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MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026 / RAMADAN 20, 1447 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 19148

16 PAGES

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2 KUWAITI OFFICERS MARTYRED DURING IRANIAN DRONE STRIKES

Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Kuwait Army triumphs over Musaylima the Liar's army

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE army stands as the nation's bulwark, ever vigilant in safeguarding national security, sparing neither blood nor effort, and dedicating all its resources to protect the land, lives, and existence of the country.

In recent days, the Kuwait Army demonstrated unwavering commitment to maintaining national security when Kuwait faced Iranian terrorist aggression.

The malevolent neighbor left no room for good-neighborly relations, cutting off all avenues of cooperation.

In confronting this systematic aggression, the Kuwait Army showed remarkable resilience, particularly in the context of modern warfare. Today, combat increasingly relies on advanced technology, including drones and remotely launched missiles.

The Kuwait Army proved it possesses the skill, strength, and readiness required of any modern military to repel aggression and protect the nation.

Everyone knows that Kuwait is a defensive state, not an offensive one. It exercises its right to defend itself, but throughout its history, Kuwait has never attacked another country. On the contrary, it has often endured hardship to maintain good-neighborly relations with all nations.

Kuwait has been committed to preserving positive relations with countries around the world. For decades, it has pursued a policy of mediation between disputing parties and has been highly successful in this role. However, when Kuwait faces aggression in a war in which it has no part, it responds with firm determination.

Self-defense has become a necessity against the malevolent neighbor on the other side of the Gulf, who has sought to destabilize Kuwait and the Gulf states.

Recently, Iran targeted Kuwait with more than 186 missiles and 812 drones. The Kuwait Army confronted these attacks with full force, successfully destroying 172 missiles and 755 drones, even as the homeland was marked by the blood of soldiers, citizens, and residents.

Everyone is ready to shed their blood and sacrifice their lives for the sake of the homeland. This is Kuwait - its people, its land, its state. All are willing to die defending its existence.

In contrast, the Iranian regime has come to realize that Kuwait, and all the Gulf states, are not easy prey and that any attempt to threaten them will be met with overwhelming resistance.

This realization came far too late, which was evident when the Iranian president issued an apology to Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council states, perhaps an attempt to throw dust in people's eyes.

However, history is not kind. The story of Musaylima the Liar is deeply ingrained in the minds of the people of this region. They do not care about Iranian presidential apologies, especially when the wound is so deep. Words alone cannot repair what has been done.

In the past, Musaylima the Liar, who claimed prophethood, tried to bribe and deceive his followers, but he was exposed and became an example of lying and hypocrisy. This applies to the Tehran regime.

The war against the followers of Musaylima the Liar brought about his end because lies have no legs.

The remaining pillars of the Iranian regime of backwardness must reflect on the fate of that self-proclaimed prophet. They must realize that they cannot hide the sun of truth with a sieve of slogans, nor can they weaken the Gulf peoples who are united behind their leaders and governments.

There is no doubt that the war is nearing its end. The tone of defeat was evident in the recent speech of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, despite his attempts to downplay the defeat.

In reality, Pezeshkian was poisoning the well when he said that the Iranian attacks were conducted on the principle of firing voluntarily in the absence of orders. He indicated that orders had been issued to cease attacking the Gulf neighbors or launching missiles towards them, unless Iran was attacked from the territory of those countries.

We can easily refute this statement, as it is well known that Iran maintains terrorist proxies in Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon, with some attacks launched from these countries, particularly Iraq.

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Kuwait targeted as Tehran backtracks



Aftermath of the attack on the PIFSS building.

Drone attacks damage PIFSS HQ, airport fuel depots

Gulf tensions soar as Tehran widens conflict

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Things quickly deteriorated and the optimism that briefly prevailed in the region following the statement of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian evaporated.

The statement of Pezeshkian, which included an apology to neighboring countries -- the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states -- and a decision purportedly issued by the Transitional Leadership Council not to attack them again, was followed by one of the worst waves of Iranian attacks on the Gulf states, including Kuwait, suggesting that the leadership in Tehran is on the path of no return and has decided to burn all bridges and destroy all ties and connections.

The attacks launched by Tehran after Pezeshkian's statement, which instilled a false sense of optimism, included targeting the main building of the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) and two fuel depots at Kuwait International Airport.

In view of this, PIFSS announced that its main building had been targeted, resulting in material damage. This prompted the institution to apologize for not receiving visitors at its headquarters. Acting Director of the institution Khaled Al-Mudhaf stated that the institution is capable of continuing its operations from secure alternative locations, emphasizing that all data are preserved and backed up, and that most services are available through electronic systems. He indicated that there is no work at the main building of the institution until further notice, while the branches continue to operate according to the approved plan at 30 percent capacity.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) confirmed that its teams controlled the fire at the fuel tanks of Kuwait International Airport, while other teams dealt with the fire at the headquarters of PIFSS.

