves the dignity and security of residents.

PAM went on to explain that these exercises reinforce a culture of prevention and prioritize the protection of lives, ensuring a rapid response to any emergency, adding that this is achieved through practical training on safe evacuation procedures and familiarization with emergency exits and assembly points, enabling the fastest, smoothest, and most unobstructed access to designated safe shelters. The exercises included simulated evacuation scenarios designed to replicate potential emergency situations, allowing PAM to assess the effectiveness of emergency plans and enhance coordination among work teams.

In conclusion, PAM emphasized the importance of adhering to safety guidelines and promoting preventative awareness, and wished everyone safety and affirming that the State of Kuwait will continue to be an oasis of security and protection.

In latest developments, Iran will not attack neighboring countries unless attacked from their territories, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Saturday.

"The transitional leadership council took the deci-

sion (not to attack neighbors) yesterday and our armed forces were instructed not to attack neighboring countries or hitting them with rockets unless they were attacked from the territories of these countries," He said in a message aired by the official TV.

Pezeshkian apologized for neighboring countries. "We apologized for neighboring countries which were subjected to our attacks .. We don't intend to attack them, and we as have repeatedly said they are our neighbors and we need to achieve peace and stability in the area together."

The Iranian capital, Tehran, and other cities have been bombarded by the US and Israeli occupation since February 28 killing supreme leader Ali Khamenei. Secretary of the Supreme National Defense Council, Ali Shamkhani, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Major General Abdulrahman Pakpour, Chief of Staff Major General Abdulrahman Mousavi and Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh.

In Washington, US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that Iran, which he described as "suffering greatly," had apologized to its neighbors in the Middle East and pledged not to attack them again, warning that Tehran would face a "very strong strike" later today.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said Iran had sought to control and rule the Middle East but had now been defeated by neighboring countries in the region.

"This is the first time Iran has been defeated in thousands of years by neighboring Middle Eastern countries," he said.

Trump added that Iranian officials had thanked him, saying: "They said, 'Thank you, President Trump,' and I said, 'You're welcome.'"

He further claimed that Iran was no longer the dominant power in the Middle East but had instead become "the loser in the Middle East" and would remain so for decades unless it surrendered or potentially collapsed.

The US president also warned that Iran would face a "very strong strike" today, adding that his administration was considering expanding the scope of targeted areas and groups without providing further details.

"Today Iran will be hit very hard," Trump said, noting that Washington was seriously considering targeting areas and groups not previously included in the strike plans due to what he described as Iran's "disgraceful behavior."



JOINT OPERATIONS

SAUDI ARABIAN CHEVRON INC. (SAC)

KUWAIT GULF OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)



Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company) announces the below-mentioned Public Tenders for the procurement of materials. Kuwaiti and Saudi merchants registered with either company wishing to participate in any of the below-mentioned Tenders should submit their bids electronically through "SMART BY GEP" <https://smart.gep.com>.

For first-time registration, please contact TLQX@Chevron.com - BHSJ@Chevron.com for support and guidance.

A non-refundable fee is stated against each tender. Tender fees must be deposited, and bidders must attach proof of payment as follows:

STATE OF KUWAIT		KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA	
NATIONAL BANK OF KUWAIT	ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1001132057	GULF BANK - KUWAIT	IBAN: KW25GULB000000000000090550035
IN KUWAITI DINAR		IN KUWAITI DINAR	
		RIYADH BANK	IBAN: SA262000003100019949901
		IN SAUDI RIYAL	

The start date for the following Tenders will be on **Sunday, 8 MAR 2026** and closing date will be on **Tuesday, 7 APR 2026 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S. NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS CLOSING DATE	FEES (KD)	CLOSING DATE
1	049852	VALVES (GATE AND BALL)	15	7 / 4 / 2026
2	049857	SHIPPING PUMP	50	7 / 4 / 2026
3	049865	VALVES (GLOBE, GATE AND CHECK)	25	7 / 4 / 2026
4	049863	FLOWMETERS	5	7 / 4 / 2026
5	049859	CONTROL VALVES	15	7 / 4 / 2026
6	050218	CLAMPS, PLIDCO OR ANY REPUTED	35	7 / 4 / 2026
7	049860	SHUTDOWN VALVES	5	7 / 4 / 2026

Operation limited in scope and duration: Johnson

House narrowly rejects war powers resolution to halt Trump's attacks on Iran

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP) — The House narrowly rejected a war powers resolution Thursday to halt President Donald Trump's attacks on Iran, an early sign of unease in Congress over the rapidly widening conflict that is reordering US priorities at home and abroad.

It's the second vote in as many days, after the Senate defeated a similar measure. Lawmakers are confronting the sudden reality of representing wary Americans in wartime and all that entails — with lives lost, dollars spent and alliances tested by a president's unilateral decision to go to war with Iran.

While the tally in the House, 212-219, was expected to be tight, the outcome provided a clarifying snapshot of political support for, and opposition to, the US-Israel military operation and Trump's rationale for bypassing Congress, which alone has the power to declare war. At the Capitol, the conflict has quickly carried echoes of the long wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and many Sept 11-era veterans now serve in Congress.

"Donald Trump is not a king, and if he believes the war with Iran is in our national interest, then he must come to Congress and make the case," said Rep. Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the

House Foreign Affairs Committee.

House Speaker Mike Johnson warned that it would be "dangerous" to limit the president's authority while the US military is already in conflict.

"We are not at war," said Johnson, R-La., a close ally of Trump, contradicting others. He said the operation is limited in scope and duration, and the "mission is nearly accomplished."

Trump's Republican Party, which narrowly controls the House and Senate, largely sees the conflict with Iran not as the start of a new war, but the end of a government that has long menaced the West. The operation has killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, which some view as an opportunity for regime change, though others warn of a chaotic power vacuum.

Republican Rep. Brian Mast of Florida, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, publicly thanked Trump for taking action against Iran, saying the president is using his own constitutional authority to defend the US against the "imminent threat" the country posed.

Mast, an Army veteran who worked as a bomb disposal expert in Afghanistan, said the war powers resolution was effectively asking "that the presi-



US Sen Tim Kaine, D-Va., arrives for a vote on an Iran war resolution he sponsored, at the Capitol in Washington on March 4. (AP)

dent do nothing."

For Democrats, Trump's attack on Iran, influenced by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is a war of choice that is testing the balance of powers in the Constitution.

"The framers weren't fooling around," said Rep. Jamie Raskin,

D-Md., arguing that the Constitution is clear that only Congress can decide matters of war. "It's up to us."

Crossover coalitions emerged among those in Congress. Two Republicans joined most Democrats in voting for the war powers resolution, while four Democrats joined Republicans to

reject it.

The war powers resolution, if signed into law, would have immediately halted Trump's ability to conduct the war unless Congress approved the military action. The president would likely veto it.

Trump has scrambled to win support for the nearly week-old conflict as Americans of all political persuasions take stock. Administration officials spent hours behind closed doors on Capitol Hill this week trying to reassure lawmakers that they have the situation under control.

Trump said Thursday he must be involved in choosing Iran's new leader. Yet Johnson, R-La., said this week that America has enough problems at home and is not about to be in the "nation-building business."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said that the war could extend eight weeks, twice as long as the president first estimated. Trump has left open the possibility of sending U.S. troops into what has largely been a bombing campaign. More than 1,230 people in Iran have died.

The administration said the goal is to destroy Iran's ballistic missiles that it believes are shielding its nuclear program. It has also said Israel was ready to act, and American bases would face retali-

ation if the U.S. did not strike Iran first. The US said Wednesday it torpedoed an Iranian warship near Sri Lanka.

"This administration can't even give us a straight answer of as to why we launched this preemptive war," said Rep. Thomas Massie, the Republican from Kentucky, an outlier in his party.

Massie and Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., who had teamed up to force the release of the Jeffrey Epstein files, also pushed the war powers resolution to the floor, past objections from Johnson's GOP leadership. Republican Rep. Warren Davidson of Ohio, a former Army Ranger, also voted for it. Democratic Reps. Henry Cuellar of Texas, Jared Golden of Maine, Greg Landsman of Ohio and Juan Vargas of California voted against.

"Congress must stand with the president to finally close, once and for all, this dark chapter of history," said Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas.

Rep. Yassamin Ansari, D-Ariz., said that as the daughter of Iranian immigrants who fled their homeland, she opposes the regime but is concerned that a democratic transition for the people of Iran never seems to be a priority for Trump or the officials who briefed Congress.

Trump fires embattled Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP) — US President Donald Trump fired his embattled Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, after mounting criticism over her leadership of the department, including the handling of the administration's immigration crackdown and disaster response.

Trump, who said he would nominate Oklahoma Republican Sen. Markwayne Mullin in her place, made the announcement on social media after Noem faced a two-day grilling on Capitol Hill this week from GOP members as well as Democrats.

Noem's departure marks a stunning turnaround for a close ally to the president who was tasked with steering his centerpiece policy of mass deportations. But she appeared to increasingly become a liability for Trump, with questions arising over her spending at her department and over her conduct in the aftermath of the shooting deaths of two protesters in Minneapolis earlier this year.

Trump said Noem "has served us well, and has had numerous and spectacular results (especially on the Border)." He said he was making her a "Special Envoy for The Shield of the Americas," a new security initiative that he said would focus on the West-



US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem speaks about Alex Pretti, who was killed by a federal immigration officer earlier in the day, during a news conference at the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters on Jan 24, in Washington. (AP)

ern Hemisphere.

Noem, who appeared at a law enforcement event in Nashville, Tennessee, moments after Trump's announcement, did not address her ouster there. She read from prepared remarks and was not asked by attendees about the development.

Later, in a social media post, she thanked Trump for the new appointment and touted her accomplishments as secretary.

"We have made historic accomplishments at the Department of Homeland Security to make America safe again," she wrote.

America

4 dead as tornado rips Michigan: Four people were killed Friday in southern Michigan as powerful storms that produced at least one tornado reduced homes to rubble, sent parts of roofs flying into the air and left a trail of debris hanging from power lines.

In the Union Lake area, near Union City, three people were killed and 12 injured after an apparent tornado hit, according to the Branch County Sheriff's Office. About 50 miles (80.5 kilometers) southwest, Cass County officials reported one death and several injuries, after a tornado touched down.

Lisa Piper stood on her back deck and videoed a terrifying scene that played out on the other side of frozen Union Lake as a funnel cloud formed and then dropped toward the ground. Trees were torn from their roots and debris flew into the air.

"It's lifting houses!" she said. As the devastation continued, she exclaimed: "Oh my heart is pounding. Oh, I hope they're OK."

Powerful storms formed Friday from Michigan all the way to Oklahoma, with reports of heavy rain and threats of severe thunderstorms. Tornado watches stretched from Iowa to Oklahoma, along with Michigan. (AP)

Ex-presidents remember Jackson: From former presidents to an NBA Hall of Famer to prominent pastors, stories of the Rev Jesse Jackson Sr.'s influence on politics, corporate boardrooms and picket lines loomed large Friday at a celebration honoring the late civil rights leader.

The public tribute — with appearances by Grammy-winning gospel singers and Jennifer Hudson — felt at times like a church service and others like a political rally. Many, from former president Bill Clinton to the Rev Al Sharpton, a civil rights leader and founder of the National Action Network, likened Jackson's death to a



From left: Former US vice president Kamala Harris, former secretary of state Hillary Clinton, former President Bill Clinton, former president Barack Obama, Jill Biden, and former president Joe Biden attend the Public Homegoing Service for Reverend Jesse Jackson at the House of Hope in Chicago on March 6. (AP)

call to action, from speaking out against justice to voting in the midterms.

Former President Barack Obama said Jackson's presidential runs in the 1980s set the stage for other Black leaders, including his own successful 2009 presidency and reelection.

"The message he sent to a 22-year-old child of a single mother with a funny name, an outsider, was that maybe there wasn't any place or any room where we didn't belong," Obama said to the boisterous crowd of thousands. "He paved the road for so many others to follow."

The event drew a slew of elected US leaders. Other notable attendees included actor and producer Tyler Perry, California Gov Gavin Newsom, Colombian President Gustavo Petro, and political activist and theologian Cornel West. Detroit Pistons great and Chicago native Isaiah Thomas also spoke at the event that lasted five hours. (AP)

US to send anti-drone system to Mideast after successful use in Ukraine: officials

LONDON, March 7, (AP) — An American anti-drone system proven to work against Russian drones in Ukraine will soon be sent to the Middle East to bolster U.S. defenses against Iranian drones, two U.S. officials told The Associated Press on Friday.

While the US has used Patriot and THAAD missile systems to take down Iranian missiles successfully, there are limited effective anti-drone defenses now in the Middle East, according to a U.S. defense official, one of two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters.

The US response to countering Iran's Shahed drones has been "disappointing," the other U.S. official said, particularly because the drones fired by Iran are a much more basic version of the same drone that Russia is continuously refining and updating in its war in Ukraine.

The effort to bolster US anti-drone capabilities in the Middle East underscores concerns about the planning for an Iranian retaliatory response across the region to the American and Israeli strikes. Persian Gulf countries have complained they were not given adequate time to prepare for the torrent of



An Iranian Shahed exploding drone launched by Russia flies through the sky seconds before it struck buildings in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Oct 17, 2022. (AP)

Iranian drones and missiles bombarding their territory.

The system that is being sent, known as Merops, flies drones against drones. It is small enough to fit in the back of a midsize pickup truck, can

identify drones and close in on them, using artificial intelligence to navigate when satellite and electronic communications are jammed.

Drones are hard to pinpoint on radar systems calibrated for spotting high-speed missiles and can be mistaken for birds or planes. The Merops system is designed to spot them and take them down. Crucially, the system also is cheaper than firing a missile that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars at a drone that costs less than \$50,000.

The top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Jim Himes of Connecticut, said this week that "we're pretty good at taking missiles down. What is much more problematic for us is the huge inventory of Iranian drones, which are hard to detect and hard to take down."

Himes said the drone attacks present a "math problem" in that the US cannot keep relying on expensive military interceptors, like Patriot systems, to down the quickly and cheaply made Iranian drones.

"It's really, really expensive to take down a cheap drone," he said. "A giant missile going after a tiny little crappy drone."



Firefighters put out the fire in a multi-storey apartment building following a Russian missile attack in Kharkiv, Ukraine on March 7. (AP)

8 killed in Ukraine as Russian missile hits apartment building

KYIV, Ukraine, March 7, (AP) — At least eight people were killed and 10 others, including three children, were wounded on Saturday by a Russian missile that hit a five-story residential building in Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, officials said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the attack and called for an international response. He said that Russia struck Ukraine overnight with 29 missiles and 480 drones, targeting energy facilities in Kyiv and other central regions and with damage reported in at least seven other locations across the country.

According to preliminary data, air defense systems downed 19 missiles and 453 drones with hits from 9 missiles and 26 strike drones recorded at 22 locations.

In Kharkiv, in Ukraine's northeast, emergency workers were combing the rubble, looking for survivors.

In the Kyiv region, damage from debris was reported in three districts, according to local authorities. In the southern Odesa region, 80 firefighters were called in to help battle massive fires at infrastructure facilities following an attack with multiple drones. Ukraine's state rail operator Ukrzaliznytsia said damage to the rail infrastructure forced changes to



Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, (left), speaks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a round table meeting at an EU summit in Brussels on June 27, 2024. (AP)

a number of routes in the center-west of the country.

Also:
BUDAPEST, Hungary: Hungarian authorities temporarily detained seven Ukrainian citizens and seized two armored cars carrying tens of millions of euros (dollars) in cash across Hungary

on suspicion of money laundering, officials said Friday.

The Ukrainians were released Friday, following their detention on Thursday, but Hungarian officials held onto the cash, prompting Ukraine to accuse Hungary's Russia-friendly government of illegally seizing the money.

Belarus pardons 18 prisoners in effort to improve ties with US

TALLINN, Estonia, March 7, (AP) — Belarus' authoritarian president has pardoned 18 more prisoners as part of his recent effort at a rapprochement with the United States.

In a decree announced on Thursday, President Alexander Lukashenko pardoned 18 prisoners, including 15 people convicted on extremism charges, which are widely used in Belarus in politically motivated prosecutions. A total of 11 pardoned prisoners are women, the authorities said in an on-line statement.

This is the latest in a series of prisoner releases, encouraged by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration. Lukashenko, largely shunned by the West since his disputed reelection in 2020 that triggered mass protests and a brutal government crackdown in response, has sought to mend fences with Washington in recent years, including by releasing prisoners.

Since the two leaders spoke on the phone in August, Lukashenko has released 123 prisoners, including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Ales Bialiatski and prominent opposition figures Maria Kolesnikova and Viktor Babaryka. In response, the US lifted sanctions off Belarus' potash fertilizer production and its flagship national airline, Belavia.

Those pardoned this week bring the total number to more than 140. John Coale, the U.S. special envoy for Belarus, hailed the move Thursday on X as "another notable step in the relationship between the US and Belarus as President Trump has tasked me with getting all the political prisoners out."



Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko arrives to attend a meeting of the supreme council of the Union State with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Grand Kremlin Palace in Moscow on Feb 26. (AP)

In the meantime, a total of 1,140 political prisoners remain behind bars, according to the Belarusian human rights group Viasna.

Rights advocates have repeatedly warned that repression in Belarus continues despite the releases, as more people are arrested and convicted. Viasna lawyer Pavel Sapelka compared this practice to a "revolving door."

INTERNATIONAL

Philippines orders 4-day work week in some govt offices to save energy

MANILA, March 7. (Xinhua): Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos on Friday ordered the implementation of a four-day work week in some offices under the executive branch starting Monday as part of government measures to conserve energy and mitigate the impact of the conflict in the Middle East.

In a video message, Marcos said the temporary arrangement would take effect on March 9 and apply to selected executive branch offices.

The order, however, will not cover agencies that provide emergency or essential services, including police, firefighters, and offices that deliver front-line public services.

Marcos also directed all government agencies to conserve energy and reduce their electricity consumption and fuel expenses by 10 to 20 percent.

Travel and activities deemed unnecessary, such as study tours, team-building activities and meetings that can be conducted online, are also temporarily

prohibited, he said.

Marcos said the measures were part of the government's efforts to cushion the impact of rising oil prices linked to the ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

Also:

MANILA: The Philippines and South Korea have elevated their economic partnership through the signing of an upgraded memorandum of understanding (MoU), the Philippines' Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said.

The MoU is aimed at expanding cooperation in trade, investment and economic cooperation at a time of rapid global economic shifts, the DTI said in a press release.