KFF spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib disclosed in a brief statement that the firefighting efforts at Kuwait Airport resulted in no injuries.

Also, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced that a drone targeted two fuel tanks at the airport belonging to the Kuwait Aviation Fueling Company (KAFCO), resulting in a huge fire at the site. Official spokesman of DGCA Abdullah Al-Rajhi cited initial reports stating that the damage was only material and there were no casualties.

Furthermore, official spokesman of the Ministry of Defense Colonel Saud Al-Atwan affirmed that the Armed Forces dealt with a wave of hostile drones that violated the airspace of the country early Sunday morning. He said the Armed Forces destroyed 12 ballistic missiles and successfully dealt with 23 drones over the past 48 hours, indicating that "the operation resulted in minor material damage without any casualties among the Armed Forces personnel."

Director of the Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the Ministry of Interior and its official spokesperson Brigadier General Nasser Bouslaib confirmed that security and military agencies coordinated their efforts.

He added "starting at midnight on Friday, the field teams for disposing of explosives, formed by the Kuwaiti Army, Ministry of Interior and National Guard dealt with 64 field reports about falling shrapnel and foreign objects, bringing the total number to 229 reports since the beginning of the Iranian aggression. All of these were dealt with quickly and efficiently."

In related news, Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Majmad were martyred at dawn Sunday while performing their national duty as part of their assigned security tasks, following the heinous Iranian aggression on the country.

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In crisis times, a single post can cross legal line: lawyers

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The rapid circulation of information through smartphones, which now function as mobile news outlets, has become a defining feature of the rapidly evolving and tense regional landscape.

Within seconds, photographs, videos and news items are disseminated in various social media platforms. However, this raises a highly sensitive legal issue. At what point does the sharing of information become a legally punishable offense?

Official warnings against certain actions, such as photographing military sites, documenting missile strikes, or publishing images of military vehicle movements are not arbitrary. They stem from a clear legal framework intended to safeguard national security.

To clarify the boundary between the 'right to know' and the 'duty to safe-

guard national security,' the newspaper consulted several lawyers.

They unanimously agreed that freedom of expression, although constitutionally protected, is not absolute. It must be exercised within the limits of legal responsibility.

The Constitution itself restricts this freedom by prohibiting any action that disturbs public order or threatens State security, thereby, granting the legislature the authority to impose stricter regulations during times of crisis.

Accordingly, the lawyers stressed that under the current circumstances, relying on information issued by official sources is the safest legal course of action. They strongly advised against publishing any content related to military or security matters.

Attorney Enam Haider affirmed that the concept of 'truth' in criminal law is not absolute when it conflicts with the higher interests of the State. She explained that many people believe that the accuracy of a piece of news or the existence of photographic documentation protects its publisher from prosecution, but this belief does not withstand the provisions of the penal code relating to crimes against State security. She asserted "national security takes precedence over the sanctity of information."

She added that the decisive factor in this type of crime is not the accuracy of the information itself, but rather its impact and the timing of its publication. She pointed out that publishing images or coordinates of vital locations during periods of tension could harm the military or political standing of the country, even if the act was not carried out with direct hostile intent.

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Americans in Kuwait advised to 'register' for crisis support

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The US government announced its readiness to assist its citizens wishing to leave the Middle East, including Kuwait, under the current circumstances.

Americans in Kuwait have been urged to complete a crisis form on the US State Department website to allow authorities to provide necessary support and keep them informed of updates and instructions.

Registration on the online crisis form is required to be included on the departure lists and receive further instructions.

American citizens may arrange travel via available commercial flights if they prefer, and those who have already submitted the crisis form do not need to submit it again.

Absconding reports go digital via As'hal

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has launched the "Employment Termination Notification" (absconding report) service on the "As'hal" portal for company services, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAM explained that the new service, which began operating on Sunday, allows employers to electronically notify an employee after submitting a request. Notifications are sent directly to the employee via the "As'hal" application, giving them a 60-day period to visit the Labor Relations Department to prove they have not abandoned their job.

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Ramadan Timings

Imsak	Monday	04:47
Iftar	Monday	17:52
Imsak	Tuesday	04:45

Turkiye Embassy in Kuwait arranges bus transport for citizens to Riyadh

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Embassy of Turkiye in Kuwait has made bus arrangements to transport Turkish citizens wishing to travel to Saudi Arabia, with arrivals scheduled at Riyadh International Airport (RUH).