"By institutionalizing a more responsive and forward-looking cooperation mechanism, we are ensuring that trade and investment remain central pillars of a resilient and future-ready Philippine economy," DTI Secretary **Cristina Roque** said.

Under the enhanced framework, the two countries agreed to deepen cooperation in sectors such as automotive, shipbuilding, marine equipment, semi-conductors, electronics and electrical equipment, mold and die, critical raw materials, energy, and the digital economy.

□ □ □

MANILA: Two people were killed and another injured after a truck transporting cattle overturned along a roadside in the northern Philippine city of Baguio, police said Saturday.

Police said the crash occurred on Friday afternoon after the truck's driver lost control when the brakes failed. The truck first hit another vehicle, then swerved, and eventually overturned along the roadside in the mountain city.

Police said the truck driver and a helper died in the accident, while another helper sustained injuries and was taken to a hospital for treatment.



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung lead their delegations during a bilateral meeting at the presidential palace in Manila, Philippines on March 3. (AP)

President vows to reassert US dominance in region

Trump looks to turn attention to Western Hemisphere at Americas summit

DORAL, Fla., March 7. (AP): US President Donald Trump is set to gather with Latin American leaders on Saturday at his Miami-area golf club as his administration looks to demonstrate it's still committed to sharpening US foreign policy focus on the Western Hemisphere even as it deals with five-alarm crises around the globe.

The gathering, dubbed the "Shield of the Americas" summit, comes just two months after Trump ordered an audacious US military operation to capture Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and whisk him and his wife to the US to face drug conspiracy charges.

Looming even larger is Trump's decision to join with Israel to launch a war on Iran one week ago, a conflict that's already left hundreds dead, convulsed global markets and unsettled the broader Middle East.

Trump's time with the Latin American leaders will be limited: He is also set to fly to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to be on hand for the dignified transfer of the six US troops killed in a drone strike on a command center in Kuwait, one day after the US and Is-

rael launched their military campaign against Iran.

But with the summit, Trump will look to turn attention to the Western Hemisphere, at least for a moment. He's vowed to reassert US dominance in the region and push back on what he sees as years of Chinese economic encroachment in America's backyard.

"Under previous leaders, we grew obsessed with every other theater and every other border in the world except our own," Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told regional leaders and defense ministers who gathered in Florida this week for talks on countering drug cartels. "These elites reduced our power and presence in this hemisphere, opting for a benign neglect that was anything but benign."

The leaders of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, and Trinidad and Tobago have confirmed they'll take part in the gathering at the president's Trump National Doral Miami, a golf resort where he's also set to host the Group of 20 summit later this year.



US President Donald Trump speaks with Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a roundtable discussion on college sports in the East Room of the White House on March 6, in Washington. (AP)

The idea for a summit of like-minded conservatives from across the hemisphere emerged from the ashes of what was to be the 10th edition of the Summit

by the White House, had barred Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela from attending the regional gathering. But after leftist leaders in Colombia and Mexico threatened to pull out in protest - and with no commitment from Trump to attend - the Dominican Republic's President Luis Abinader decided at the last minute to postpone the event, citing "deep differences" in the region.

The Shield of the Americas moniker is meant to speak to Trump's vision for a "America First" foreign policy toward the region that leverages U.S. military and intelligence assets unseen in the region since the end of the Cold War.

But notably missing will be the region's two dominant powers - Brazil and Mexico - as well as Colombia, long the linchpin of US anti-narcotics strategy in the region.

Richard Feinberg, who helped plan the first Summit of Americas in 1994 while working at the National Security Council in the Clinton White House, said the contrast couldn't be starker.

"The first Summit of the Americas, with 34 nations and a carefully

negotiated comprehensive agenda for regional competitiveness, projected inclusion, consensus and optimism," said Feinberg, now professor emeritus at the University of California-San Diego. "The hastily convened Shield of the Americas mini-summit conjures a crouched defensiveness, with only a dozen or so attendees huddled around a single dominant figure."

Since returning to the White House, Trump has made countering Chinese influence in the hemisphere a top priority. His national security strategy touts what it dubs the "Trump Corollary" to the 19th century Monroe Doctrine - which had sought to ban European incursions in the Americas - by targeting Chinese infrastructure projects, military cooperation and investment in the region's resource industries.

The first demonstration of the more muscular approach was Trump's strong-arming of Panama to withdraw from China's Belt and Road Initiative and review long-term port contracts held by a Hong Kong-based firm amid US threats to retake the Panama Canal.



People walk through floodwaters after heavy rains in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 7. (AP)

23 dead after heavy rains pound Kenya's capital overnight

Twenty-three people died, flights were disrupted and the military was deployed as motorists in the Kenyan capital were stranded for hours on Saturday after roads were flooded following heavy rains overnight.

George Seda, the police boss in Nairobi, said Saturday that some of the people drowned and others were electrocuted, warning that the death toll may rise as search and rescue operations continue. Seda also said that more than 100 vehicles were damaged, with some overturning on the roadside and in parking bays.

Kenya Airways Saturday said flights were disrupted, with some diverted to the coastal city of Mombasa, and that disruptions would continue for hours.

The military was deployed to assist emergency rescue services, and the local toll road operator waived fees for an elevated road.

Heavy rain began on Friday and continued overnight, submerging vehicles and forcing motorists in some areas to wade through hip-high water to reach higher ground. (AP)

Former rapper's political party leads early results in Nepal's election

KATHMANDU, Nepal, March 7. (AP): Preliminary and partial results released Saturday showed a new political party led by an ex-rapper leading Nepal's parliamentary election, the country's first since last year's youth-led revolt.

The Rastriya Swatantra, or National Independent, Party, had already won 27 of 165 directly elected seats and was leading in 90 other constituencies in the results published by Nepal's Election Commission.

Its prime ministerial candidate is rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah, who won the 2022 Kathmandu mayoral race and emerged as a leading figure in the 2025 uprising that ousted former Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli.

The 35-year-old highlighted health and education for poor Nepalis as a key focus of his campaign, which rode a wave of public anger toward traditional political parties.

He's running directly against Oli in a southeastern district, where he has a substantial lead on the former prime minister as counting continues.

The six other seats that have been called went to the Nepal Congress party and two communist parties.



Ranjun Darshana, a candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives from Rastriya Swatantra Party, celebrate with supporters in Kathmandu, Nepal on March 6. (AP)

Voters are directly electing 165 members to the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of Parliament. The remaining 110 seats in the 275-member body will be allocated through a proportional representation system, under which political parties are allocated seats based on their share

of the vote.

Vote counting was continuing in most of country's constituencies Saturday and final results are expected within the next two days. Ballot boxes were being collected from remote mountain villages in the northern parts of the country using helicopters.

Islamic militants abduct more than 300 in northeastern Nigeria: officials

ABUJA, Nigeria, March 7. (AP): Islamic militants attacked a town in northeastern Nigeria on Friday, abducting more than 300 people, including women and children, local officials said.

The attack happened in the town of Ngoshe in Borno state, according to Bulama Sawa, an official from the Gwoza area. He told The Associated Press the attack was likely in retaliation for an operation by the military that killed three commanders of the militant Boko Haram group.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for Friday's attack. Nigeria is battling a complex security crisis from different armed groups. The United States has sent troops to the West African nation to help advise its military on the fight against insecurity.

Separate attacks this week also took place in the communities of Konduga, Marte, Jakana, and Mainok between Wednesday and early Friday, according to a military spokesperson.

The spokesperson, Uba Sani, said the troops were able to repel the attacks on the communities of Konduga, Marte, Jakana and Mainok, but "a number of brave soldiers paid the supreme price in the line of duty," along with a senior officer. He did not elaborate on military casualties.



People listen to Babagana Zulum, the Borno state governor, in Pulka, Nigeria on March 6, after they fled an attack by Islamic militants in Ngoshe. (AP)

Sani described the assaults as "failed attacks" and said they showed "increasing desperation of terrorist elements under sustained operational pressure" from the military.

Ulf Laessing, with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, said Friday's attack on Ngoshe took advantage of the Nigerian army's difficulties in controlling large swaths of the country where

jihadi groups operate. Militants are also benefiting from increased cross-border cooperation between their groups and the use of drones to scout out their targets before attacking.

"The army is fighting a ghost - fighters descending with motorbikes on villages and disappearing into the bush before the army can respond in time," said Laessing.

Pakistan, Afghanistan claim killing dozens of other side's troops in relentless fighting

ISLAMABAD, March 7. (AP): Pakistani and Afghan forces launched multiple strikes at each other in cross-border clashes on Friday, and each side claimed to have killed dozens more enemy troops in what has been the deadliest fighting yet between the two neighbors - a conflict that Islamabad has declared to be an "open war."

Repeated appeals from the international community for restraint have had no effect as the fighting, now in its ninth day, continued unabated.

Also on Friday, a suicide car bomber struck a security post in the district of North Waziristan, which borders Afghanistan. One civilian was killed and 18 were wounded, several of them seriously, a local doctor, Mohammad Asif, said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility but suspicion was likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, who often target Pakistani forces and civilians in the region.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban-run government's Defense Ministry said Friday its forces "destroyed numerous Pakistani military posts" along the border in Nangarhar, Kandahar, Kunar, Paktia, and Khost provinces, killing dozens of Pakistani soldiers.

Pakistani state-run media said the country's air force and ground troops inflicted heavy losses in their latest strikes targeting Afghan forces and the Pakistani Taliban - also known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP. Islamabad



Local residents remove pieces of mortar shell fired by Afghan forces, which damaged their house at a village in Khyber, a district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering with Afghanistan on March 5. (AP)

said the fighting is ongoing and that the military "inflicted heavy losses" on Afghanistan, without elaborating.

Pakistan has repeatedly accused the Taliban government in Afghanistan's capital of harboring the TTP, a charge Kabul denies. Since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the TTP has stepped up its attacks within Pakistan.

Islamabad says its military operations, which started last week, will continue until Afghanistan takes verifiable steps to rein in the TTP and other mili-

tants operating from its territory.

The UN refugee agency said in a statement Thursday that the Afghanistan-Pakistan border clashes have so far displaced about 115,000 people in Afghanistan and around 3,000 people in Pakistan.

The UN mission in Afghanistan has urged for a halt in the fighting, saying it's worsening Afghanistan's already grave humanitarian situation. The mission, known as UNAMA, said Friday on X that so far, 56 civilians have been killed inside Afghanistan.

Kuwait oil price rises to \$98.48 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 7, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil edged up by USD 5.67 to hit USD 98.48 per barrel (pb) on Friday, compared to USD 92.81 the previous day, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

In global markets, the price of Brent crude went up by USD 7.63 to reach USD 93.04 per barrel, and West Texas Intermediate surged by USD 10.26 to USD 91.27 pb.

Other Voices

Hormuz risk looms

Oil near triple digits

By Kamel Al-Harami
Independent Oil Analyst

Oil prices are approaching triple digits but they have not reached the milestone of \$100 per barrel, although oil traders and speculators are talking about prices well above \$150 per barrel. It has not happened... yet. Perhaps it could occur if the Strait of Hormuz, which controls 20 percent of the world's crude oil supply, were to be closed.



Al-Harami

It may be that the war has not started and the closure of the strait outside the Arabian Gulf has not occurred, or perhaps it never will. The question is - How long will the current state of threats persist?

The sudden escalation of tensions and the destruction of Iran's infrastructure, along with the near elimination of its army, raise further questions. What comes next in the war, and how will it be resolved, especially after the near destruction of nearly every city in Iran?

Oil is now under threat as the Gulf becomes a potential battleground, with oil tankers facing uncertainty over their routes, destinations, and ports for loading oil. Storage capacity is becoming limited, whether it takes one week or three weeks to find available ullage to store crude oil. This will inevitably lead to a reduction in crude production from oil fields, as well as in the output of products from Arabian Gulf refineries.

A reduction in refining throughput is imminent, driven by the slow movement of oil tankers through the Gulf, the risks of war, and rising insurance costs. The Gulf is no longer safe and is increasingly too

risky for navigation. Sailing through it has become difficult, and the question remains - why take the risk?

Fortunately, global markets are closed for the next two days. However, if the war on Iran continues, oil markets are likely to face even greater pressure. The longer the war continues, the firmer the oil prices will become, potentially reaching and surpassing \$100 per barrel, especially if any Gulf crude-producing country halts production or if tanker traffic through the Arabian Gulf is disrupted.

Any threats or signs of closing the Strait of Hormuz would almost certainly trigger panic in the oil markets, sending prices soaring well above \$100 per barrel.

The current situation has also led to a relaxation on Russian oil, allowing India to resume imports of Russian crude following an agreement with the U.S. administration. India relies on oil from both the Gulf region and Russia, leaving it with limited alternatives, which pressured the U.S. to accommodate its request. This arrangement is likely to remain in place for some time.

The world did not anticipate the outbreak of a joint war between the USA and Israel against a solitary Iran. Now that the war with Iran has begun, the Arabian Gulf countries has ended up in the middle. No one knows how it will end or at what cost.

Oil prices are rising and may reach historic levels, fueling high inflation and driving up the cost of every single item in households worldwide.

Difficult and challenging days lie ahead. Ending the war quickly is the only solution, but that is a hopeful wish. With oil prices soaring beyond \$100 per barrel, inflation will continue to climb.

The war has begun. The world must act to stop it as soon as possible.

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Business

Kuwait's overseas refineries operating normally amid rising regional frictions

Duqm refinery achieves 10% capacity increase

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The operations of the refineries of Kuwait in other countries are proceeding normally, given their substantial reserves, which are sufficient for extended periods, say reliable sources.

Sources pointed out that even if the current crisis between the United States and Israel and Iran continues and the Strait of Hormuz is completely closed, the operations of these refineries will not stop.

Sources said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) will utilize all available alternatives to ensure the delivery of oil shipments to its overseas refineries, especially since a single oil tanker can carry at least two million barrels of oil.

Sources indicated that the Nghi Son refinery in Vietnam, in which KPC holds a 35.1 percent stake and has a daily refining capacity of 200,000 barrels per day, has increased its production capacity from 110 percent to 120 percent over the past two years.

Sources added the refinery implemented a strategy that enabled it to further raise its capacity to 125 per-

cent in January and February 2026.

Sources revealed that Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), the international arm of KPC, successfully managed the Nghi Son refinery and played a significant role in its transformation from losses to recovery and profitability, ultimately enabling it to exceed its daily refining capacity.

Sources stated that the refinery incurred enormous losses -- around \$1 billion in 2023 due to fluctuating oil prices and declining demand for petroleum products. Sources attributed these losses to a two-month maintenance shutdown, increased loan interest rates and the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the global economic and oil sectors.

Regarding the Duqm refinery in Oman, jointly owned by KPI and Oman's OQ Group and considered the largest joint Gulf investment project, sources disclosed this refinery achieved what seemed impossible in record time, as it succeeded in increasing its capacity by 10 percent within a few months -- an accomplishment unprecedented in the history of global refineries.

Meanwhile, the newspaper obtained a copy of an official document, confirming that the efforts of KPI led to a remarkable operational transformation at Duqm refinery.

Through the implementation of several high-quality initiatives, the refinery achieved financial savings of \$41.1 million by March 2025.

The document also revealed that the refinery passed the lenders' reliability test due to its compliance with all financing requirements, enabling it to benefit from shareholder guarantees exceeding \$4 billion.

The document stated that the Italian Milazzo refinery, in which KPC holds a 50 percent stake, possesses significant operational capabilities and a proven track record of improved efficiency.

It affirmed that in recent months, Milazzo modified its sour crude oil processing unit, enhancing the refinery's operational flexibility and efficiency and enabling it to refine multiple types of crude oil.

Regarding safety and security, the document stated that one of Milazzo's most notable achievements is completing four consecutive years without any incidents, up to May 2025.

This accomplishment reflects the efficiency of the operational team of the refinery, the strength of its organizational model, and the effectiveness of its safety culture.

The document added that the capabilities and leadership of the Kuwaiti negotiator in the international refining sector played a significant role in these achievements.

It added that the overseas refineries, in which KPC holds substantial stakes, were designed to meet the technical specifications of Kuwaiti crude oil, thereby ensuring secure and sustainable outlets for Kuwaiti oil.

Regular training ensures KPC's high preparedness levels

Kuwait oil sector maintains untapped strategic reserves

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: CEO of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah stated that the corporation has prepared well-considered plans to deal with various crises and potential scenarios, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on Wednesday, he revealed that a comprehensive plan is in place to meet the needs of the local market, particularly given the current regional situation.

Sheikh Nawaf explained that the safety of employees in the oil sector and the security of operational processes are top priorities for KPC and take precedence over all other considerations. KPC's crisis plans, including those addressing the current regional situation, are continuously reviewed and updated. Regular training programs are also implemented to maintain a high level of preparedness and

ensure efficient handling of any developments.

KPC's procedures prioritize the safety of its employees first, followed by ensuring the continuous supply of essential petroleum products to the local market, including gasoline, diesel, and gas cylinders for domestic use.

KPC maintains a comprehensive long-term strategic reserve of these products. This reserve has not yet been utilized, as crude oil production and refining operations continue uninterrupted to meet the needs of the local market.

Sheikh Nawaf commended the role of oil sector personnel working near vital sites, ensuring the stability of Kuwait's economic lifeblood by overseeing the efficient and continuous supply of all necessary petroleum products to the local market.

As part of its social responsibility

Weyay enhances financial awareness & expands its secure digital services through its user-friendly app

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: In light of the current circumstances and as part of its social responsibility, Weyay Bank, Kuwait's first fully digital bank, continues to play a leading role in enhancing financial awareness and promoting financial inclusion. The Bank remains dedicated to offering round-the-clock digital banking services designed to support people across different segments of the community and meet their daily needs with ease and security.

Weyay Bank's fully digital strategy reflects the level of flexibility customers seek today, enabling them to open their accounts and manage all their banking services easily, anytime and anywhere, through the app. Immediately after opening an account, customers receive a digital card that can be used right away for online payments and digital wallets. For those who prefer a physical card, Weyay offers an easy way to request one, ensuring a complete and seamless banking experience.

To further enhance customer convenience, the Bank has introduced significant improvements to its card delivery service. Customers can now choose the most convenient delivery slot, track their card delivery, and view the expected delivery time. These upgrades offer greater transparency and comfort, especially at a time when fast and flexible service access is essential.

Weyay Bank also employs an advanced digital security framework aligned with the Cybersecurity Framework issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, ensuring the highest levels of protection, especially as current conditions bring increased reliance on



digital transactions. The Bank uses identity verification through the Kuwait Mobile ID app by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), particularly when resetting a password, with an added liveness check to ensure the request is made by the legitimate account holder. The Bank also sends instant alerts for

any activity on the account, reinforcing transparency and enabling quick response.

For added safety, customers must enable e-wallet service from within the Weyay app before adding their Weyay cards to digital wallets, a step that significantly reduces the risk of fraud amid rising global cyber threats. The Bank has also introduced in-app authentication for online purchases on retail websites, offering stronger protection and preventing unauthorized use.

To ensure banking access is inclusive and effortless for everyone, Weyay offers a dedicated pathway for customers with disabilities. Individuals with mild disabilities can upload their disability certificate through the app and complete their account opening smoothly, demonstrating the Bank's commitment to delivering fair and accessible experiences for all.

Weyay further reinforces its readiness through its 24/7 in-app chat support, ensuring customers receive immediate assistance for urgent questions or needs. This continuous support enhances overall service efficiency and speed.

Amid today's financial challenges, the Bank provides a range of innovative digital saving tools, including saving pots, budgeting features, and spending trackers, along with seamless local and international transfers tailored to customers' daily needs.

With its advanced digital ecosystem, Weyay Bank continues to empower customers to manage their finances responsibly, elevate their financial awareness, and enjoy a secure, modern banking experience that meets their needs in all circumstances.

Corporate titles carry legal risk

When is a director liable for acts they did not commit?

By Attorney Shaikha Aljulaibi

A common informal phrase in certain corporate settings is: "He is a director in name only."

Legally, this concept does not exist. The law recognizes registered authority not informal internal arrangements.



Shaikha Aljulaibi

Accepting the title of director means accepting its legal consequences.

Position as Legal Obligation
A managing partner or board member assumes:

- Duty of care
- Duty of loyalty
- Institutional oversight obligations
- Conflict-of-interest prevention

Intervention upon red flags
Liability does not arise solely from action, but also from negligent omission.

Circumstances of Exposure
Director liability may arise from:

- Weak compliance architecture
- Unmonitored delegation
- Constructive knowledge
- Passive facilitation through inaction

The standard applied is that of a reasonably prudent director in comparable circumstances.

The Nominal Director Culture
In some businesses, individuals are appointed as directors:

- For administrative convenience
- To satisfy regulatory formality

For familial or relational considerations
To shield actual decision-makers

This practice creates a dangerous structural divide between:

- Actual control
- Legal accountability

A nominal director may not ex-

ercise operational authority, yet remains legally exposed.

Regulatory and judicial bodies examine:

- Registered authority
- Supervisory conduct
- Institutional negligence
- Not undocummented internal understandings.

Structural Risk to the Market

The nominal director culture:

- Weakens transparency
- Distorts accountability
- Complicates liability allocation
- Encourages governance opacity

In a compliance-driven regulatory environment, separation between authority and responsibility becomes unsustainable.

Modern governance demands alignment.

Practical Scenario:

I. A company is effectively controlled by an unregistered decision-maker.

II. The registered director does not review accounts, approve controls, or demand reporting.

III. A serious regulatory violation occurs.

IV. The legal inquiry will focus on supervisory failure not informal internal dynamics.

V. Claiming "I was not managing" may demonstrate structural weakness, but it does not eliminate exposure.

Strategic Insight for Entrepreneurs

Registered authority defines legal exposure. Delegation does not extinguish oversight responsibility. Informal power arrangements do not override statutory duty. Nominal directorship can evolve into criminal exposure under certain conditions. In Kuwait's tightening regulatory landscape, Managerial responsibility is indivisible.

Conclusion

A director is accountable not only for what they do, but for what they fail to prevent. The illusion of the nominal director collapses under the standard of professional care. In a market moving toward structured governance, Management is not symbolic; it is continuous legal responsibility.

Trump unveils \$20 billion Gulf insurance plan

Experts warn of prolonged energy shock as security fears choke oil shipping

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): The price of oil surged higher and showed no signs of halting its rapid climb a week after the U.S. and Israel launched major attacks on Iran that escalated into a war in the Middle East.

The conflict, in which nearly every country in the Middle East has sustained damage from missiles or drone strikes, has left ships that carry roughly 20 million barrels of oil a day stranded in the Arabian Gulf, unable to safely pass through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Gulf that is bordered on its north side by Iran.

The disruption and damage to key oil and gas facilities in the Middle East has led to an interruption in the supply of oil and gas.

Oil prices surpassed \$90 a barrel Friday, with American crude settling at \$90.90, up 36% from a week ago, and Brent, the international standard, climbing 27% over the course of the week to land at \$92.69.

The fallout is ratcheting up what consumers and business will pay for gasoline, diesel and jet fuel, with some drivers already feeling it at the pump.

"It's crazy. It's not needed, especially at a time when people are already struggling, but not unexpected from all this turmoil that's going on," said Mark Doran, who was pumping gas in Middlebury, Vermont Friday. "I don't think there's been an end in sight to any Middle East conflict that's been started by us, so the fact that they say that there's going to be an end that quickly is not believable, and the Middle East is, you know, a place that the U.S. is not going to solve."

On Monday, President Donald Trump said that the U.S. expected its military operations against Iran to last four to five weeks but has "the capability to go far longer." And on Friday, Trump appeared to rule out talks with Iran absent its "unconditional surrender."

"The more news we get, the more it seems like this is going to last a really long time," said Al Salazar, head of macro oil and gas research at Enverus.

In the U.S., a gallon of regular gasoline rose to \$3.32 on Friday, up 11% from a week ago, according to AAA motor club. Diesel was selling for \$4.33 a gallon Friday, up 15% from a week ago.

The price shocks were felt even more heavily in Europe and Asia, markets that rely more heavily on energy supplies from the Middle East. Diesel prices doubled in Europe, and jet fuel prices rose by close to 200% in Asia, according to Claudio Galimberti, chief economist at Rystad Energy.

Energy prices climbed throughout the week as Iran launched a series of retaliatory attacks, including a drone strike on the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia, and the conflict widened. Iran also hit a major refinery in Saudi Arabia and a liquefied

natural gas (LNG) facility in Qatar, halting flows of refined products and taking about 20% of the world's LNG supply offline.

"We keep seeing news of vessels being hit or refineries or pipelines, so the list is very long," Galimberti said. As a result, roughly 9 million barrels of oil per day are off the market because of facilities being hit or producers taking precautionary measures, he said. "Right now, with all of this shut in, we are in a situation of extreme deficit."

The U.S. is a net exporter of oil, but that does not mean it is immune to increases in the price of oil or gasoline, or that its producers can just make up the difference.

Oil is traded on global markets, so even the oil produced in the U.S. has risen in price based on what's happening in the Middle East. And for many American oil producers, "if you put more wells in the ground, there's about a six-month lag before you get that production uplift," Salazar said.

In addition, the U.S. can't simply turn all of its crude oil into gasoline. That's because most of the oil produced in the U.S. is light, sweet crude, and refineries on the East and West coasts are primarily designed to process heavier, sour crude. As a result, the U.S. exports some of its crude oil and imports some refined products such as gasoline.

Jerry Dalpiaz of Covington, Louisiana, said he started filling up his cars and gas cans on "the day that they announced that the United States has started military operations against Iran" because he assumed gas prices would climb.

"I can weather the storm because I'm in good financial position, but I feel sorry for my fellow citizens who are living paycheck to paycheck because they have to drive to get to work and they have to change their oil and all those things," Dalpiaz said. "And they need some relief and it doesn't seem to be coming anytime soon."

Trump issued a plan Friday to insure losses up to approximately \$20 billion in the Gulf region, aiming to restore confidence in maritime trade, help stabilize international commerce and support American and allied businesses operating in the Middle East.

But some energy experts said extra insurance won't solve the problem.

"The problem is that in the oil trading, oil shipping world, people are worried about counterterrorism," said Amy Jaffe, director of the Energy, Climate Justice and Sustainability Lab at New York University, adding that they're worried about automated drone speedboats, weapon-carrying, flying drones and mines or other devices. "In order for the United States to create the atmosphere that undoes the current bottleneck at the Strait of Hormuz, there has to be some credible demonstration of solutions to the counter-terrorism problem."

BUSINESS

EU faces rising gas prices

US allocates India 30-day waiver to buy Russian oil

FRANKFURT, March 7, (AP): The U.S. Treasury Department's decision to allow India to buy Russian oil for 30 days underscores a boost for Moscow's fortunes against the backdrop of the Iran war as Russia's oil exports help Kremlin pay for its own war on Ukraine.

The Treasury Department this week said India can keep buying crude oil and petroleum products from Russia for a month, until April 4.

That measure is aimed at helping ease upward pressure on oil prices that affect gasoline costs for U.S. consumers. But it also underlines how the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran is tightening the markets for oil and gas - including Russia's crude.

China and India became Russia's biggest customers for oil after Moscow's full-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 provoked a boycott by the European Union, formerly the biggest importer from Russia.

U.S. President Donald Trump had slapped 25% tariffs on India for continuing to purchase Russian oil. Indian oil imports from Russia diminished after Trump dropped the tariff Feb. 6 in return for what he said was a promise to stop buying Russian oil.

On Friday, international benchmark Brent crude rose to \$89 per barrel, up from just under \$73 a week ago, on the eve of the new war in the Middle East. Russia's Urals blend export hit \$70, up from below \$40 as recently as December.

The widening war in Iran and the risk of Iranian drone or missile attacks has shut down almost all tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the only sea passage out of Persian Gulf and the conduit for 20% of the world economy's oil needs.

Tankers traveling through the strait, which is bordered in the north by Iran, carry oil and gas from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Iran. Now nothing is going through.

Soaring oil prices after the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz oil chokepoint have meant at least a temporary reversal of fortune for Russia's fossil fuel revenues.

That revenue had dwindled due to previously weak global prices and tightening Western sanctions on Russia's "shadow fleet" of tankers with obscure ownership used to evade a price cap imposed by the Group of Seven democracies, as well as sanctions against Russia's two biggest oil companies, Rosneft and Lukoil.

In granting a month's reprieve to India, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the 30-day period would "not provide significant financial benefit" to the Russian government as it only applied to Russian oil stranded on tankers after no customer could be found.

Analysts estimated that could be some 125 million barrels of crude. "This stop-gap measure will alleviate pressure caused by Iran's attempt to take global energy hos-

tage," Bessent said on X.

Russian oil still trades at a considerable discount to international benchmark Brent. However, Russian crude is now well above the benchmark of \$59 per barrel that was assumed in the Russian Finance Ministry's budget plan for 2026.

Oil and gas tax revenues can amount to 20% to 30% of the Russian federal budget. Tax is based on the price of oil once Russian producers have covered their costs of around \$15 per barrel, so a fall in the price can substantially reduce revenue to the government.

Additionally, the halt in production of ship-borne liquefied natural gas, or LNG, by major supplier Qatar - suspended after an Iranian drone strike on Qatar's largest LNG plant early on in the Iran war - will sharply increase global competition for available cargoes, including those from Russia.

Prices for future delivery of natural gas have soared in Europe, raising questions about the EU's plans to halt its remaining imports of Russian gas by 2027.

Much depends on how long the war with Iran lasts. In the first week, the effects of the conflict that began with the United States and Israel's Feb. 28 strikes on Iran are widening and now encompass more than a dozen countries.

Oil market analysts say that if it ends within a week or two, oil prices could quickly fall to pre-war levels around \$65 per barrel and Russia would see little benefit.

However, a longer conflict - one that leaves long-term damage to oil fields, pipelines and terminals in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE and Kuwait, and sends oil prices over \$100 per barrel - could deliver a lasting windfall to Russia.

Russia had seen state oil and gas revenue fall to a four-year low of 393 billion rubles (\$5 billion) in January and the budget shortfall of 1.7 trillion rubles (\$21.8 billion) for that month was the biggest on record, according to Finance Ministry figures.

Economic growth has stagnated as massive military spending has leveled off. As oil and gas revenues to the state budget fell, President Vladimir Putin has resorted to tax increases and increased borrowing from compliant domestic banks to keep state finances on an even keel in the fifth year of the war.

Asked about the waiver, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov noted the increased demand on Russian oil amid the Mideast war and said that "India and China are guided by their national interests, and we do the same."

"We continue our cooperation, including the energy field and energy trade, with India and China," Peskov said. "We note a significant increase in demand for Russian energy resources in connection with the Iran war," he added. "Russia has been a reliable supplier of oil and gas. It can guarantee all contracted supplies."

Trump raises tariffs to 15% limit

States sue Trump over new tariffs

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP): Some two dozen states challenged President Donald Trump's new global tariffs on Thursday, filing a lawsuit over import taxes he imposed after a stinging loss at the Supreme Court.

The Democratic attorneys general and governors in the lawsuit argue that Trump is overstepping his power with planned 15% tariffs on much of the world.

Trump has said the tariffs are essential to reduce America's longstanding trade deficits. He imposed duties under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 after the Supreme Court struck down tariffs he imposed last year under an emergency powers law.

Section 122, which has never been invoked, allows the president to impose tariffs of up to 15%. They are limited to five months unless extended by Congress.

The lawsuit is led by attorneys general from Oregon, Arizona, California and New York.

"The focus right now should be on paying people back, not doubling down on illegal tariffs," said Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield. The suit comes a day after a judge ruled that companies who paid tariffs under Trump's old framework should get refunds.

The White House said Trump is acting within his power. "The President is using his authority granted by Congress to address fundamental international payments problems and to deal with our country's large and serious balance-of-payments deficits," said spokesman Kush Desai. "The Administration will vigorously defend the President's action in court."

The new suit argues that Trump can't pivot to Section 122 because it was intended to be used only in specific, limited circumstances - not for sweeping import taxes. It also contends the tariffs will drive up costs for states, businesses and consumers.

Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes pointed to a New York Federal Reserve Bank study that found Americans largely bear the cost of the tariffs, which has been estimated at \$1,200 a year per household. "That is money out of the pockets of American families trying to buy groceries, pay rent and keep their small businesses afloat," Mayes said.

Bessent told CNBC on Wednesday that the administration would raise the levies to the 15% limit this week.

The Democratic states and other critics say the president can't use Section 122 as a replacement for the defunct tariffs to combat the trade deficit.

The Section 122 provision is aimed at what it calls "fundamental international payments problems." At issue is whether that wording covers trade deficits, the gap between what the U.S. sells other countries and what it buys from them.

Section 122 arose from the financial crises that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s when the U.S. dollar was tied to gold. Other countries were dumping dollars in exchange for gold at a set rate, risking a collapse of the U.S. currency and chaos in financial markets. But the dollar is no longer linked to gold, so critics say Section 122 is obsolete.

Awkwardly for Trump, his own Justice Department argued in a court filing last year that the president needed to invoke the emergency powers act because Section 122 did "not have any obvious application" in fighting trade deficits, which it called "conceptually distinct" from balance-of-payment issues.

Still, some legal analysts say the Trump administration has a stronger case this time.

"The legal reality is that courts will likely provide President Trump substantially more deference regarding Section 122 than they did to his previous tariffs under IEEPA," Peter Harrell, visiting scholar at Georgetown University's Institute of International Economic Law, wrote in a commentary Wednesday.

The specialized Court of International Trade in New York, which will hear the states' lawsuit, wrote last year in its own decision striking down the emergency-powers tariffs that Trump didn't need them because Section 122 was available to combat trade deficits.

Trump does have other legal authorities he can use to impose tariffs, and some have already survived court tests. Duties that Trump imposed on Chinese imports during his first term under Section 301 of the same 1974 trade act are still in place.

Also joining the lawsuit are the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and the governors of Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

Oil surge and weak jobs sink Wall St

Fed's rate cuts in jeopardy from oil-driven inflation

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): Oil shot to its highest price since 2023 after surging again Friday because of the Iran war, and a weak update on the U.S. job market knocked stocks lower to cap Wall Street's worst week since October.

The S&P 500 dropped 1.3% after a report showed U.S. employers cut more jobs last month than they created and after oil prices spiked above \$90 per barrel. The combination of a weak economy and high inflation is a worst-case scenario for investors because the Federal Reserve has no good tool to fix both problems at the same time.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged as many as 945 points before finishing with a loss of 453, or 0.9%, and the Nasdaq composite sank 1.6%.

"You can't sugarcoat this report," according to Brian Jacobsen, chief economic strategist at Annex Wealth Management. "A negative payrolls number combined with a big jump in oil prices will have traders worrying about stagflation risks."

Stagflation is what economists call the miserable mix of a stagnating economy with high inflation, and a separate report released Friday added to the sourness after showing that U.S. retailers made less money in January than economists expected. It raised the disconcerting possibility that spending by U.S. households, the main engine of the economy, may be stretched near its maximum.

Usually when the economy is unsteady and the job market is weakening, the Federal Reserve cuts interest rates to give things a boost. Lower rates can make it easier for households to get mortgages and for companies to raise money to expand, while also lifting prices for stocks and other investments. The Fed cut its main interest rate several times last year and had indicated more were to come this year.

But lower interest rates can also make inflation worse. And the Fed's hands may be increasingly tied because spiking oil prices are pushing inflation higher due to disruptions for the energy industry.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, leaped another 8.5% to settle at \$92.69. It briefly rose above \$94 to touch its highest level since September 2023.

A barrel of benchmark U.S. crude breached the \$90 level for the first time since 2023 and jumped 12.2% to \$90.90.

Oil prices have surged, with Brent up from near \$70 late last week, as the war has expanded and included areas critical to the production and movement of oil and gas in the Middle East. Much will



Pedestrians mill about outside the New York Stock Exchange in New York, Friday, March 6, 2026. (AP)

depend on what happens with the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's coast, where roughly a fifth of the world's oil typically sails.

The U.S. government gave details Friday about a plan President Donald Trump announced earlier to offer insurance to ships crossing the strait, but it had little effect on the market.

If oil prices spike further, like to \$100 per barrel, and stay there, some analysts and investors say it could be too much for the global economy to withstand.

To be sure, the U.S. stock market has a history of bouncing back relatively quickly following conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere, as long as oil prices don't jump too high for too long. Uncertainty about just how high oil prices will go this time around and for how long caused frenetic swings across financial markets this past week, sometimes hour by hour.

On Monday, the S&P 500 tumbled to an immediate 1.2% loss at the start of trading but made it all back and ended the day with a tiny gain.

Trump's most recent signal on the war was that he wants an "unconditional surrender" of Iran, apparently ruling out negotiations.

In the bond market, Treasury yields wavered, with higher oil prices pushing upward on them and the discouraging updates on the U.S. economy pulling downward.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury initially rose toward 4.19% before pulling back to 4.14%. That's up from 4.13% late Thursday and just 3.97% a week earlier.