According to a statement released by the embassy, the bus will depart tomorrow at 3:00 pm, in coordination with the embassy to ensure a smooth travel process for citizens by road. The departure point has been confirmed as the Turkish

Embassy building in Kuwait. Travelers are advised to arrive at least one hour prior to departure to complete all necessary procedures.

The journey is expected to take between 10 and 12 hours, due to which the passengers should prepare accordingly.

The embassy noted that no additional trips will be organized, as all submitted travel requests have been fulfilled.

It urged Turkish citizens to follow the embassy's official social media channels for updates or any new announcements related to the travel process.

Ramadan likely 30 days

Eid expected to begin March 20

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center announced on Sunday that astronomical calculations indicate the impossibility of sighting the crescent moon of Shawwal month for the year 1447 AH on the evening of Wednesday, March 18, corresponding to the 29th of Ramadan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, the center clarified that precise astronomical calculations and the astronomical map prepared by its specialists for various countries around the world show that the moon will set before sunset in Kuwait and most other countries on that day, making the crescent sighting astronomically impossible.

The center explained that the

conjunction (new moon birth) will occur at approximately 4:23am on Thursday, March 19, Kuwait time, after sunset on the 29th of Ramadan. Based on these astronomical data, the month of Ramadan is expected to be 30 days long, with Thursday, March 19, being the 30th and final day of Ramadan.

According to the center, Friday, March 20, will be the first day of Eid al-Fitr.

The Al-Ojeiri Scientific Center emphasized that the official determination and announcement of the beginnings of the Islamic months is carried out by the relevant authorities in the country according to the approved Islamic sighting method.



5 PM visits Sport Club for the Deaf shelter



8 Gulf Bank reaffirms full operational continuity across all retail & corporate banking channels

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:47	Asr	15:20
Sunrise ..	06:10	Maghrib ..	17:52
Zohr	12:00	Isha	19:06

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

HH Amir receives call from UAE Pres.

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, received a phone call Saturday from President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

During the call, the UAE President inquired about Kuwait, its leadership and people, while His Highness the Amir also expressed concern for the UAE and its citizens, following the recent Iranian attacks targeting both Kuwaiti and Emirati territories.

Both leaders reiterated strong condemnation of the aggression, describing it as a blatant violation of



HH the Amir



UAE president

the sovereignty of both countries, international law, and the United Nations Charter.

They emphasized that the attacks represent a serious escalation threatening regional security and stability, stressing the urgent need to halt escalation and return to dialogue and diplomatic

solutions.

Crown Prince

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Saturday a telephone call from Spanish King Felipe VI who strongly condemned the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwait's

territory.

During the call, King Felipe affirmed that these assaults as a flagrant violation of sovereignty and international law, stressing his country's full support for Kuwait in all measures it takes to maintain its security and sovereignty.

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

His Highness the Crown Prince also voiced thanks and sincere appreciation to the King for this good initiative and the supportive positions for Kuwait's security and stability.

PM calls UAE's Vice Pres. on Iran attacks

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah called Saturday UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Presidential Court.

During the telephone call, His Highness the Prime Minister checked on the UAE, its leadership and people following the heinous Iranian attacks and continued violations that targeted Kuwait and UAE's territories and airspaces.

Both sides voiced their strong condemnation and denunciation of these flagrant assaults which are a blatant violation of the two countries' sovereignty, international law



HH the Prime Minister

and the UN Charter.

They stressed the necessity of stopping this dangerous escalation and harnessing all potential to back the region security and stability.

Iraq's Kurdistan call

His Highness the Prime

Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Saturday a telephone call from the Premier of Iraq's Kurdistan region Masrour Barzani.

During the call, Barzani condemned the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwait's and expressed his government's support for all measures taken by Kuwait to maintain its security and stability.

His Highness the Prime Minister expressed appreciation and thanks for this good initiative and the supportive stances to Kuwait in measures taken to maintain its security and territorial integrity.

Women join defense forces in diversified achievements

Kuwait joins world to mark Women's Day

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): Kuwait joined the international community on Sunday in celebrating International Women's Day, adopted by the United Nations in 1975, in recognition of women's struggles, achievements and vital role in advancing societies and promoting equality while rejecting all forms of discrimination.

Observed annually on March 8, the occasion renews appreciation for women's valuable contributions worldwide and highlights their pioneering role in the progress and prosperity of communities.

This year's theme, "Rights, Equality, Empowerment for All Women and Girls," underscores the need for decisive measures to dismantle barriers to equal justice, including discriminatory laws, weak legal protections, harmful practices and social norms that undermine the rights of women and girls.