Smaller companies often feel the bite of high borrowing costs more because many need to borrow to grow. Smaller companies can also be more dependent on the strength of the U.S. economy for their profits than big multinational rivals, and the smallest stocks on Wall Street took Friday's sharp-dive.

The Russell 2000 index of small stocks fell a market-leading 2.3%.

Among the big companies in the S&P 500, companies with high fuel bills helped lead the way lower. Old Dominion Freight Line sank 7.9%, cruise line Carnival fell 5% and Southwest Airlines lost 5.3%.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 90.69 points to 6,740.02. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 453.19 to 47,501.55, and the Nasdaq composite sank 361.31 to 22,387.68.

In stock markets abroad, indexes slumped in Europe following a better finish in Asia. London's FTSE 100 fell 1.2%, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 1.7%.

South Korea's Kospi was nearly unchanged after plunging 12.1% Wednesday for its worst loss in history and then rebounding 9.6% Thursday.

China calls for 'green mining' and global cooperation

U.N. warns critical mineral demand could quadruple by 2040

UNITED NATIONS, March 7, (AP): Demand for critical minerals that power technology from smartphones to missiles could triple by 2030 and quadruple by 2040, the United Nations political chief told the U.N. Security Council on Thursday.

"A decade ago, minerals such as lithium, cobalt and nickel had limited strategic importance," Undersecretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo said. "Today, they underpin the technologies powering the digital economy and the energy transition."

She spoke at a signature event chosen by the United States, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, entitled "Energy, Critical Minerals and Security."

Calling critical minerals one of the main drivers of the 21st century economy, DiCarlo said that in 2023, trade in raw and semi-processed minerals reached approximately \$2.5 trillion.

"This represents more than 10% of global trade," she said. "Demand could triple by 2030 and quadruple by 2040." Her office said the figures and projection were from U.N. reports in 2025.

U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright, who chaired the meeting, said it is in the security interest of the U.S. and its allies not to be overly dependent on any single country "for materials critical to our economies and national security."

"The work we're doing today, especially on the strategic importance of critical minerals and energy, is directly tied to preventing conflict and building a world where countries can cooperate and move forward together," he said.

The Trump administration is making bold moves to shore up supplies of critical minerals needed for electric vehicles, fighter jets and other high-tech products. China, which has had a stranglehold on rare earth minerals, choked off their flow in response to President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs last year.

While the two global powers reached a truce to pull back on the high import taxes and stepped-up rare earth restrictions, China's limits remain tighter than they were before Trump took office. Last month, his administration announced

that it wants to create a critical minerals trading bloc with its allies and partners to counter China's dominance.

China's U.N. Ambassador Fu Cong told the council that as the global energy transition accelerates and technology including artificial intelligence advances, demand for critical minerals and other resources continues to rise. And he said imbalances in supply and demand are becoming increasingly pronounced "as the world enters a new period of turbulence and transformation."

He urged greater international cooperation to ensure a stable supply of resources and supply chains, "thereby supporting global economic growth."

Fu also urged all countries to participate in an initiative to promote the transformation of the mining sector to "green mining" unveiled by China at the G20 summit in South Africa last November.

As part of the U.S. effort to diversify critical mineral supplies, which also includes Australia and Ukraine, the administration is stepping up cooperation with Venezuela and Congo.

Earlier Thursday, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum said Venezuela's government will give security assurances to mining companies that invest in mineral-rich areas long-controlled by guerrilla members, gangs and other illegal groups.

Last month, Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi offered U.S. companies access to eastern Congo's rich minerals - mostly untapped because of decades of violence and estimated to be worth \$24 trillion - as a bargaining chip for U.S. support to help fight off rebels and build critical infrastructure in the region.

Congo's U.N. Ambassador Zenon Mukongo, a current council member, stressed the need for the private sector, which plays "an essential role in the mineral industry and in global supply chains," to respect national laws and ensure their involvement doesn't contribute to financing armed groups or illegally exploit mineral riches.

Unemployment hits 4.4%

US employers slash 92,000 jobs

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP): American employers unexpectedly cut 92,000 jobs last month, a sign that the labor market remains under strain. The unemployment rate blipped up to 4.4%.

Hiring deteriorated from January, when companies, nonprofits and government agencies added a healthy 126,000 jobs, the Labor Department reported Friday. Economists had expected 60,000 new jobs in February.

Revisions also cut 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls.

The surprisingly weak employment picture in February adds to the economic uncertainty over the war with Iran, which has caused oil prices to surge and saddled business and consumers with unforeseen costs.

"The job market is struggling in the face of so many headwinds," said Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union. "Companies are going to be even more reluctant to hire this spring until the war ends and they can see consumers still spending. It's a tense time for the U.S. economy."

The job market had been expected to rebound this year from a lackluster 2025 when it was buffeted by President Donald Trump's erratic tariff policies, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates. In 2025, employers added just 15,000 jobs a month. Hopes for a 2026 rebound rose after January hiring came in above expectations.

"Just when it looked like the labor market was stabilizing, this report delivers a knock-down blow to that

view," said Olu Sonola, head of U.S. economics at Fitch Ratings. "It's bad news whichever way you look at it."

The job losses were widespread.

Construction companies cut 11,000 jobs last month, which likely reflects frigid weather. And health-care firms shed 28,000 jobs after a four-week strike by more than 30,000 nurses and other front-line workers at Kaiser Permanente in California and Hawaii. Health care has been one of the job market's strong points.

Factories cut 12,000 jobs and have now lost jobs for 14 of the last 15 months. Restaurants and bars lost nearly 30,000 jobs. Administrative and support services firms cut nearly 19,000 jobs and courier and messenger services almost 17,000.

Financial firms added 10,000 jobs, though job cuts continue to hit that sector as well this year.

Average hourly wages rose 0.4% from January and 3.8% from a year earlier.

The outlook for the job market - and the entire economy - is clouded by the war with Iran.

The combination of weak hiring and increasing inflationary pressures arising from the war creates a nightmare for the Federal Reserve, which must decide whether to cut interest rates to help the job market or hold off to help keep a lid on prices. "This is probably the worst scenario for monetary policy," said Eugenio Aleman, chief economist at Raymond James.

Employers were reluctant to hire last year because of uncertainty over Trump's tariffs - and the unpredict-

able way he rolled them out.

The impact of Trump's aggressive trade policies may recede in 2026. His import taxes became smaller and less erratic after he reached a trade truce last year with China and deals with leading U.S. trade partners such as Japan and the European Union. A lot of businesses have also learned how to offset the costs of the tariffs, often by passing them along to customers via higher prices.

Brian Bethune, an economist at Boston College, said that Trump's 2025 tariffs were a shock to companies' business plans. Now, just as they've adjusted to them, "Guess what! All of a sudden their 2026 business plans are upended by an increase in fuel costs" caused by the war with Iran.

Jay Foreman, CEO of the toy company Basic Fun, expects to get some relief from Trump's tariffs after the Supreme Court last month struck down the biggest ones and potentially created a path for importers to get refunds for the levies they paid. The refunds would allow Foreman to invest more in his Boca Raton, Florida, company, which makes Lincoln Logs and Care Bears. He can also hand out more generous raises to employees and hire new people.

"We are expecting a record year," he said.

Yet under new tariffs sought by Trump, Foreman estimates that Basic Fun's tariff bill will more than double this year to \$15 million. That is partly because the firm will be paying for a full year of Trump tariffs in 2026. Tariffs last year were not rolled out until spring or later.

China targets quality growth in 2026 and beyond amid weakening global economy



The opening meeting of the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress is held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 5, 2026. (Xinhua/Wang Ye)

BEIJING, March 7, (Xinhua): China on March 5 set an economic growth target of 4.5 to 5 percent for 2026, aiming for a good start to the new five-year plan that charts the course for high-quality development and offers much-needed certainty to a troubled world economy.

The GDP growth target is well aligned with China's long-range objectives through the year 2035 and broadly in line with the long-term growth potential of China's economy, said a government work report submitted to the country's top legislature for deliberation.

China's economic growth target for 2026 is proactive and pragmatic, reflecting a broad assessment of domestic conditions and shifts in the external environment, said Shen Danyang, head of the group responsible for drafting this year's government work report.

The projected pace would also be among the highest for major economies globally, Shen said.

"The signal this target sends to the international community is clear that China is no longer pursuing growth speed alone," said Zhang Ying, associate dean of the Guanghua School of Management at Peking University, in an interview with Xinhua. "This year's target reflects China's firm commitment to high-quality development."

The country has made it clear that it will strive for better in practice regarding this year's growth target, and favorable conditions for achieving this target are in place, according to the report.

Further assurance

The government work report outlined this year's major tasks, including building a robust domestic market, fostering new growth drivers at a faster pace, and moving faster to achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology.

To achieve these goals, China will continue to implement a more proactive fiscal policy and apply an appropriately accommodative monetary policy. The orientations highlight policy continuity and offer further assurance to a global economy unnerved by trade and geopolitical tensions.

China's global economic heft means its policy moves are pivotal to the world economy. Over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), China saw its economy grow at an average annual pace of 5.4 percent, well above the global average, and contributed around 30 percent of global growth.

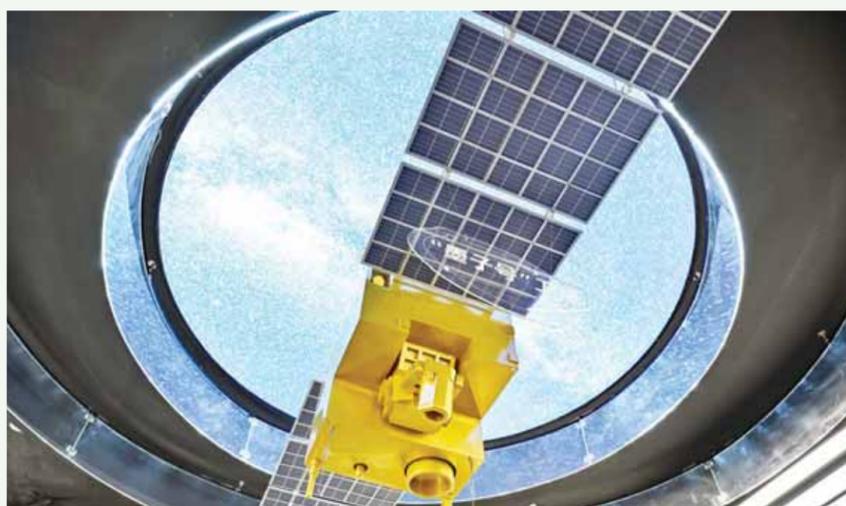
The country has remained the world's second-largest importer for 16 consecutive years, has cemented its position as the world's largest trader of goods, and has become a major trading partner of more than 160 countries and regions.

The weight of the role is only set to grow. According to a World Bank forecast, global growth is projected to ease to 2.6 percent in 2026. If the forecast holds, the 2020s are on track to be the weakest decade for global growth since the 1960s.

"What we achieved in 2025 was indeed hard won," according to the government work report. "Rarely in many years have we encountered such



An aerial drone photo taken on Dec. 15, 2025 shows vessels loading and unloading containers at a container dock of Tangshan Port in Tangshan, north China's Hebei Province. (Photo by Liu Mancang/Xinhua)



This photo taken on July 1, 2025 shows a model of the quantum science satellite Mozi at the science and technology experience center of China Telecom Quantum Group in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province. (Xinhua/Zhang Cheng)

a grave and complex landscape, where external shocks and challenges were intertwined with domestic difficulties and tough policy choices."

Long-term predictability

In a sign of assurance to the troubled global economy in the longer term, China on Thursday unveiled a slew of development priorities for the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030).

The 15th Five-Year Plan sets a clear anchor: doubling China's 2020 per capita GDP by 2035 to reach the level of a moderately developed country. Getting there will require navigating a middle stretch that China has chosen not to over-prescribe, as annual growth targets will be set year by year, a flexibility that reflects both confidence in the trajectory and awareness of the uncertainties ahead.

The 15th Five-Year Plan marks a pivotal stretch in China's modernization drive, and its

ambitions reach well beyond domestic growth metrics. By directing capital into frontier technologies, deepening trade and investment linkages, and advancing green development, the blueprint is poised to affect the global economy across multiple dimensions, from the tempo of the energy transition to the landscape of advanced manufacturing worldwide.

Simon Smith, director and general manager of Taikoo Engine Services (Xiamen) Co., Ltd., an engineering branch of the multinational company Swire Group, said long-term policy clarity changes the calculus for multinationals operating in China.

"The five-year plan transforms investment decisions from probabilistic bets to calculated strategic positioning," Smith told Xinhua in an interview. "Without the plan, the company may hesitate on a specific capability expansion or in-

vestment, uncertain whether regulatory support, skilled labor availability, or customer demand will materialize."

That strategic positioning comes with a concrete roadmap. According to China's technology agenda, the country will nurture emerging industries and industries of the future. During the 2026-2030 period, China will foster new drivers of economic growth such as quantum technology, biomanufacturing, hydrogen and nuclear fusion power, brain-computer interfaces, embodied artificial intelligence, and 6G mobile communications.

Hu Jinbo, a national political advisor and head of the Shanghai Institute of Organic Chemistry, said the next five years represent a critical window for China's economic transition from high-speed growth to high-quality development, and sci-tech innovation will serve as the core engine of this transformation.

Broader opportunities

As China continues to achieve sci-tech innovation breakthroughs, developing countries can draw on China's experience to accelerate their own industrialization, while developed countries will also gain broader opportunities for collaboration in advanced manufacturing and frontier technologies, Hu said.

For the rest of the world, what may matter most in the longer run is not the pace of growth, but its composition. China has set an explicit goal of raising household consumption as a share of GDP over the next five years.

For a global economy straining under the weight of trade tensions, geopolitical fragmentation and weak growth, China's dual pledges -- to sustain its own steady expansion and to open its vast market further to the world -- offer a rare note of predictability.

A more balanced Chinese economy underpinned by stronger domestic demand would generate far-reaching spillover effects globally, according to a recent Bloomberg article citing Robin Xing, chief China economist at Morgan Stanley.

"Chinese and foreign companies alike would benefit from the depth and scale of the China market, which would help cushion today's geopolitical challenges," Xing was quoted as saying.

According to the government work report, China will deepen reform of the institutional framework for promoting foreign investment this year. It will open wider to the outside world, with efforts to expand market access and open up more areas, particularly in the service sector.

Zhang Ying highlighted three aspects of China's opportunities for global investors: a massive unified market with rising purchasing power of residents, highly efficient and cost-effective supply chains, and an increasingly open, pro-investment regulatory environment.

"Against a backdrop of global volatility and macroeconomic headwinds, these fundamentals offer significant appeal to international investors and corporations," Zhang said.

'The Tell' revisits childhood abuse memories revealed in therapy

Woman sues author Griffin, claims memoir stole her abuse story

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): A woman has sued author and venture capitalist Amy Griffin over her bestselling 2025 memoir "The Tell," saying that Griffin's descriptions of childhood sexual abuse in the book were stolen from her experience.

The plaintiff identifies herself only as Jane Doe in the lawsuit filed Wednesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. An attorney for Griffin called the suit "absurd" and "meritless."

In "The Tell," published a year ago, Griffin writes that undergoing therapy using the psychedelic drug MDMA uncovered previously buried childhood memories of being sexually abused by a teacher at her middle school in Amarillo, Texas, in the 1980s.

"I knew that these memories were real," Griffin writes in the book. "My body knew what had happened to me."

The memoir was an Oprah's Book Club selection and was also touted by Reese Witherspoon and Gwyneth Paltrow.

In the lawsuit, the plaintiff says the descriptions match her own sexual assaults by a different teacher at a school dance and in a school bathroom. The lawsuit says Griffin had reason to know about the abuse.

"The Tell" constitutes neither a genuine nor harmless memoir," the lawsuit says, alleging Griffin engaged in intrusion, invasion of privacy, publication of private facts, negligence and infliction of emotional distress. It seeks damages to be determined at trial.

The lawsuit also names Griffin's publishers and a ghostwriter as defendants.

The New York Times published a story in September raising questions about the book. It included people who expressed doubts about the reliability of the memories. The

story also pointed out financial ties between Griffin and the prominent people who helped promote the book.

The plaintiff first learned of the existence of the memoir when the Times reached out to her during its reporting.

"She immediately recognized that the character of Claudia appeared to be based on herself," the lawsuit says. "She further recognized that a number of stories attributed to the memories of Defendant GRIFFIN that supposedly resurfaced during MDMA therapy were actually her own real life past experiences."

Griffin's attorney, Thomas A. Clare, said in an email: "We look forward to exposing these meritless claims in court, as well as the deeply flawed New York Times reporting that is at the center of it."

"Just like the New York Times manufactured a false narrative



Amy Griffin arrives for the Schiaparelli Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection presented in Paris, Thursday, March 5. (AP)

about Amy Griffin and 'The Tell,' it also engineered the premise for this absurd lawsuit," Clare said. "After two New York Times reporters instigated this whole situation by bringing the book to her attention, the Plaintiff made her own choice to publicize her narrative to a global audience." He added, "For its part, the Times took full advantage, publicizing this inaccurate narrative despite receiving many red-flag warnings."

Danielle Rhoades Ha, a Times spokeswoman, said in response, "We're confident in the accuracy of our reporting."

The lawsuit says that when the plaintiff was assaulted at the school dance, she was wearing a dress she had borrowed from Griffin. The lawsuit says the abuse would have been apparent to some people at the dance because of how she left and how she returned. It also says the dress was returned to Griffin with

bodily fluids from the assault. The plaintiff also said she asked Jesus for forgiveness for the assault at a church youth group meeting that Griffin attended.

The lawsuit says she met with Griffin for the first time in decades at a California coffee shop in 2019, a meeting that is recounted in the book. But the woman said she did not discuss her sexual assaults during the meeting.

The plaintiff says she did describe the abuse in detail to a talent agent who called her later about her life story. According to the lawsuit, the agent told the plaintiff he learned about her and her stories through an unidentified third party. The lawsuit says the agent stopped contact when she began asking him too many probing questions about him, and that details from the conversations "found their way into 'The Tell.'"

People

'Inexcusable'

Spears arrested on DUI suspicion

LOS ANGELES, March 7, (AP): Britney Spears was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs near her Southern California home and released, authorities said. A statement from Spears' representative calls the arrest "inexcusable."



Spears

The California Highway Patrol said officers received a report shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday that someone in a black BMW 430i was driving fast and erratically on US 101 in Newbury Park, California in Ventura County near the Los Angeles County line.

The 44-year-old pop star, the only person in the car, exited the freeway and pulled over, a CHP statement said. She appeared to be impaired, took a series of field sobriety tests, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of a combination of alcohol and drugs and was taken to a Ventura County jail, the CHP said. Chemical test results are pending and the case remains under investigation.

Spears was booked early Thursday morning and released at about 6 a.m., according to jail records.

"This was an unfortunate incident that is completely inexcusable," a statement from a Spears representative said. "Britney is going to take the right steps and comply with the law and hopefully this can be the first step in long overdue change that needs to occur in Britney's life. Hopefully, she can get the help and support she needs during this difficult time."

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office will determine whether charges will be filed. Spears has a May 4 court date scheduled.

The arrest was a few miles from Thousand Oaks, California where Spears has a home. The CHP listed her as living in nearby Westlake Village.

Born in Mississippi and raised in Louisiana, Spears was a teen pop phenomenon who became a defining superstar of the '90s and 2000s.



Savannah Guthrie visits the Today show at Rockefeller Plaza in New York on Thursday, March 5. (AP)

Savannah Guthrie visits 'Today' off-air

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): Savannah Guthrie made an off-camera appearance Thursday at NBC's "Today" show studios to thank colleagues for their support since her mother Nancy went missing from her Arizona home a month ago.

The "Today" show said Guthrie, a longtime co-host of the morning news program, plans to return to the air at some point but "remains focused right now supporting her family and working to help bring Nancy home."

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

Film



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from 'One Battle After Another.' (AP)

Classic film tech revived in 'One Battle After Another'

Forgotten VistaVision finds new life in films

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): When Paul Thomas Anderson told his cinematographer Michael Bauman that he wanted to shoot "One Battle After Another" on VistaVision - a large-scale film format born in the 1950s - he had some questions.

"Question one was: Is this even going to be reliable?" Bauman recalls.

For much of the past 60 years, the few remaining VistaVision cameras have been mostly collecting dust on shelves. Though the format was widely used in the 1950s, when Alfred Hitchcock shot "Vertigo" on it and Cecil B. DeMille used it for "The Ten Commandments," VistaVision went dormant by the early 1960s.

Yet at the March 15 Academy Awards, a movie made largely with decades-old antique cameras is poised to win best picture. Even in 2026, when most films are shot digitally and AI has begun filtering into moviemaking, "One Battle After Another" has - with film equipment borrowed from collectors and museums - showed that a vintage, analog film system can still astonish moviegoers. "One Battle After Another" presented a major new test for an old format. A sprawling American epic filmed largely in dusty, rural locations, Bauman estimates it meant running 1.5 million feet of film through antique cameras.

"VistaVision is great if you're sitting on a tripod and filming a nice, beautiful waterfall or something," says Bauman. "But when you're putting it on a Steadicam, using it as a handheld strapping it to cars, or doing any of the myriad things we were doing - because ultimately Paul wanted it to feel like 'The French Connection' - it was a question if the camera could hold up to it."

Revival

But it turns out that VistaVision isn't just holding up, it's enjoying a big-screen revival. At last year's Oscars, Lol Crawley won best cinematography for Brady Corbet's "The Brutalist," much of which was shot on VistaVision. This year, Bauman is nominated for the same award after shooting an even greater amount of "One Battle After Another" (he estimates 80% on VistaVision).

VistaVision is all about the size of the negative. First introduced by Paramount with 1954's "White Christmas," it has double the resolution of standard 35mm. Normal film stock



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows camera/steadicam operator Colin Anderson filming a scene from 'One Battle After Another.' (AP)

is four perforations wide, but VistaVision is eight. To make a higher-resolution image, the film runs horizontally through the camera, instead of vertically.

Before "One Battle After Another," the last film shot and projected on VistaVision was 1961's "One-Eyed Jacks," Marlon Brando's sole directorial effort. But, with some notable exceptions (George Lucas shot the visual effects to 1977's "Star Wars" in VistaVision), Hollywood moved on.

But now, VistaVision is back in a big way. After being impressed with it for parts of 2023's "Poor Things" Yorgos Lanthimos and his cinematographer Robbie Ryan shot the best picture-nominated "Bugonia" on VistaVision. Emerald Fennell's just-released "Wuthering Heights" was also made with VistaVision. Greta Gerwig turned to Vista for her upcoming "Narnia" movie. And Alejandro G. Iñárritu, with his celebrated director of photography Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki, shot the upcoming "Digger" with it.

"It's a revitalization of a level of the craft of cinematography," Bauman says. "Photochemical has got a strong voice in the room, still."

The 1950s-set "The Brutalist" helped spark the revival.

"We were excited by the colors and the feeling and the weight of the camera," Mona Fastvold, cowriter and producer of "The Brutalist," said in

an interview last year. "It limits how you move it and dictates the shots, which I think is something that also helps to transport you back to the period."

VistaVision has its drawbacks. The camera (which looks sideways) is awkward and noisy. You can film takes only for about five minutes. For her 2025 Shaker drama "The Testament of Ann Lee," Fastvold considered VistaVision but ultimately decided its cameras were too loud for the quiet intimacy she wanted.

Clarity

But for many filmmakers, the extra hassle is worth it for the beauty and clarity of the image it creates. Anderson has been pondering it for a while. He and Bauman first met when the director was experimenting with VistaVision for 2012's "The Master." Anderson decided not to use it then, but he tried it out in a short film for Thom Yorke's "Anima."

Just tracking down the equipment for "One Battle After Another" was a challenge, though. Much of "One Battle After Another" was shot on a camera owned by the actor and cinematographer Giovanni Ribisi. He's long been enamored by the capabilities of the format and the tactile, vinyl-like nature of the camera. Years ago, Ribisi acquired a Beaumont VistaVision camera, a more mobile camera than traditional VistaVision cameras.

"It's not something that you can

just press a button and you just let it roll for two hours. It fights back a little bit, maybe too much," Ribisi says, chuckling. "You kind of have to earn it, and I like that."

For Ribisi, the VistaVision image speaks for itself: multidimensional, inviting, immersive. He thinks formats like VistaVision are more than analog novelty, but a rich future for increasingly image-savvy audiences.

"I don't think it's just a flash in the pan," says Ribisi. "I think a lot of people - especially with the phone calls I'm getting - are wanting to not just explore this but consider it their new sword in the battle for filmmaking."

The "One Battle" filmmakers added two other VistaVision cameras, rented from Geo Film Group, and augmented the production with Super 35mm. They continued testing the Vista cameras even once shooting began. To lessen the noise for some scenes, they built a blimp, or a box, around it.

Camera

"It's its own personality on the set using that camera," Bauman says. "It would jam. It's noisy. It kept the camera team on their toes. There's a look of trepidation in their eyes in many of the photos I have."

Historically, VistaVision has been used for formally composed vistas. But Anderson wanted to approach "One Battle After Another" with a more '70s-style feel - essentially combining separate Hollywood eras, not unlike how the movie's revolutionary saga blends generations in political resistance. So they leaned into the organic process, intentionally underexposing the film and then leaving it longer in development to add grain and texture.

VistaVision and CinemaScope were both first introduced as way to combat the rise of television. VistaVision's second life corresponds with a new age of anxiety for movies, where streaming and mega-sized flat-screen TVs have pushed films onto bigger and bigger screens.

Increasingly, film format is a selling point. Christopher Nolan and others have emphasized and promoted the use of IMAX cameras. Ryan Coogler's "Sinners" was shot on 70mm. In the case of "One Battle After Another," the movie was also projected in VistaVision, a first for a wide release movie in more than 60 years.

Variety

MADRID: Spanish soccer team Celta Vigo is desperately seeking Madonna as it goes in search of a 36-year-old soccer shirt the pop star wore during a 1990 concert at its Balaídos stadium.

Madonna appeared on stage wearing the club's true blue colors during her Blonde Ambition tour in July 1990.

She delighted locals who claimed the material girl as one of their own and brought unexpected attention to defender Jose Manuel Espinosa, whose No. 5 shirt she wore.



Madonna

However, the whereabouts of the cherished garment are unknown and, after searching fruitlessly for decades, Celta is asking the 67-year-old Madonna to help find it for the club's archive.

"Although ours was not the only football shirt you ever wore on stage, this iconic image has grown to shine differently as years have passed," Celta president Marián Mourinho Terrazo wrote in an open letter to the American icon.

"Over time we came to better understand what you stood for back then: questioning established norms and standing up to those who try to tell you what you can or cannot do. At our club we recognise ourselves in this line of thought. That is why we hold on to the hope of finding the garment you once wore."

"Do you have it? If you know where it may be, or if you would like to join us in the search to retrieve it, please contact us via private message." (AP)

NEW YORK: Andris Nelsons is being forced out as music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the summer of 2027 after 13 seasons.

The orchestra made an unusually blunt announcement Friday. "The decision to not renew his contract was made by the BSO's board of trustees because, beyond our shared desire to ensure our orchestra continues to perform at the highest levels, the BSO and Andris Nelsons were not aligned on future vision," the BSO said in a statement from its trustees and CEO Chad Smith.

A five-time Grammy award winner, the 47-year-old Nelsons is currently leading the Vienna Philharmonic on a US tour and was to conduct the orchestra in Naples, Florida, on Friday night. "While this is not the decision I anticipated or wanted, I am unwaveringly committed to you and to our work together," Nelson wrote in a letter to BSO musicians and staff that was released by his management agency. (AP)

NEW YORK: Romantasy favorite Sarah J. Maas has given her millions of fans a plot twist they had long been waiting for - two more books over the next 11 months in her blockbuster "A Court of Thorns and Roses" series.

Bloomsbury announced this week that Book 6 will come out Oct. 27, and Book 7 on Jan. 12, 2027. Neither novel is currently titled. Maas' last installment in the saga of protagonist Feyre Archeron, "A Court of Silver Flames," came out more than five years ago, in February 2021.

The author herself, who turned 40 this week, first revealed the news on the podcast "Call Her Daddy."

"It took me a while to find the right story and find the right head space," she said. "And then what poured out of me was this, and it poured out very quickly." Maas' other series include "Throne of Glass" and "Crescent City." Her books have sold more than 75 million copies worldwide, according to Bloomsbury. (AP)

Singer says reimagining iconic song was 'a puzzle'

J Balvin remakes Van Halen's 'Jump' as FIFA World Cup anthem

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): In need of a global superstar for a sports anthem? Colombian singer J Balvin is the right man for the job.

"Our biggest moments in history, of happiness, surround sports," he says of Colombia. "Of course music, but sport has this power (to) unite a whole country and vibrate in a really positive way. So that's part of my DNA."

Balvin is one-fourth of Coca-Cola's official anthem for the FIFA World Cup 2026, a reimagining of Van Halen's "Jump" that also features drummer Travis Barker, pop/R&B singer Amber Mark and guitarist Steve Vai.

Last year, Joshua Burke, head of global music and culture marketing at The Coca-Cola Company, approached Balvin with the idea. The singer initially felt trepidation.

"I'm really cautious when it comes to songs like this one," Balvin said. "It's like touching the Mona Lisa."

"I have so much respect for anthems like that," he said. So, he had to take "a totally different approach" to make it work; he wanted to avoid straightforward comparisons to the original recording.

"It was like a puzzle," he says.

Mark's rich, crystalline voice is the first heard on the



J Balvin arrives at the 68th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 1, 2026, in Los Angeles. (AP)

track; she sings the song's original English lyrics. Vai transforms its iconic guitar; Barker amplifies its percussion.

The greatest difference is found in Balvin's contributions. He wrote a new verse - in Spanish - atop production courtesy his collaborator L.E.X.V.Z, a sound he describes as "Brazilian funk with hard strings, kind of like hip-hop."

"'Jump' is not a fútbol song," he said of the original, using the Spanish word for soccer. "So that's why I had to put the Latin love and passion for fútbol (in the lyrics)."

"El fútbol es nuestro idioma / Aquí todos somos mi gente," he raps. In English: "Football is our language / Here, we're all my people."

"Fútbol is about bringing everyone together," he says. It's a particularly resonant message as sports fans and organizers alike are considering the ways in which President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown may impact the tournament.

"I wish this administration open their mind and see, like, this is a world event. This is for all of us," he said. "Let the people really have fun and enjoy and show that the United States can definitely pull off a World Cup."

The new "Jump," out Friday, was released through Coca-Cola's newly minted in-house label Real Thing Records, in partnership with Capitol Records. The "Jump"

video, art directed and designed by McFly, is illustrated in the style of anime - amplifying its aim to reflect global cultural interest.

Coca-Cola has been an official sponsor for the FIFA World Cup since 1978 and has produced a number of its own anthems for the event, including Jason Derulo's "Colors" in 2018 and a reimagining of Queen's "A Kind of Magic" in 2022 featuring Mexican singer Danna Paola, Egyptian rapper Felukah and Saudi Arabian singer TamTam.

"Reimagining a song as iconic as Van Halen's 'Jump' came with a real sense of responsibility," Burke wrote to The Associated Press in an exclusive statement. "All four artists leaned into the process as if this was their own single. Our goal was to create an anthem that celebrates the full spectrum of emotions of the tournament and feels just as powerful in a stadium as it does blasting from a car with your friends. We were able to do exactly that."

As for Balvin? He hopes that people respond to the energy of the song, and truly view it as "a fútbol song, you know? And that people vibrate with it."

And that is fútbol - not soccer. Don't get it twisted. "I don't even know what soccer is," he joked. "It's always been fútbol."

Fashion

Hushed stillness, Japanese craft at Miyake's show

Paris runways dazzle with star power, bold designs

PARIS, March 7, (AP): Paris Fashion Week is delivering a forceful reminder of why it remains a capital of fashion, with blockbuster celebrity front rows, boundary-pushing design, and collections that are tackling big ideas about power, craft and the female body.

Oprah Winfrey turned heads at both Stella McCartney and Chloé. Sissy Spacek, Julia Garner and Lil Yachty claimed front-row seats at Loewe.

The star wattage has matched the creative ambition - and both have been running high.

Halfway through the fall 2026 shows, several clear themes are emerging from the runways: dress with intent, dress with pleasure, and don't be afraid to show up.

Here are the trends defining the season so far.

The women's tuxedo turns 60 this year, and no house owns that legacy like Saint Laurent.

Creative director Anthony Vaccarello, marking his own 10th anniversary at the helm, sent out a parade of razor-sharp Smokings - the house term for its iconic women's tuxedo - with plunging necklines and elongated silhouettes that crackled with the same transgressive energy founder Yves Saint Laurent unleashed in the 1960s.

But Vaccarello didn't stop at evening.

He extended the same sensual, body-skimming tailoring into daytime suits in fluid pinstripe fabrics with almost no interlining, effectively arguing that the tuxedo silhouette belongs in a woman's life around the clock.

Plenty of brands in Milan showed strong black pantsuits this season, but the Saint Laurent version still occupies its own territory - sleeker, sharper, more loaded with meaning.

The other half of Vaccarello's equation was lace, stiffened with latex and tailored into structured cardigan-like jackets and straight skirts.

It was lace with backbone - tough, not delicate.

Paired with smoky eyes, chunky gold jewelry and slingback heels, the collection made a case that Saint Laurent's codes are as potent as ever.

Designers aren't being shy about the body this season.

Vaquera's Bryn Taubensee and Patric DiCaprio staged a provocation-filled show inside a Paris church, with exposed skin at almost every turn - hip-cut trousers, leather pieces with strate-



A model wears a creation from the Chloe Fall/Winter 2026-2027 Women's collection presented in Paris, Thursday, March 5. (AP)

gically placed zippers and references to fashion's most boundary-pushing moments from the past six decades.

At Courrèges, Nicolas Di Felice built his collection around a day-in-the-life concept that traced a woman from bed to club, with body-conscious cuts and geometric cutouts on pinafore dresses.

Isabel Marant's designer Kim Bekker went short and tight with tiny cut-off shorts, miniskirts and slim leather pencil skirts.

At Loewe, the design duo of Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez are rapidly redefining what luxury craft looks like - and having a blast doing it.

Their sophomore collection was

a sensory jolt: inflatable channels pumped into outerwear and leather raincoats, shearing sculpted and groomed to resemble prize-winning poodle fur, and latex cast in 3D-printed molds to reimagine boudoir staples.

The venue was drenched in taxi yellow, the soundtrack was pounding techno, and stuffed sea creatures shared the front row with Hollywood stars.

The designers have cited artist Cosima von Bonin as a key inspiration, which explained the gingham accents and hand-painted floral prints scattered through the lineup.

Their take on craft is deliberately different from designers who celebrate the imperfect or the handmade.

McCollough and Hernandez are in-

terested in craft so refined it erases the evidence of the hand entirely - leather jackets skived to feather-thinness, fused so smoothly they look like they rolled off a factory line. It's a provocative inversion: the highest skill made to look effortless.

Fringe is having a moment across multiple shows.

At Carven, designer Mark Thomas made it a signature of his assured sophomore collection - fringed gloves, shaggy textures and paper-thin mille-feuille panels that brought movement and dimension to skirts and dresses.

He layered gauzy organza with lace in tones of wine and chocolate, creating a romantic but purposeful ward-

robe. Fringe has been visible elsewhere too, becoming one of the season's quieter but most persistent trends.

Courrèges under Di Felice has become one of the week's most reliable propositions.

His fifth-anniversary collection featured slim flared coats, A-line skirts and vinyl knife-pleated into dresses - a slick Parisian minimalism that has won over both young customers and fashion critics.

That's a rare double audience, and Di Felice has earned it.

Isabel Marant's Bekker sent models racing down the runway in distressed denim, reversible statement jackets and sparkly knitted minidresses with curved-heel pumps.

The mood was fast, social and unapologetically fun - a woman running between shows and parties, living at full tilt.

Rich reds, cobalt and Mondrian-style colorblocking punched through the denim-heavy palette.

Evening had a disco edge, with fluid sparkly dresses and high-slit satin skirts.

Sparkling dust drifted across the runway inside the Carrousel du Louvre on Friday as Issey Miyake asked a question few fashion houses dare voice: When should a designer stop designing?

Satoshi Kondo's answer was a fall-winter collection of rare stillness and force.

Titled "Creating, Allowing," it pulled at the tension between shaping a garment and letting cloth and body do the work alone.

That tension sits at the core of the house Miyake founded in 1970 and that Kondo has led since 2019. Miyake, who died in 2022, always started with a single piece of cloth.

He believed the space between fabric and body - what the Japanese call "ma" - mattered as much as the garment itself.