Women's rights are regarded as a key indicator of national progress, and Kuwait places importance on advancing women's status locally and internationally by backing UN and global initiatives to empower women and strengthen their role.

Kuwait's efforts are aligned with Article 29 of the Constitution, the national development blueprint New Kuwait 2035 and the fifth goal of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which focuses on achieving gender



Al-Huwailah



Dr Al-Mashaan

equality and empowering women and girls.

The State has witnessed notable achievements by Kuwaiti women across various fields, with women assuming leading positions in government and public institutions.

The current Cabinet includes three female ministers, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs Dr. Reem Al-Fulaj.

In February 2025, an Amiri decree appointed Dr. Dina Al-Mailem as Director of Kuwait University at the rank of Undersecretary for a four-year term, while Abeer Al-Awadhi was appointed head of the National Cybersecurity Center for the same period.

Further appointments in 2025 included Mona Al-Mutairi as Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, Dr. Dalal Al-Othman as Director-General of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs, Manal Al-As-

four as Director-General of Kuwait Municipality, and Rabab Al-Osaimi as Director-General of the Public Authority for Manpower, all at the rank of Undersecretary.

In 2024, four women were appointed as public prosecutors for the first time in Kuwait's history, bringing the number of female prosecutors to around 88, in addition to 19 Kuwaiti female judges.

In the security sector, 19 women were appointed to the Amiri Guard for the first time, while more than 900 Kuwaiti women serve in the police force.

Kuwait has also adopted initiatives supporting women's advanced rights in the region, becoming the first Gulf country to launch a women's empowerment initiative in the private sector and a pioneer in implementing the regional "Waraqati" project aimed at strengthening women's legal rights.

In March 2025, Kuwait officially amended the Personal Status Law (No. 10 of 2025), raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 in line with the Child Protection Law.

The country has also ratified several international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Kuwait continues to cooperate closely with the United Nations and other regional and international organizations to enhance women's capacities and promote their effective participation in achieving development goals and implementing programs related to their rights.

Call to hike production of bread products

Co-ops implementing total freeze in prices

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Director of the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Faisal Al-Ansari, along with the inspection teams, conducted field visits to several cooperative societies to ensure compliance with the price freeze as per the ministerial decree issued by Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai.

In a press statement, Al-Ansari said there were no price hikes during the inspection visits, affirming that the cooperatives are fully com-

plying with the directives. He added these visits are in cooperation with the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

He revealed that the aim is to ensure the needs of the 92 supply centers are met and that they receive all the necessary food supplies, while streamlining procedures for the cooperatives to guarantee stock delivery to central markets.

He stated that the concerned government agencies continue to coordinate their efforts to make sure that essential goods are available for the citizens and expatriates. He explained this is done by monitoring stock levels and facili-

tating supply chains to strengthen food security and stabilize the market during peak consumption seasons.

He also confirmed the ongoing coordination with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to increase bread production and guarantee the availability of sufficient quantities at all supply centers in order to meet local demand and ensure the availability of fresh bread.

He affirmed that the inspection visits will continue to ensure the cooperative societies adhere to the specified prices of basic products and other goods, prevent violations, protect consumers and maintain market stability.

Circular issued on putting off PIFSS-related lawsuits

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: President of the Court of Appeals, Counselor Mohammad Ahmad Al-Rifai, issued a circular to the counselors and judges of the Court of Appeals, calling for adherence to a number of procedural measures in light of the current circumstances in Kuwait and in order to uphold justice.

The circular stipulates the postponement of cases concerning the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) for which the required documents have not been submitted. Cases will be postponed even if the PIFSS lawyer does not attend the hearing.

The decision was taken following the fire incident that caused damage to the PIFSS headquarters and created difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents.

The circular emphasized that cases should not be dismissed due to the absence of litigants, but rather postponed to a suitable date, taking into account the current exceptional circumstances.

GAC employees working 24/7 to facilitate entry of various goods

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Male and female employees of the General Administration of Customs (GAC) work around the clock at various customs ports to facilitate the entry of shipments, expedite customs clearance, and ensure smooth arrivals in accordance with legal regulations and procedures, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a press release by GAC, these efforts are carried out in implementation of directives from the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, and under the direct supervision of GAC President Yousef Al-Nuwaif and Vice President for Ports, Search, and Customs Investigation Affairs Saleh Al-Omar, with continuous

monitoring of operations through the control room.

GAC stated that male and female inspectors perform their duties with cooperation and a unified team spirit, demonstrating professional integration that reflects the efficiency of national personnel. This approach ensures the highest levels of accuracy and speed in processing transactions while maintaining the integrity of control and security systems.