Kondo has honored that philosophy while carving a quieter, more contemplative path of his own.

Pared-down vocals hung in the darkened space. Models moved slowly.

The clothes spoke in hushed tones that demanded you lean in.

Oversize sweaters in off-white had elongated shoulders that sloped like soft architecture, white shirt cuffs extending past the sleeves in a surreal, almost preppy touch.

Variety

NEW YORK: The executive director of the National Symphony Orchestra, a mainstay at the Kennedy Center, is leaving to head the Los Angeles-based Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. It's the latest departure from the Kennedy Center since President Donald Trump began asserting control over the storied performing arts venue in Washington.

The Wallis announced Friday that Jean Davidson had been appointed executive director and CEO. Before joining the Kennedy Center in 2023, Davidson had served for

eight years as executive director and CEO of the Los Angeles Master Chorale at The Music Center. "The arts are where a community sees itself, and where it imagines what's possible next," Davidson said in a statement. "I'm honored to join the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Arts at this pivotal moment."

Kennedy Center President Richard Grenell said in a statement to The Associated Press that she was among those who deserved "enormous credit" for their efforts.

"I have enjoyed working with Jean to cultivate new donors and patrons while cleaning up the financial mess at the center," he said. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: The Cannes Film Festival will honor filmmaker Peter Jackson with an honorary Palme d'Or at the upcoming French festival.

Festival organizers announced Jackson as a recipient Thursday for what they hailed as "a body of work that blends Hollywood blockbusters and films d'auteur with extraordinary artistic vision and technological audacity."

The "Lord of the Rings" director, in a statement, called the honor "one of the greatest privileges of my career." Jackson recalled that he first came to Cannes in 1988 to sell his first movie, "Bad Taste." In 2002, he returned to preview "The Fellowship of the Ring."

"This festival has always celebrated bold, visionary cinema, and I'm incredibly grateful to the Festival de Cannes for being recognized among the filmmakers and the artists whose work continues to inspire me." Jackson said. (AP)

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's renowned Angkor Archaeological Park attracted a total of 14,334 Chinese tourists in January and February, down 39 percent from 23,536 over the same period last year, according to a report released on Thursday.

China was the fourth biggest source of international tourist arrivals to the UNESCO-listed world heritage site after the United States, France and Britain, said a report of the state-owned Angkor Enterprise.

Located in northwest Siem Reap province, the 401-square-km Angkor Archaeological Park, the kingdom's most popular tourist destination, is home to 91 ancient temples built from the ninth to the 13th centuries.

Thong Mengdavid, deputy director at the China-ASEAN Studies Center of the Cambodia University of Technology and Science, said the drop was likely linked to online scam issues and border tensions with Thailand. (Xinhua)



Caroline Daur arrives for the Victoria Beckham's show. (AP)



Chiara Ferragni arrives for the Schiaparelli's show. (AP)



Camila Coelho at the Schiaparelli FW26 in Paris. (AP)



Gina Alice Redlinger attends Schiaparelli F/W 2026 show. (AP)



Anna Tanaka attends the Chloe Fall/Winter 2026 show. (AP)

Yorgos Filmmaker pauses movies to celebrate photography

Before the Oscars, Lanthimos finds a still moment in Athens

ATHENS, Greece, March 7, (AP): Oscar-nominated filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos paused his filmmaking and promotion schedule this week to celebrate a quieter creative pursuit: photography.

The 52-year-old Greek director on Friday inaugurated an exhibition of his photographs in his hometown of Athens, presenting images he has taken over the past five years - many captured while making his films, wandering through movie sets and nearby neighborhoods, or on trips back to Greece.

The exhibition gathers 182 still photographs, in color and in black and white, from the filmmaker known for his distinctive - and often disturbing - cinematic style. It opens days before Lanthimos returns to Hollywood for the March 15 Academy Awards ceremony. In his latest film, "Bugonia," a pair of conspiracy-obsessed men kidnap a powerful female executive they accuse of being an alien.

The movie received four Oscar nominations, including

best picture and best actress for Emma Stone, along with nods for adapted screenplay and original score. The photos, all shot with a film camera, features several portraits of Stone, a frequent star in his films.

Lanthimos on Friday said he was happy to dive into something different. Photography, he said, began for him as a technical foundation for filmmaking but gradually became something more personal.

"In film school you learn that cinema is basically 24 photographs per second," he said. "So photography is where it all begins."

Over time, working with still images opened a creative outlet separate from the complex machinery of movie production, he added.

"You can be alone with a camera, walking without having something specific in mind," Lanthimos said. "A photograph can have value on its own, but many photographs together

can create another kind of value."

For Lanthimos, photography also offers something cinema rarely can: immediacy.

"You create something and almost immediately it exists," he said, describing the process of shooting and developing film in a darkroom. "You can take a photograph, print it and hold it in your hands. That satisfaction is very direct."

While Lanthimos remains one of contemporary cinema's most distinctive filmmakers, he said photography will play a growing role in his creative life.

Unlike movies, he said, photographs are free to evolve long after they are taken.

"You can present them in a book, in an exhibition, combine them in different ways," Lanthimos said. "There's a freedom in photography that is very exciting."

The exhibition at the Onassis Foundation runs through May 17.



Oscar nominated director Yorgos Lanthimos speaks to reporters at the inauguration of an exhibition of his photographs at Onassis Stegi in Athens, Greece, on Friday, March 6. (AP)

Heart attacks, strokes rise post-March time shift: studies

How springing forward to DST could affect your health

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP): Most of America "springs forward" Sunday for daylight saving time. Losing that hour of sleep can do more than leave you tired and cranky the next day; it also could harm your health.

Darker mornings and more evening light knock your body clock out of whack - which means daylight saving time can usher in sleep trouble for weeks or longer. Studies have even found an uptick in heart attacks and strokes right after the March time change.

There are ways to ease the adjustment, including getting more sunshine to help reset your circadian rhythm for healthful sleep.

Daylight saving time begins Sunday at 2 a.m., an hour of sleep vanishing in most of the US. The ritual will reverse on Nov. 1 when clocks "fall back" as daylight saving time ends.

Hawaii and most of Arizona don't make the spring switch, sticking to standard time year-round - along with Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam and the US Virgin Islands. Worldwide, dozens of countries also observe daylight saving time, starting and ending at different dates.

Some people try to prepare for daylight saving time by going to bed a little earlier two or three nights ahead. While getting back on schedule after an hour's change may not be



Ian Roders fastens the hands to a clock at Electric Time Company, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022, in Medfield, Mass. (AP)

that difficult for some people, it's an added challenge for the third of U.S. adults who already don't get the recommended seven hours of nightly shuteye.

The brain has a master clock that is set by exposure to sunlight and darkness. This circadian rhythm is a roughly 24-hour cycle that determines when we become sleepy and

when we're more alert. The patterns change with age, one reason that early-to-rise youngsters evolve into hard-to-wake teens.

Morning light resets the rhythm. By evening, levels of a hormone called melatonin begin to surge, triggering drowsiness. Too much light in the evening - that extra hour from daylight saving time - delays that surge and the cycle gets out of sync.

Sleep deprivation is linked to heart disease, cognitive decline, obesity and numerous other problems. And that circadian clock affects more than sleep, also influencing things like heart rate, blood pressure, stress hormones and metabolism.

Fatal car crashes temporarily jump the first few days after the spring time change, according to a study of U.S. traffic fatalities. The risk was highest in the morning, and researchers attributed it to sleep deprivation.

Then there's the cardiac connection. The American Heart Association points to studies that suggest an uptick in heart attacks on the Monday after daylight saving time begins, and in strokes for two days afterward.

Doctors already know that heart attacks, especially severe ones, are a bit more common on Mondays generally - and in the morning, when blood is more clot-prone.

Researchers don't know why the time change would add to that Monday connection but it's possible the abrupt circadian disruption exacerbates factors such as high blood pressure in people already at risk.

Go outside for early morning sunshine that first week of daylight saving time, which can help reset your body's internal clock. Moving up daily routines, like dinner time or when you exercise, also may help cue your body to start adapting, sleep experts advise.

Afternoon naps and caffeine as well as evening light from phones and other electronic devices can make adjusting to an earlier bedtime even harder.

Every year there's talk about ending the time change. Before starting his second term, President Donald Trump promised to eliminate daylight saving time. A bipartisan bill named the Sunshine Protection Act to make daylight saving time permanent has repeatedly stalled in Congress.

But that's the opposite of what some health groups recommend. The American Medical Association and American Academy of Sleep Medicine agree it's time to do away with time switches but say sticking with standard time year-round aligns better with the sun - and human biology - for more consistent sleep.

Pregnancy, pediatric drug orders shift: study

'Trump's autism claims influenced care'

NEW YORK, March 7, (AP): Last year, President Donald Trump told pregnant women not to take Tylenol as he promoted unproven ties between the fever reducer and autism and touted an old generic drug as a treatment for the developmental condition.

For nearly three months after that, new research found, Tylenol orders for pregnant women showing up in emergency rooms dropped and prescriptions of the generic drug for children rose. This happened despite sharp criticism of the president's message from doctor groups saying that the drug, leucovorin, shouldn't be broadly used for autism and Tylenol is safe during pregnancy.

"It just shows that in our country right now, health care has been politicized in a way that political messages are driving and impacting care - and not always for good," said Dr. Susan Sirota, a pediatrician in Highland Park, Illinois, who wasn't involved with the research.

Doctors, who published their work Thursday in *The Lancet*, looked at changes in drug ordering or prescribing compared with projected trends, or what might have happened if things had continued on the same path as before the White House briefing.

They found that orders for Tylenol - also known by the generic names acetaminophen and paracetamol - were 10% lower than predicted for pregnant emergency department patients aged 15 to 44. And outpatient prescriptions of leucovorin for children aged 5 to 17 were 71% higher than expected during the same study period, late September to early December.



Tylenol pills in La Habra, Calif., on Sept. 23, 2025. (AP)

Researchers observed no similar shifts in comparable medications, suggesting the changes were directly tied to the briefing.

The research had limitations. For example, it didn't capture all Tylenol use by pregnant women because most people buy the painkiller over the counter outside of a hospital setting.

Still, it reflected how an unconventional news conference by a political leader could change not just patient behavior but prescribing as well, said co-author Dr. Michael Barnett.

In past administrations, "there are lots of layers of approval and expert consensus" before officials make big announcements about medical topics, said Barnett, who is with Brown University School of Public Health.

Pregnant women generally take Tylenol for pain or fever. Untreated fevers in pregnancy, particularly in the first trimester, increase the risk for miscarriages, preterm birth and other problems, according to the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine. Some studies have raised the possibility that taking Tylenol in pregnancy might be associated with a risk of autism, but

many others haven't found a connection.

Leucovorin is a derivative of folic acid used for, among other things, reducing the toxic side effects of certain chemotherapy drugs and treating a rare blood disorder. It has also been studied for a neurological condition known as cerebral folate deficiency and for a subset of autistic children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The pediatrics group doesn't recommend routine use of the drug for autistic children. Early, small-scale studies have explored its use, "and some findings suggest potential benefit in carefully selected cases," the group said.

But evidence remains limited, the pediatrician group said. And in late January, the *European Journal of Pediatrics* retracted a study evaluating leucovorin as an autism treatment.

Still, after the federal announcement about the drug, Sirota said some families in her practice asked about getting it for their autistic children. She educated them about the evidence, told them about the potential for side effects and didn't prescribe it. Potential side effects include irritability, nausea and vomiting and skin issues like dermatitis.

Sirota said it has been hard to deal with the repercussions of government pronouncements like the ones on autism.

"It feels like a pattern with our government, right? They keep building on these houses of cards that just fall down," she said. "This politicizing of medicine just in general, and moving away from science, has been so challenging."

Experts reprogram anti-tumor immune cells in lab

AI system detects early-stage breast cancer from CT scans within minutes

ST. PETERSBURG, March 7, (Xinhua): Russian researchers have developed a neural network that can detect early-stage breast cancer from CT scans within minutes, significantly faster than traditional methods that may take up to a day, local media reported on Thursday.

The technology, created by St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University and the Almazov National Medical Research Center, reduces clinical error probability by about 20 percent, according to developers.

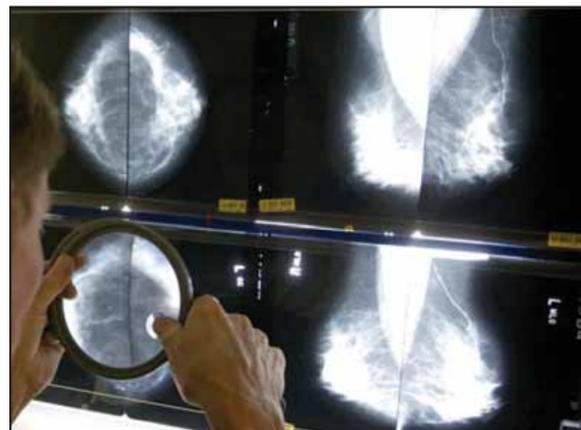
"Such a development could help save thousands of lives," said Denis Stepanenko, head of the OncoDetect AI project and a master's student at the university's Faculty of Computer Technologies and Informatics.

Breast cancer claims 4,000 to 7,000 lives annually in Russia, with late diagnosis cited as a major contributing factor. The AI system automatically processes CT images and highlights potential cancer signs for further evaluation by physicians.

Developers said the model was trained on around 7,000 anonymized CT images from the Almazov Center's database.

Scientists have successfully created anti-tumor immune cells in a laboratory using cellular reprogramming for the first time, opening new possibilities in the fight against cancer, according to a press release issued Thursday by the University of Coimbra.

The breakthrough was achieved



A radiologist uses a magnifying glass to check mammograms for breast cancer in Los Angeles, May 6, 2010. (AP)

by a research team coordinated by the Center for Neurosciences and Cell Biology of the University of Coimbra (CNC-UC), part of the Center for Innovation in Biomedicine and Biotechnology (CIBB), in partnership with Sweden's Lund University.

The researchers succeeded in recreating Natural Killer (NK) cells -- a type of immune cell that serves as a first line of defense against tumors -- through cellular reprogramming, a process that converts one type of cell into another.

To achieve this, the team developed a platform called REPROcode, designed to help scientists map and

reprogram immune cells.

The platform contains a library of more than 400 transcription factors -- proteins capable of reprogramming most types of immune cells. Each factor is identified by a unique "barcode" allowing researchers to track which factors drive the reprogramming of different immune cell types.

"This tool allows us to test dozens of combinations of factors simultaneously to identify those that enable the production of various types of immune cells," said Carlos Filipe Pereira, a researcher at CNC-UC who coordinated the study.

Compound heat events accelerating worldwide

Heat waves causing droughts are rising

WASHINGTON, March 7, (AP): Heat waves that lead to sudden and damaging drought are spreading across the globe at an accelerating rate, highlighting how climate change-fueled extremes can build dangerously off each other, a new study found.

Researchers from South Korea and Australia looked at compound extreme weather - a one-two punch of heat and drought - and found it increasing as the world warms. But what's rising especially fast is the more damaging type when the heat comes first and that triggers the drought. In the 1980s, that kind of extreme covered only about 2.5% of Earth's land each year. By 2023, the last year the researchers studied, it was up to 16.7%, with a 10-year average of 7.9%.

The average has likely gone even higher with 2024's record global heat and a 2025 that was nearly as warm, the study's authors said.

In their study published in Friday's *Science Advances*, the scientists said the quickening rate of change is even more concerning than the raw numbers. For about the first two decades since 1980 they examined, the spread of heat-first extremes increased, but the rate in the last 22 years is eight times higher than the earlier rate, the study found.

Events where drought happens first, followed by high heat, remain more common and are also rising. But the researchers focused on those increasing cases where heat struck first. That's because when heat strikes first, the



A resident of a riverside community carries food and containers of drinking water after being distributed due to the ongoing drought in Careiro da Varzea, Amazonas state, Brazil, Oct. 24, 2023. (AP)

droughts are stronger than when the droughts come first or don't come with high heat, said co-author Sang-Wook Yeh, a climate scientist at Hanyang University in South Korea.

They also lead to "flash droughts," which are more damaging than ordinary droughts because they come on suddenly, not allowing people and farmers to prepare, said lead author Yong-Jun Kim, a Hanyang climate scientist.

Flash droughts - when warmer air gets thirstier it sucks more water out of soil - have been increasing in a warming world, past studies show.

"The study illustrates a key point about climate change: the most damaging impacts often come from compound extremes. When heat waves,

drought, and wildfire risk occur together - as we saw in events like the Russian heat wave of 2010 or the Australian bushfires in 2019-20 - the impacts can escalate quickly," said Andrew Weaver, a climate scientist at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. "What this study shows is that warming doesn't just make heat waves more likely - it changes how heat and drought interact, amplifying the risks we face."

Weaver was not part of the study, but he lives in the Pacific Northwest, where the 2021 heat dome and drought was what Kim called a top example of what they see rapidly increasing. Others include the 2022 heat and drought around China's Yangtze River and the 2023-24 record heat and drought in the Amazon, Kim said.

"The 2021 Pacific Northwest heat dome illustrates how quickly these compound extremes can escalate - temperatures near 50°C (122 degrees Fahrenheit) in Lytton (British Columbia) were followed by rapid drying and extreme wildfire conditions that destroyed the community," Weaver, a former Canadian legislator, said in an email.

The study found the biggest increases in heat-first droughts in South America, western Canada, Alaska and the western United States, and parts of central and eastern Africa.

Kim and Yeh said they noticed a "change point" around the year 2000, when everything sped up for heat-then-drought situations.

Japan's bird flu

Polio cases rise in Afghanistan

KABUL, March 7, (Agencies): Five new cases of polio were confirmed in southern Afghanistan over the past year, local broadcaster Tolo News reported on Saturday, citing the World Health Organization (WHO).

The cases were identified in provinces in the southern part of the country, where health authorities continue to face difficulties in eliminating the highly contagious disease, the report said.

Afghan health authorities, together with international partners, have been conducting nationwide vaccination campaigns to protect children and curb the spread of the virus.

Public health experts have stressed the need for continued immunization efforts and stronger community awareness to ensure that every child receives the polio vaccine.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has confirmed its first wild polio case of 2026 in a four-year-old child in the country's southern Sindh province, the country's polio eradication authorities said on Thursday.

The case was detected in Sujawal district through the national polio surveillance network, the National Emergency Operations Center for Polio Eradication said in a statement.

Authorities said the Polio Eradication Initiative is analyzing the situation to determine the best response to prevent further transmission of the virus.

Bird flu: Japan's agriculture ministry has confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza at a poultry farm in Hokkaido, marking the northern prefecture's fourth case and the country's 21st outbreak this season.

The affected farm, located in the town of Abira, keeps about 190,000 chickens, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said in a statement on Thursday.

Local authorities were notified by the farm on Wednesday. A rapid avian influenza test conducted the same day returned a positive result, which was confirmed by genetic testing the following day.

Measles: A large immigration detention camp in Texas has been closed to visitors and attorneys due to a measles outbreak, a lawmaker said Tuesday.

There are 14 active measles cases at the detention center on the Fort Bliss Army base and 112 people are being isolated, said US Rep. Veronica Escobar, an El Paso Democrat whose district includes the facility, known as Camp East Montana. It will remain closed to visitors and attorneys until March 19 or March 20.



In this image provided by NASA, an impact plume emerges from the asteroid Dimorphos, (left), after DART collided into it, Sept. 26, 2022. (AP)

'No 2032 Moon collision'

Spacecraft impact changed asteroid's orbit in test: study

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., March 7, (AP): An asteroid that NASA used for target practice a few years ago was nudged into a slightly different route around the sun, findings that could help divert a future incoming killer space rock, scientists reported Friday.

It's the first time that a celestial body's orbit around the sun was deliberately changed. The asteroid that NASA's Dart spacecraft slammed into was never a threat to Earth.

"This study marks a notable step forward in our ability to probe future asteroid impacts on Earth," the international research team wrote in *Science Advances*.

The changes were slight - reductions of just one-tenth of a second and one-half of a mile (720 meters) to a solar lap spanning two years and hundreds of millions of miles (kilometers), according to the scientists.

"Even though this seems small, a tiny deflection ... can add up over decades and make the difference between a potentially hazardous asteroid hitting or missing the Earth in the future," lead author Rahil Makadia, of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, said in an email.

For any save-the-planet tests, "the key isn't delivering a huge shove at the last minute. The key is delivering a tiny shove many years in advance," he added.

Launched in 2021 on the world's first planetary defense exercise, the Dart spacecraft deliberately plowed into Dimorphos, which orbits a bigger asteroid, Didymos, as they circle the sun together. The space agency quickly determined that the 2022 strike

trimmed the smaller asteroid's orbit around its bigger companion.

But it took until now for scientists to confirm, based on observations from around the world, that the impact cut the duo's travel time around the sun by 0.15 seconds. With each solar orbit lasting 769 days, that's a real-time slowdown of just over 10 micrometers per second, shrinking the asteroids' 300-million-mile (480-million-kilometer) orbit by 2,360 feet (720 meters).

The researchers said all the boulders and other debris flung off Dimorphos in the crash provided as much push to Dimorphos as the spacecraft itself - a doubling of momentum. Last summer, a US-Italian team estimated that 35 million pounds (16 million kilograms) of rock and dust were ejected.

Also:

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.: NASA issued a welcomed all-clear Thursday, saying there's now zero chance that asteroid 2024 YR will crash into the moon in 2032.

The space agency had been predicting a 4.3% chance of a direct hit. But observations by the Webb Space Telescope in February helped scientists refine the asteroid's orbit.

This new information indicates that the asteroid will miss the moon by 13,200 miles (21,200 kilometers) on Dec. 22, 2032.

Discovered at the end of 2024, the asteroid at first looked like it might threaten Earth. Scientists last year ruled out a collision with our planet anytime in the next century, but kept the moon as a possible target. The asteroid is about 200 feet (60 meters) across.

Gripping final kept spectators on the edge of their seats until last moment

5th edition of IBAK Chairman's Cup concludes with Team ISA crowned champions



Group photo of the participants.



Winners of the IBAK Chairman's Cup.



Runners IBAK Torpedoes

KUWAIT CITY, March 7: The Indian Badminton Association Kuwait (IBAK) successfully conducted the 5th edition of Chairman's Cup at its Salwa Gym (Saad Al Awzi School) on 25th, 26th & 27th Feb 2026. IBAK Chairman's Cup concluded on a high note after an action-packed 3-day tournament with electrifying performances, fierce competition, and remarkable sportsmanship displayed by all participating teams. The tournament once again proved to be a celebration of talent, teamwork, and competitive spirit.

This year's edition featured eight dynamic teams divided into Group A & Group B and was played in the round robin format, followed by knock-out Semi-Final & Final

Group A	Group B
Team USC	IBAK Torpedoes
IBAK Arrows	Team ISA
Turbos Badminton Club (TBC)	Team Elite
Team Titans	IBCK

Each tie had 5 matches, 1 Professional Men's Doubles, 1 Advanced Men's Doubles, 1 Above 50 Men's Doubles,

1 Intermediate Men's Doubles and a Mixed Doubles. Top 2 teams from each group advanced into the knockout stage.

Over the course of the tournament, fans witnessed a series of thrilling matches filled with intensity, skill, and determination. Each team brought its best to the field, making the competition tougher and more exciting at every stage.

The grand finale saw Team ISA deliver a commanding performance to secure victory against a resilient IBAK Torpedoes side. During the final battle Team ISA took the lead by winning the Professional Men's Doubles but IBAK Torpedoes leveled up the score by winning the Advanced Men's Doubles. Again, Team ISA took the lead by winning Above 50 Men's Doubles. IBAK Torpedoes again leveled up the score by winning the Intermediate Men's Doubles. Team ISA sealed victory by winning the decider match of the tie, the Mixed Doubles, in a pulsating tie.

The final match was a gripping contest that kept spectators

on the edge of their seats until the very end. With this win, Team ISA proudly lifted the Chairman's Cup trophy, marking a memorable achievement in the tournament's history.

The semifinal stage was equally competitive, with Team USC and IBAK Arrows emerging as strong contenders and finishing as semifinalists after a tough fight with Team USC being beaten by IBAK Torpedoes and the IBAK Arrows losing to Team ISA.

The success of the 5th edition reflects the continued growth and spirit of the IBAK Chairman's Cup. The tournament not only showcased athletic excellence but also strengthened camaraderie and unity among participants and supporters.

Organizers expressed their appreciation to all teams, officials, volunteers, and supporters who contributed to making this edition a grand success. As the curtain falls on another unforgettable chapter, anticipation is already building for an even bigger and better upcoming tournaments scheduled for this year.

The Chairman's Cup 2026 prize distribution was done by Dr Manimara Chozhan – Chairman IBAK along with other IBAK committee members. Top 90+ players who practice across different clubs in Kuwait participated in this tournament.

IBAK is committed to improve to badminton in Kuwait. As part of this efforts, IBAK will be showcasing its premier international tournament of the year, The Kuwait Badminton Challenge (Edition No:9) which will bring top international players from around world on 26th May, 27th May and 28th May 2026. Categories scheduled for KBC are Elite Men's Singles, Elite Men's Doubles, Flight 1 Men's Doubles, Flight 2 Men's Doubles (Kuwait Advanced Players Only), Ladies Doubles (Non-professional above 20 years), Flight 3 Doubles (Kuwait Players – M & W), Mixed Doubles, + 100 Jumbled Doubles (M & W Combo), + 110 Jumbled Doubles (M & W Combo), + 90 Jumbled Doubles (M & W Combo). IBAK can be reached on www.ibakwt.org or ibakcommittee@gmail.com

Lens handed opportunity to cut gap

PSG drops points in title race after home defeat to Monaco



Monaco's Christian Mawissa, right, blocks a shot by PSG's Ousmane Dembele during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Monaco in Paris. (AP)

PARIS, March 7, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain dropped points in the Ligue 1 title race after losing 3-1 at home to a slick Monaco side.

Leader PSG's fourth league defeat of the campaign could have been even heavier and rival Lens can move within one point at the top by beating rock-bottom Metz on Sunday.

Livewire winger Maghnes Aklouche opened the scoring for Monaco and American forward Folarin Balogun sealed the win with a deflected strike in the 73rd minute.

Monaco beat PSG 1-0 in the league in September and has taken the lead in all four games this season, including two in the Champions League.

PSG hosts Chelsea in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 game on Wednesday.

Aklouche pounced in the 27th minute after terrible defending from Warren Zaïre-Emery, who tried to dribble out of his penalty area and lost the ball.

Balogun reacted quickly to combine with Aklouche to his right, and he slammed the ball in off the post.

Aklouche scored at the same end at Parc des Princes in the return leg of the Champions League playoff. PSG advanced 5-4 on aggregate to set up the clash with Chelsea.

Fifth-place Monaco grabbed a second goal 10 minutes into the second half when midfielder Aleksandr Golovin, who had just come on, slid the ball into the bottom corner after latching onto a cross from the right. He almost scored again moments later with a superb dipping strike from 25 meters.

Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembélé came on for PSG on the hour mark, having missed the last three games with a calf injury, but lacked sharpness.

Forward Bradley Barcola pulled a goal back in the 71st with a deflected low shot, but Balogun restored the two-goal lead from the edge of the penalty area when his shot sailed over goalkeeper Matvei Safonov's head.

Safonov was beaten again near the end although Simon Adingra's shot hit the crossbar.

Aklouche has made five appearances for France since breaking into the national team at the start of the season, and is pushing his case to be included in coach Didier Deschamps' World Cup squad later this year.

Aklouche caused problems throughout with his runs from deep and midfielder Vitinha intervened just in time to stop him shooting again late in the first half.

Change Name

I, hitherto known as TITTY P THOMAS S/o CHACKO PAPPACHEN, residing at Chithralayam, PO Kothamangalam, Ernakulam, Kerala-686691, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TIM T THOMAS.

Change Name

I, MOHAMMED KHALEEL AHMED holder of Indian Passport No. T0708212 having permanent address H. No. 11-1141/ 10/A/43, MSK Mill Road Opp. to Govt. School, Madina Colony, Kalaburgi-Dist. Pin: 585103, India residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) MD KHALEEL and (surname) AHMED.

Tatum makes comeback as Celtics dominate Mavericks

Wembanyama sparks Spurs' epic rally against Clippers

BOSTON, March 7, (AP): Jaylen Brown had 24 points, seven rebounds and seven assists and the Boston Celtics beat the Dallas Mavericks 120-100 on Friday night in Jayson Tatum's first game in almost 10 months after rupturing his right Achilles tendon.

Tatum had 15 points on 6-of-16 shooting, 12 rebounds and seven assists in a rust-filled 27 minutes. He played in five- and six-minute spurts in his first game since suffering the injury in during Game 4 of Boston's Eastern Conference semifinal loss to New York in May.

Derrick White added 20 points to help Boston win for the fourth time in five games. Dallas has lost six straight.

No. 1 overall pick Cooper Flagg, a Maine native playing his first game in TD Garden, had 16 points, eight rebounds and six assists for Dallas. Klay Thompson finished with 19 points, and Naji Marshall had 13 points.

Tatum missed his first six shots, including three 3-pointers. But he continued to look for his teammates and actively screening to initiate the offense.

The Celtics have 19 games remaining in the regular season, including 11 at TD Garden to try to ramp up Tatum for the playoffs.

Spurs 117, Clippers 112

In San Antonio, Victor Wembanyama had 27 points, 10 rebounds and four blocks as the San Antonio Spurs rallied from a 25-point deficit to beat the Los Angeles Clippers.

Kawhi Leonard had 30 points and nine rebounds for Los Angeles, which had a three-game winning streak snapped.

San Antonio (46-17) has won 14 of 15 and is second in the Western Conference.

After defending a missed 3-pointer by Leonard, Wembanyama broke free for an uncontested dunk that gave the Spurs a 113-112 lead with 16 seconds left. Clippers forward Nicolas Batum turned the ball over on the ensuing possession when his foot crossed the boundary while inbounding the ball. Stephon Castle closed out the win by rebounding his own missed free throw and converting a layup with 1 second remaining.

After trailing 75-50 in the third quarter, the Spurs opened the fourth with an 18-5 run to take their first lead since the opening minutes.

Wembanyama blocked Kris Dunn's reverse layup, creating a fast break that ended with an alley-oop dunk by Carter Bryant. Devin Vassell followed with a 3-pointer for a 99-97 lead. Julian Champagnie finished with 20 points and nine rebounds for the Spurs, and De'Aaron Fox had 19 points and nine rebounds.



Miami Heat forward Myron Gardner, right, battles Charlotte Hornets forward Moussa Diabate, front left, for the ball as Hornet forward Miles Bridges (0) watches during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C. (AP)



Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) takes a 3-point shot against Dallas Mavericks forward P.J. Washington (25) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Boston. (AP)

Brook Lopez had 26 points for the Clippers.

Heat 128, Hornets 120

In Charlotte, Tyler Herro had 33 points, nine rebounds and nine assists and the Miami Heat snapped the Charlotte Hornets' six-game winning streak.

Herro was 8 for 10 from 3-point range, including one that broke a 108-all tie with 7:06 to play. That came during a 9-0 run after the Hornets led by two and was essentially the difference in the game. Bam Adebayo added 24 points and 12 rebounds to help the Heat win their fourth straight game. Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 21 points off the bench. Miami was 18 for 38 (47%) on 3s.

Kon Knueppel scored 27 points for the Hornets, going 6 for 10 behind the arc. Brandon Miller had 22 points and 13 rebounds, while LaMelo Ball scored 21 points but was 7 for 22 from the field.

Charlotte fell back to .500 at 32-32. All the victories during the Hornets' winning streak had been by 15 or more points, tying the 2017-18 Golden State Warriors for

the second-longest streak in NBA history.

Lakers 128, Pacers 117

In Los Angeles, Luka Doncic scored 44 points in the first three quarters Friday night, overcoming LeBron James' absence and leading the Los Angeles Lakers to a victory over the Indiana Pacers.

Doncic hit seven 3-pointers on a 14-for-25 shooting night and grabbed nine rebounds before sitting out the fourth for the Lakers, who rebounded from a road loss to Denver on Thursday and won for the fourth time in five games overall.

James sat out to rest his accumulation of minor injuries in his 23rd NBA season, but Doncic picked up any offensive slack from the start. The Slovenian superstar scored 22 points in the first quarter, topping 20 in the opening period for the fifth time this season - the most such first quarters in the NBA in one season at least 30 years.

Knicks 142, Nuggets 103

In Denver, OG Anunoby scored 34 points to power the New York Knicks to

a 142-103 win over the Denver Nuggets, who lost All-Star point guard Jamal Murray to a sprained ankle just when their starting lineup was back together.

Josh Hart added 18 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 19 points and 17 rebounds as the Knicks kicked off a five-game trip in resounding fashion, their starters taking the fourth quarter off to enjoy the rare rout.

The 39-point home loss tied the Nuggets' record set against Chicago in 1998.

Nikola Jokic led Denver with 38 points but the Nuggets suffered their biggest loss of the season — both on the scoreboard and on the court with Murray's injury.

Aaron Gordon (hamstring) played for the first time since Jan. 23 and Cam Johnson returned from a sprained ankle, giving the Nuggets their original starting lineup for the first time since Nov. 12.

Rockets 106, Trail Blazers 99

In Houston, Alperen Sengun scored 28 points, Amen Thompson had 26 and the Houston Rockets used a dominant fourth quarter to beat the Portland Trail Blazers.

Sengun shot 11 of 15 from the field while playing just 26 minutes due to foul trouble, while Thompson converted all but one of his 12 shot attempts and scored eight points in the fourth quarter.

Houston trailed 85-77 after Matisse Thybille drained a 3-pointer a minute into the final period, but Portland missed 11 of its next 13 shots and the Rockets went on a 23-4 run that covered close to eight minutes.

Houston shot 67% in the fourth quarter, outscoring Portland 29-17.

Suns 118, Pelicans 116

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 18 of his 32 points in the third quarter, and the Phoenix Suns held off the New Orleans Pelicans.

Jalen Green had 25 for the Suns, who led by 14 in the second half before the Pelicans trimmed the lead to one point.

Grayson Allen made two free throws with 9.8 seconds remaining to give the Suns a 116-113 lead. Zion Williamson made one of two and Booker made a pair with 7.8 seconds left. Herb Jones scored with 5 seconds to go but the Suns were able to run out the clock.

Trey Murphy III led New Orleans with 22 points. Williamson had 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Saddiq Bey also had 19 points for the Pelicans.

Oso Ighodaro, starting for injured Mark Williams, had 13 points and six rebounds before fouling out with 1:08 remaining. Allen had 12 points and eight assists, and Collin Gillespie also had 12 points for Phoenix.

Both teams were playing for the second straight night. The Pelicans won Thursday night in Sacramento while the Suns lost at home to Chicago. The game featured 63 free throws; New Orleans had 37 and Phoenix attempted 26.

Teams rely on wise call

F1 appears to delay decision on two Middle East races in April affected by war

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 7, (AP): Formula One appears to have delayed a decision on whether to cancel its races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia in April which have been placed in doubt due to the Iran war.

Both countries have been struck during Iran's response after the United States and Israel launched a wave of attacks on Iran.

F1 is due to race in Bahrain on April 12 and in the Saudi Arabian city of Jeddah on April 19.

Various media reports said a decision was expected during this weekend's season-opening race at the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne.

Formula 1 officials met on Friday at Albert Park in Melbourne, but Racing Bulls chief executive Peter Bayer said no decision had been made and there is no deadline in place.

"What we said is, first of all, it's still a month to go," Bayer said. "Secondly, it's also difficult to talk about it because I'm really sorry for the people and the situation (in the Middle East). But I also have to say that we are so focused on (racing) here, which is, for us now, really what matters at the moment."

"And I know Stefano (Domenicali, F1's president and CEO), and the FIA, they're monitoring the situation. And I trust they make the right decision for us as a team."



Mechanics push McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia's car back into the team garage during qualifying for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park, in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Bahrain had already hosted two preseason F1 tests this season before the attacks were launched on Iran. A smaller-scale test of wet-weather tires was called off in the immediate aftermath of those strikes.

F1's governing body, the FIA, has already postponed the Qatar curtain raiser for top sports car category, the World Endurance Championship, that was slated to be held on March 26-28.

Previous media reports said canceling the F1 events could come at a cost to the sport of more than \$100 million, with F1's business model still heavily relying on race hosting fees and media rights.

If the Middle East events are canceled, it would leave an almost five-week hole in the calendar. Alternative sites such as Malaysia, Turkey, Portugal and Imola, Italy have been mentioned as possible new 2026 race venues later in the year.

The last time a scheduled F1 race was canceled was in 2023, when the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix in northern Italy was called off at short notice due to deadly floods in the area.

In 2022, F1 continued with its race weekend in Saudi Arabia even after Yemen's Houthi rebels attacked an oil depot during a practice session, with black smoke visible from the Jeddah circuit.