Meanwhile, in its broadcast Friday sermon, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs called for national unity, urging people to rally around the rulers and follow official instructions in light of current circumstances, reports Al-Rai daily.

Embassy of Mexico

The Embassy of Mexico to the State of Kuwait is closely following the current developments in the country. At this time, Mexico expresses its sincere solidarity with the State of Kuwait (Leadership, Government and people).

Mexico values its longstanding and friendly relations with the State of Kuwait and reaffirms its support for the country's continued stability, security, and prosperity. In moments such as these, the international community stands together in support of peace, dialogue, and cooperation.

The Embassy of Mexico reiterates its readiness to cooperate and extend any appropriate support within the framework of the strong bilateral relations that unite our two friendly nations.

Mexico sincerely wishes the State of Kuwait, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-



Eduardo Patricio Peña Haller

Sabah, continued peace, security, and prosperity, and expresses its confidence in the resilience and unity of the Kuwaiti people.

Eduardo Patricio Peña Haller
Ambassador

Eye on market demand

PAAAFR ensures no hurdles in eggs, poultry production

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Eng. Salem Al-Hai conducted an inspection visit to several farms and production companies in Wafra to assess their operational status, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, PAAAFR explained that these field visits are part of its commitment to supporting local farmers and producers and monitoring operations at national farms, thereby contributing to increased local production and strengthening the foundations of food security.

The tour included a visit to a livestock production company, where production and storage facilities and distribution

mechanisms were reviewed.

PAAAFR emphasized the vital role of the agricultural and livestock sectors in supporting and enhancing Kuwait's food security system, particularly given the current regional circumstances.

During the visit, Al-Hai reviewed the production mechanisms and operational capacity of a company specializing in table egg production. The company produces between 850 and 1,000 cartons of eggs daily, with each carton containing 12 trays, resulting in a daily production of approximately 306,000 eggs.

The tour also included a broiler chicken farm that produces about 10,000 chickens per day, which reflects the size of the production capacity that contributes to supporting the local market.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visits the Farwaniya Fire Station.

Fire-fighters role in boosting security, safety wins praise

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah conducted a visit to the Farwaniya Fire Station on Saturday evening as part of his field visits to monitor operations.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser was received by the Head of the Farwaniya Fire Station, Colonel Abdullah Al-Haddad, and several officers

and commanders.

He received a briefing on the station's operational procedures and the protocols followed in handling reports and incidents, as well as the operational plans adopted to enhance response times and protect people's lives and property.

Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser commended the firefighters for their significant efforts and praised their vital national role in strengthening security and safety.

Kuwait major player, cut in production to spiral oil prices worldwide, says expert

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Economist Ahmed Al-Sadhan said the decision of Kuwait to cut crude oil production and refining operations – part of a precautionary strategy announced by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) – is expected to drive up global oil prices.

Al-Sadhan told the newspaper that

this is a significant decrease in global supply, because Kuwait is a major player in the oil market. He said the reduction coincides with the ongoing war between Israel and the United States against Iran, a conflict contributing to the instability that prompted the production cut following repeated attacks on Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations.

Nevertheless, he believes that the price of a barrel of oil will reach \$150

only if supplies are completely halted, such as the total closure of the Strait of Hormuz or an escalation and continuation of the war.

He pointed out that fully reopening the Strait of Hormuz is more important than an apology from the Tehran regime to the GCC countries, especially since most of the GCC oil passes through this global waterway.

He explained that while an apology is necessary, true good faith could be

demonstrated by guaranteeing the security of navigation, flow of oil, and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. He added that if Iran fulfills these requirements, it will have a more significant impact on calming markets. He stressed that the continuous closure of the strait will negatively impact the economies of the Gulf states, not to mention the deteriorating global economic situation.

Regarding the need for Kuwait to

establish oil export pipelines in cooperation with other Gulf states to be used in times of crisis, Al-Sadhan supports this idea. He said "reviving the idea of exporting Kuwaiti oil via pipelines to bypass the Strait of Hormuz during periods of heightened conflict is a strategic necessity. Kuwait can cooperate with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or the Sultanate of Oman to access maritime outlets in case of any regional conflict or to

shorten access and reduce transportation costs."

About the possible damage on the global and Gulf economies if the Strait of Hormuz remains closed, he asserted that "this will disrupt the local, regional and global economic landscapes. Closing one of the most important arteries of maritime transport in the world will lead to a remarkable increase in oil prices, which will affect fuel and energy prices worldwide."

Caught between a rock and the deep blue sea

"ACCORDING to reports circulating in the news, US President Donald Trump contacted the Iranians to call for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations, but the Iranians rejected all the incentives he offered," Kuwaiti journalist **Hassan Ali Karam** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Here, we are not concerned with what Trump said or offered to the Iranians. Trump was not fighting a state and its people, but rather a regime he considered a threat to American interests in the region and the world.

"America is concerned with the security and existence of the Zionist enemy state. But it is impossible to discuss this now as the fighting continues.



Ali Karam

"In this sudden war, the Iranians have lost their compass and failed to distinguish between their friends and their foes.

"Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi stated a few days ago, 'We cannot strike America, but we will strike its bases in the region.'

"Perhaps Araqchi realizes that he cannot do this except by striking the Gulf.

"The Gulf states have vested interests with America. These interests vary according to the priorities of each Gulf state. Kuwait, for example, was liberated by America from the clutches of an unprecedented Iraqi aggression. Therefore, Kuwait had no choice but to strengthen its relationship with the country that responded to its plea for help.

"America did not come to Kuwait solely to liberate it. America found that Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, led by a reckless and tyrannical leader, posed a threat to the interests of the superpower and to world peace.

"Therefore, the two countries developed closer ties, driven by shared interests, which led to the opening of doors and the expansion of relations.

"The American military presence in Kuwait was not aimed at aggression against others, but rather at protecting Kuwait from any aggression similar to that of Saddam Hussein.

"Therefore, I am surprised by the statement of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi when he blames Kuwait despite the fact that it was Kuwait that received Iranian missiles and fire.

"In another interview, when Araqchi was asked about the Iranian missiles that targeted Gulf states, he said, 'No one can stop the Revolutionary Guard.' Here, Araqchi appears to be contradicting himself. Araqchi is described as a hardliner close to the Revolutionary Guard, which is why his meetings with the Americans failed and did not lead to a positive outcome or avert war.

"So the war broke out, and the Iranian regime's losses remain catastrophic, including the killing of top leaders, most notably the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ali Khamenei. 'It is understandable that the Iranians would reject Trump's offer in the heat of war. But will America remain an enemy or a close friend of Iran after the guns fall silent?'"

Also:

"An 11-year-old Iranian girl has died from Iranian missiles. We all know the horrors of war, and we know that children have the right to a happy life, not to become victims of a war which they have nothing to do with," columnist Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"However, we also know that the Israelis do not care about children or civilians. This is what we witnessed in the Gaza Strip and what we are currently witnessing in Lebanon.

"Yes, there is a foolish entity like Hezbollah that caused all this recent devastation in Lebanon, and it is no different from the foolish Saddam Hussein who invaded Kuwait in 1990. Hezbollah gave Israel the pretext to attack Lebanon. Iran has done the same. Under the pretext of fighting American bases in the region, Iran is killing children and civilians in the Gulf states. The United States and Israel were the ones to launch a war on Iran.

"All the Gulf states' governments announced months ago that they would not allow their territories to be used to wage this war.

"As long as Iranian officials call Iran an Islamic state, do they not adhere to Islamic teachings and the principles established by our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)? He had instructed his armies not to cut down trees or attack unarmed civilians. Does Iran abide by these instructions?"

"Frankly, the feelings of all Kuwaitis were with the family of the victimized child. What did this child do to deserve being killed in this way? We believe in God's will, but I repeat the question - what did this child do?"

"What is the value of the nuclear bomb that Iran is so desperately trying to acquire? And what kind of revolution is this that you want to export, even by killing innocent people? Is the deplorable situation of the Iranian

people a result of this revolution that Iran wants to export?"

"On the other hand, several questions arise from the current situation regarding systematic attacks targeting Kuwait, perpetrated by Iran and its affiliated factions in Iraq. Kuwait has signed joint defense agreements with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Russia and China are also allies of Iran. Why aren't their officials speaking with the Iranians to prevent an attack on Kuwait?"

"We must acknowledge that Kuwaitis felt the state, represented by the executive branch, which is the Cabinet, was prepared for this confrontation. While the readiness may not have been 100 percent, there were preparations, arrangements, and a high level of organization.

"I pray that God grants strength to all, especially our valiant army and security forces, who have proven their ability to defend the homeland, its citizens, and residents.

"Why aren't the joint defense and cooperation agreements signed with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council being activated?"

"It is deeply saddening that we are losing martyrs in a war which is not ours."