The same year, F1 canceled the Russian Grand Prix's contract after Russia invaded neighboring Ukraine.

Milan Cortina Paralympics open amid war and boycott



Athletes from Italy walk during the opening ceremony at the 2026 Winter Paralympics, in Verona, Italy. (AP)

Russian flag returns

VERONA, Italy, March 7, (AP): The Milan Cortina Winter Paralympics opened Friday amid the tensions of intensifying war in the Middle East and with some countries boycotting the opening ceremony because of the return of the Russian flag to the global sports stage.

The Russian flag made its return during the nations' parade, marking the first time it was flown at the Paralympics since the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, and signaling a possible full-fledged return to the Olympic circles ahead of the 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles.

Some boos were heard as the Russian athletes entered the stage during the parade. Four members of the delegation represented the country wearing a bright red uniform. They waved to the crowd as they paraded at the ancient Arena di Verona that was retrofitted with new wheelchair ramps and accessible restrooms along with other safety upgrades.

Russia's national anthem could be played for gold medalists for the first time on the stage of a major global sporting event since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Russian athletes were initially banned because of a state-sponsored doping program, and the sanctions had continued after the invasion.

There was applause when Ukraine was announced, but none of its athletes were seen as the country went through with its boycott of the ceremony. Six other nations had



Francesca Porcellato holds a Paralympic torch to light the Paralympic cauldron during the 2026 Winter Paralympics opening ceremony in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. (AP)

planned to not attend for political reasons, according to the International Paralympic Committee: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania.

Also back was the flag of Russia's close ally Belarus, which had two athletes participating in the parade in front of a virtually full Arena di Verona.

Iran's flag was absent because the only athlete set to compete for the nation, Para cross-country skier Aboulfazi Khatibi, had to withdraw just hours before the opening ceremony after he could not make it to Italy safely amid the intensifying Middle East conflict that began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran.

"Four years ago I said I was horrified at what was happening in the world," IPC president Andrew Parsons said. "Unfortunately, the situation has not improved. In a world where some countries are better known by the names of their leaders, I prefer to know countries by the names of their athletes. Sport offers the world another way forward, another perspective."

Only about 45 athletes - of the more than 600 competing - represented their nations at the ceremony. Because the Games are one of the most widespread ever, with competitions and venues in different clusters around Italy, many athletes were not able to attend.

Americans Laurie Stephens, a Para alpine skier and Josh Pauls, a Para ice hockey athlete, represented the United States in the parade.

Each nation announced their flag-bearers, but volunteers were handed the task of actually carrying the flags for all nations because not all flagbearers could attend the ceremony for logistics and training issues. Many would start competing early on Saturday morning.

During the parade, videos were shown with the other athletes at their competition locations.

Italian fencing champion Bebe Vio carried the Paralympic flame into the arena, while compatriot and wheelchair athlete Francesca Porcellato lit the cauldron in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

Italian visually impaired alpine skier Gianmaria Dal Maistro lit the cauldron in Milan.

Among the performances during the ceremony at the Arena di Verona - the first UNESCO World Heritage site to host a Paralympic ceremony - was Stewart Copeland, the renowned drummer of the Police, and DJ Miky Bionic, known as the first DJ in the world to play with a bionic arm.

The Milan Cortina Games mark the 50th anniversary of the Winter Paralympics. Athletes will compete across 79 events in six sports. It is the biggest

Val di Fassa, Italy, March 7, (AP): Lindsey Vonn finally lost her lead in the World Cup downhill standings Saturday when Laura Pirovano won by the smallest margin of 0.01 seconds on back-to-back days.

Vonn was the standout downhill racer through January but her season-ending crash at the Olympics last month left her too few World Cup points in hand with four races left in her favored event.

Pirovano is now the surprise standings leader because of a stunning and career-defining weekend on home snow in the Dolomites.

The 28-year-old Italian had never finished on the podium in 124 career World Cup races - until her win Friday.

Pirovano followed up Saturday by edging inside Cornelia Huebner's time. Minutes later, the 2022 Olympic downhill champion Corinne Suter raced into third, 0.05 outside Pirovano's time having led for most of her run and touched close to 133 kph (83 mph).

They pushed the early leader Breezy Johnson, the Olympic and world champion in downhill, down to fourth, trailing Pirovano by 0.64.

Pirovano's 100 race points lifted her atop the downhill standings, 36 ahead of Vonn who was pursuing a remarkable ninth career season-long downhill title at age 41. Emma Aicher is in second place with one race left, on March 21 at Kvitfjell, Norway.

Aicher placed outside the top 10 Saturday and was set to lose more points if lower-ranked late starters beat her time that trailed Pirovano by 1.06. She had been runner-up Friday.

That unexpected result for Aicher also was good for Mikaela Shiffrin, whose lead in the overall World Cup standings

Pinheiro Braathen puts pressure on Odermatt

Vonn loses lead in World Cup downhill standings, Pirovano wins by 0.01 again

has been cut back because she no longer races in downhill.

Shiffrin's lead over Aicher in the overall standings is still more than 115 points ahead of a super-G scheduled Sunday that the United States star could start.

The women's World Cup season now has seven scheduled races left as Shiffrin chases a sixth career overall title, and her first for three years.

In Slovenia, Olympic champion Lucas Pinheiro Braathen won the first World Cup giant slalom since the Winter Games to put pressure on Marco Odermatt for the season-long title.

Pinheiro Braathen protected his first-run lead to finish 0.54 seconds ahead of Olympic bronze medalist Loic Meillard. Stefan Brennsteiner was third, 0.80 back.

Pinheiro Braathen's historic gold-medal win for Brazil last month pushed Odermatt down to silver, and he is the Swiss star's closest challenger in the season-long giant slalom standings.

"I'm just skiing with a lot of happiness, a lot of joy," said Pinheiro Braathen, who was runner-up in the three World Cup giant slaloms before the Olympics.

Odermatt placed fifth Saturday, 1.33 back, and Pinheiro Braathen's 100 points for the win cut the Swiss star's lead in the World Cup giant slalom standings to 48 with one race left.

The discipline title will be decided March 25 at the season-ending race at Hafjell, Norway. Odermatt is the four-time defending champion.

Odermatt also is chasing a fifth straight overall World Cup title which he already effectively won.

He is 632 points ahead of Pinheiro Braathen with eight scheduled races left, though no rival who can theoretically catch him competes in all disciplines.



Italy's Laura Pirovano speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill, in Val di Fassa, Italy. (AP)

Taiwan beats Vietnam to move into second place

PERTH, Australia, March 7, (AP): Taiwan defeated Vietnam 1-0 on Saturday to move into second place in Group C at the Women's Asian Cup with one match remaining.

Su Yu-hsuan scored the decisive goal in the 26th minute after Saki Matsunaga's shot hit the crossbar, leaving Su to nod the rebound into an empty net for the team which won the last of its three Asian Cup titles in 1981.

It was a deserved victory for Taiwan, 2-0 losers to Japan on Wednesday, which created several chances to extend its lead.

Vietnam, the 2022 quarterfinalist, beat India in its opener but struggled to threaten the Taiwan defense and failed to record a shot on target. Thi Duyen Tran came closest with a first-half chance that went wide from inside the area.

Both teams now have three points from two games. Taiwan sits ahead of Vietnam and behind Japan, which faced India later Saturday. India is still seeking its first point in the tournament.

Australian organizers said Saturday that the tournament had sold



Taiwan's Chen Jin-wen, left, and Vietnam's Tran Thi Duyen during the Women's Asian Cup soccer match between Taiwan and Vietnam in Perth, Australia. (AP)

250,000 tickets. The milestone follows the tournament already breaking the all-time total attendance record, with 92,795 fans at the first 10

matches.

That surpassed the previous record of 59,910 for the 2010 edition in China.

The top two teams in each of the three groups advance to the quarterfinals along with the two best third-place teams.

In Group A, Australia, which beat Iran 4-0 on Thursday, and South Korea have already qualified. Australia and South Korea will meet in Sydney on Sunday to determine top spot in the group, where another record crowd is expected.

After back-to-back losses, Iran needs a big win over the Philippines (0-2) on Sunday to have any chance of advancing to the quarterfinals and qualifying for next year's Women's World Cup in Brazil.

In Group B, defending champions China and three-time winners North Korea are through to the quarterfinals after their second consecutive wins in group matches Friday. In opening matches on Tuesday, Myong Yu Jong had a first-half hat trick in North Korea's 3-0 win over Uzbekistan and China beat Bangladesh 2-0.

Group B play concludes Monday in Sydney when North Korea plays China in a match that will decide first place in the group, and Bangladesh takes on Uzbekistan.

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Italian fencer Beatrice Vio holds the Paralympic torch during the opening ceremony at the 2026 Winter Paralympics, in Verona, Italy. (AP) - See Page 15

Sports

Verstappen crashes

Mercedes locks front row with Russell, Antonelli for Australian GP

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 7, (AP): Mercedes has revealed its dominant hand during qualifying for Sunday's Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix.

George Russell earned his ninth-career pole position Saturday ahead of his teammate Kimi Antonelli for the team's 83rd front-row lockout and its first since the 2024 British Grand Prix.

Russell topped all three sessions in F1's knockout qualifying format, finally casting aside questions of where Mercedes team was in the new-era pecking order. His pole time, at 1 minute, 18.518 seconds, was almost eight-tenths faster than the nearest non-Mercedes challenger, Red Bull rookie Isack Hadjar, who completed the top three.

"It was a great day, we knew there was a lot of potential in the car, but until we get to this first Saturday of the season, you never know," Russell said. "But it really came alive this afternoon, especially when the track temperatures cooled, we know we tend to favor those conditions."

Antonelli was relieved to have made it onto the front row alongside his teammate after a crash in final practice at the exit of turn two meant it was a race in the Mercedes garage to get him out for qualifying.

"It's been a very stressful day. Unfortunately, I went into the wall (in FP3)," he said. "But the guys (in the garage) were the heroes today to put the car back on track."

Hadjar was impressive by qualifying third on debut for Red Bull, his highest-ever grid position.

"The only thing I can do is take them at the start, but they're just too fast at the moment," Hadjar said of Mercedes. "I want to keep my position and a second podium would be cool."

Ferrari showed it's neck-and-neck with McLaren on pace, with just one and a half tenths seconds covering the four drivers just beyond the top-three - with Charles Leclerc qualifying fourth, McLaren's Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris in fifth and sixth respectively, and Lewis Hamilton in seventh.

Racing Bulls showed they've taken a step forward over the winter, with New Zealander Liam Lawson eighth ahead of his highly-rated rookie teammate Arvid Lindblad.

The big surprise of the session came from four-time F1 world champion Max Verstappen, who triggered red flags at Melbourne's Albert Park after he lost control of his Red Bull car in braking for turn one in the first half of Q1 and ended in the barriers.

The Dutchman, who was unhurt from the crash, though upset that his brakes locked up, will now start from the back of the grid.

F1 heads into a new era this year, with unprecedented changes across the chassis (car) and power unit, which now feature an almost 50:50 output split between the turbo 1.6-liter V6 engine and electrical energy harvested from the brakes, one that requires a new, often counterintuitive driving style from the drivers.



Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain steers his car during the qualifying session for the Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park, in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

Real Madrid stays in title race



Monchengladbach's Nico Elvedi, left, and Bayern's Nicolas Jackson challenge for the ball during the Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and Borussia Monchengladbach in Munich, Germany. (AP)

Bayern cruises past Monchengladbach despite heavy rotation

MADRID, March 7, (Xinhua): Real Madrid stayed in the La Liga title race thanks to a stroke of luck that earned a 2-1 win away to Celta Vigo.

The game looked to be heading for a 1-1 draw, a result that would have given FC Barcelona the chance to extend lead. But Federico Valverde's 94th-minute shot from outside the Celta penalty area took a huge deflection off Marcos Alonso, leaving home goalkeeper Ionut Radu helpless.

Real Madrid, missing Kylian Mbappe, Eder Militao, Jude Bellingham and David Alaba, took the lead in the 11th minute with an excellent goal from Aurelien Tchouameni, who curled a spectacular shot in from distance.

The lead didn't last long. In the 25th minute, Borja Iglesias leveled for Celta with his first goal against Real Madrid. Williot Swedberg found space behind Trent Alexander-Arnold, turned the full-back and pulled the ball back for Iglesias to sweep past goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Tchouameni was Real Madrid's best player in the first half as he broke up play and set his side on the front foot, but Celta was sitting deep and denying Brahim Diaz and Vinicius Jr. space.

Courtois made a flying save to

stop Swedberg giving the hosts the lead shortly before the break.

Real Madrid thought they had a penalty late on when Ferran Jutga handled a cross in the Celta box, but the incident was ruled out for an earlier push on Ilaix Moriba.

Iago Aspas got the ball past Courtois in the closing minutes, but the ball came back off the post, before fortune again smiled on Madrid with Valverde's deflected winner.

In Berlin, Bayern Munich eased to a 4-1 victory over Borussia Monchengladbach in the Bundesliga at the Allianz Arena, overcom-



Real Madrid's Brahim Diaz, center left, duels for the ball with Celta's Miguel Roman during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Celta Vigo and Real Madrid in Vigo, Spain. (AP)

ing several absences and heavy rotation to take control of the match.

Bayern entered without top scorer Harry Kane, who was rested because of a calf issue. Coach Vincent Kompany also left several regular starters on the bench. Despite the rotation, the hosts quickly settled and began to dictate possession.

An early attempt from Rocco Reitz tested goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, but Bayern soon pushed the visitors back. Lennart Karl briefly thought he had broken the deadlock after finishing from a Leon Goretzka pass, only for the goal to

be ruled out for offside.

The breakthrough finally arrived in the 33rd minute when Goretzka lifted a precise ball toward Luis Diaz, who met it first time to score. Bayern struck again just before halftime as a swift counterattack ended with Diaz setting up Konrad Laimer to drive the ball under the crossbar.

Neuer did not return after the break, with Jonas Urbig taking his place, yet the pattern of play remained unchanged as Bayern continued to press forward.

The decisive moment followed in the 55th minute when Reitz fouled Nicolas Jackson in the penalty area. The referee showed a red card and Jamal Musiala calmly converted from the spot to make it 3-0.

Bayern maintained its pressure and created further chances. Jackson added the fourth goal in the 79th minute after meeting a cross from Karl.

Gladbach managed a late response when Wael Mohya scored in the 89th minute after a rebound, becoming the youngest Bundesliga scorer for the club.

"We were very solid today and controlled the game for long stretches. The late goal we conceded is frustrating though, that is something we simply must manage better and it is something we will address," said Goretzka.

Wolverhampton eliminated

Salah and Robertson fire Liverpool into quarters

WOLVERHAMPTON, England, March 7, (AP): Andy Robertson scored for only the second time this season and set up Mohamed Salah for another goal as Liverpool beat Wolverhampton 3-1 to move into the quarterfinals of the FA Cup.

Scotland captain Robertson rifled in a low shot from outside the penalty box 10 minutes into the second half to put Liverpool ahead and then Salah crashed home his enticing cross two minutes later.

Curtis Jones added a third for the visitor 16 minutes from time before Hwang Hee-Chan scored a stoppage-time consolation for Wolves.

Defender Robertson's only other goal this season came in September when Liverpool beat Atletico Madrid in the Champions League. His leading role in Friday's win was a welcome one after Wolves had humbled Arne Slot's team 2-1 in the Premier League three days ago.

"(That was a) bit more like it," Robertson told the BBC. "We know we let ourselves down on Tuesday ... it was up to us to go and put it right. The FA Cup is do or die."

The quarterfinals take place on the first weekend in April. The other seven contenders will be decided in matches to be held over the next few days.

"We are trying to fight on all



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates scoring their second goal of the game during an English FA Cup fifth round match against Wolverhampton Wanderers in Wolverhampton, England. (AP)

fronts," Robertson said. "We are still in two cup competitions. If we play like we did tonight, then nobody wants to play against us. We have to start showing that consistency. It is one step forward and two steps back."

Best of the Rest

Morocco appoints Ouahbi as new head coach: Mohamed Ouahbi was named head coach of Morocco, replacing Walid Regragui, who has left the role less than 100 days before the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The Moroccan Football Federation announced the decision during a ceremony held Thursday night, in which federation president Fouzi Lekjaa paid tribute to the departing coach.

Ouahbi, who led Morocco to the FIFA U-20 World Cup title last year in Chile, will be assisted by Portugal's Joao Sacramento.

"It's not simply a change. Our objective is to ensure the continuous development of Moroccan football through a structured roadmap," said Lekjaa. (Xinhua)

Brazil to host Panama in World Cup warm-up: Brazil and Panama will fine-tune their preparations for this year's FIFA World Cup with a friendly at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said.

The May 31 clash will be Brazil's last home appearance before the team embarks on its bid for a sixth World Cup title in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

"I really like the Maracana, it's a grand stage, full of history," Brazil manager Carlo Ancelotti told the CBF's official website.

"We have everything it takes to play a high-level World Cup, we are preparing very well, the players are proud to serve the national team and this exchange of energy before the tournament will be very good." Panama, currently 33rd in the world rankings, has been drawn in Group L of the World Cup alongside England, Croatia and Ghana. (Xinhua)

Ex-England midfielder Lingard joins Corinthians: Corinthians has completed the signing of former England and Manchester United midfielder Jesse Lingard, the Brazilian Serie A club said.

The 33-year-old agreed to a deal that runs until December after completing a medical earlier this week.

"It's a magical feeling. I can imagine with the fans it'll be a crazy atmosphere," Lingard said in a video posted on the club's social media accounts.

"First, I saw the fans at the airport saying 'Go, Corinthians! Go, Corinthians!' There's a lot of passion from the fans, which is amazing to see. The facilities are amazing." "The lads welcomed me with open arms, the coach, the CEO have been really good to me. My first impressions: very happy, I can't wait to get going." Lingard, who has 32 England caps, arrived as a free agent after parting ways with FC Seoul in January. (Xinhua)

Santos returns to Botafogo: Forward Junior Santos has returned to his former side Botafogo on loan from Atletico Mineiro, both clubs said.

Santos will be tied to Botafogo until December, with an option for the Rio de Janeiro club to buy.

The 31-year-old made 28 appearances for Atletico and scored two goals after arriving from Botafogo in January 2025 on a four-year deal.

In his first spell with Botafogo from 2023 to 2024, Santos scored 28 goals in 115 games, including a late strike in the 2024 Copa Libertadores final against Atletico Mineiro that helped secure the title. (Xinhua)