"Since the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, relations between Iraq and Kuwait have fluctuated between periods of calm and escalation. It is unfortunate, however, that some political voices in Iraq continue to raise issues that have been settled legally and internationally, most notably the Khor Abdullah issue, as if the region cannot bear stability and has not suffered enough from wars and crises," Kuwaiti lawyer **Dr. Abdullah Mohammad Al-Turajji** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Khor Abdullah is not a new issue or a recent dispute. It was addressed according to binding international resolutions issued by the Security Council after the liberation of Kuwait. The maritime and land borders were clearly demarcated and internationally recognized, with the participation of specialized technical committees and based on historical and legal documents. Therefore, any attempt to reopen the issue outside of this framework can only be interpreted as an attempt to create a political crisis that does not serve the interests of the people of either country.

"Since 1991, Kuwait has adhered to all international resolutions and dealt with the border issue in accordance with the law and respect for agreements. It has never sought to escalate tensions or infringe upon Iraq's sovereignty. On the contrary, Kuwait has been keen to build a relationship based on good neighborliness and economic and security cooperation, believing that Iraq's stability is essential for the stability of the entire region.



Al-Turajji

"However, the repeated threats and escalatory statements regarding Khor Abdullah revive a discourse that has been overtaken by events and send negative messages that are inconsistent with the demands of the current situation and the aspirations of the brotherly Iraqi people, who yearn for development, stability, and reconstruction, free from the conflicts of the past.

"Raising this issue at every juncture in local politics raises legitimate questions about the true motives behind it. Sovereignty issues are not resolved through slogans or media posturing, but through internationally recognized legal and diplomatic channels. Any violation of international agreements and resolutions opens the door to regional instability, which no one needs.

"How long will this issue be a bargaining chip or a means to escape internal crises? How long will disputes that have been legally settled be revived, at a time when the region needs a rational discourse that builds trust and strengthens cooperation?"

"Kuwait is a state of institutions that respects international law, adheres to international legitimacy, and believes that relations between states are built on mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs, and commitment to signed agreements. Any attempt to circumvent these principles will not alter the legal reality.

"The current stage requires everyone to heed the voice of wisdom and prioritize the shared interests of the two peoples. History and geography dictate coexistence and cooperation, not confrontation. Reviving crises will not rewrite borders or change internationally recognized facts.

"The question that every Kuwaiti and Arab concerned about the region's stability asks is - How long, Iraq, will some voices continue to raise this issue at every opportunity? When will the discussion shift from border disputes to joint action for a more secure and prosperous future for the people of both countries and the entire region?"

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



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 Kuwait Fire Force Headquarters. First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Saud Yousef Al-Sabah received the honorable guests.

Crown Prince, PM visit KFF HQ

'KFF doing splendid job in current situation'

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): 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 Kuwait Fire Force headquarters on Saturday.

His Highness the Crown Prince was received by First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Saud Yousef Al-Sabah, KFF chief Major-General Talal Al-Roumi and senior KFF officers.

His Highness the Crown Prince conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and appreciated great efforts of firefighters and their fast response to calls of incidents.

His Highness the Crown Prince was briefed about mechanisms of how to deal with accidents and emergencies, as well as precautionary and pre-emptive measures to protect lives and properties as well as boosting public safety system nationwide.

His Highness the Crown Prince commended sacrifices of firefighters, appreciating their courage and vigilance in dealing with different calls, protecting the nation and public as well as national interest.

He said dedication and professionalism of firefighters reflected great loyalty and belonging to the nation and leadership vis-a-vis dangers and disasters.

His Highness the Crown Prince urged the KFF

senior officers to continue development of operations in a way that guarantee full readiness to deal with any emergency in an efficient manner, and in coordination with all state institutions.

He prayed that Allah the Almighty bestowed Kuwait with protection, security, stability and prosperity under leadership of His Highness the Amir.

He also prayed to Allah the Almighty to bless the martyrs who died while saving lives and defending the nation.

His Highness the Crown Prince was accompanied by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah and head the Diwan of the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Sports club wins 4-year term

Dispute ends as court rejects appeal

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: **Attorney Mutlaq Al-Jada'i said the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) rejected the appeal filed by Khalaf Al-Sahu and Ali Al-Sahu against his clients, Jahra Sports Club President Yousef Karim Al-Enezi and others.**

Al-Jada'i made the statement after an arbitration ruling issued by the National Sports Arbitration Authority, which upheld the validity of procedures during the General Assembly held in November 2023.

He disclosed these procedures resulted in the selection of a temporary committee that called for elections, through which the Board of Directors of the club, headed by Yousef Karim Al-Enezi, was endorsed in February 2024.

He added "with the issuance of the final and binding arbitration ruling by CAS, the sports dispute at Jahra Sports Club has concluded. The endorsement of the Jahra Sports Club board, headed by Yousef Karim Al-Enezi, will

continue for a four-year term -- from February 2024 to February 2028. The dispute is over. I hope that in the coming days, Jahra Sports Club will enjoy stability and support from everyone, including the Public Authority for Sports (PAS), members of the General Assembly, and former players, so it can return to its former glory."

The Jahra Sports Club crisis began in January 2023 due to an administrative and legal conflict over the results of the board elections. The Al-Ittihad List, headed by Attorney Khaled Al-Jarallah, won the elections for the 2023-2027 term.

The representative of Al-Jahra List, which was also running in the elections, objected to the vote count in some polling stations, citing discrepancies in the final figures and demanded a recount.

The crisis escalated after the Sports Arbitration Committee invalidated the Jan 12, 2023 elections, leading to an exchange of appeals and accusations between the rival lists and the intervention of PAS.

The Al-Jahra List rejected the results of the January 2023 elections (in which they lost 0-11) and appealed. In September 2023, the Sports Arbitration Committee invalidated the

elections, citing a violation of Article 20 of the bylaws of the club.

The electoral committee of the club took over, and the various lists (Al-Ittihad, Al-Jahra and Al-Jamee') entered into a legal battle.

Conflicting rulings were issued both locally and internationally regarding the validity of the elections, culminating in a case filed at CAS, which rejected the appeal and upheld the procedures for endorsing the Board of Directors under the leadership of Yousef Karim.

The Kuwait Olympic Committee and PAS previously handed over the club to Yousef Karim's board after reviewing the arbitration decision in the sports dispute on Sept 8, 2024, and in accordance with Article 49 of Sports Law No. 87/2017. This article stipulates that "arbitration rulings are binding on the parties to the dispute once signed by the chairman of the arbitration panel and the parties are notified thereof. Their implementation is subject to the rules on arbitration stated in Decree-Law No. 38/1980, without prejudice to the right to resort to CAS."

It is worth noting that there are still pending cases in Kuwaiti courts concerning the Jahra Sports Club crisis, including forgery of general assembly documents.

'Loyalty and unity main pillar of Kuwait security'

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lt. Gen. Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib affirmed that security personnel dedication and unity form the fundamental pillar for strengthening the country's security.

This came in a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior (MoI) following an inspection tour Al-Wuhaib made to some sectors to review security readiness in light of the current circumstances facing the country and the region.



Al-Wuhaib

Al-Wuhaib added that the personnel are the first line of defense in protecting the homeland and preserving its security and stability.

During the tour, Al-Wuhaib reviewed the workflow mechanisms and procedures followed in the relevant sectors and listened to briefings from leaders and officials on the approved plans and coordination mechanisms among various departments to ensure a higher level of preparedness and rapid response to various field tasks.

It also included a visit to the cybercrime department, where he was briefed on monitoring and tracking mechanisms of content circulated across various social media platforms and the procedures followed in dealing with anyone publishing content that violates the law, particularly in light of these current circumstances.

He underlined the necessity of continuing to work in a spirit of teamwork and enhancing coordination among the various sectors in a manner that contributes to achieving the highest levels of efficiency in security performance and raising full readiness.

He lauded the efforts made by the ministry's personnel in doing their duties with dedication and sincerity.

Check on food products

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The official spokesperson for the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN), Dr. Shaima Al-Asfour, Deputy Director General for Community Nutrition Affairs, confirmed that PAFN conducted an inspection tour of the Sulabiya border crossing and the Sulabiya laboratory to review procedures for inspecting food products entering Kuwait, reports **Al-Seyassah** daily.

She clarified that the tour aimed to monitor control mechanisms and ensure the safety of imported food before it reaches local markets, in line with approved health requirements.

Dr. Al-Asfour emphasized that food supplies are abundant and readily available, noting that the country's food situation remains safe and stable thanks to PAFN's ongoing efforts to guarantee food safety and protect consumer health.

Ministry nears completion of key water and power repairs

6 South Zour units to go online

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy is exerting tremendous efforts to resume the operation of six water production units at South Zour Power Station this week, upon completion of the maintenance works, say reliable sources.

Sources confirmed the commitment of

the ministry to complete the maintenance of electricity and water production units in preparation for emergencies, taking into consideration the current regional circumstances.

Sources said the operation of these six units will provide the water network with 50 million imperial gallons, thereby, ensuring balance between production and daily consumption. Sources stressed that the ministry is keen on balancing water production with consumption during the annual maintenance of power station units, particularly in preparation for the summer season when

consumption is high.

Regarding the repair of overhead power lines damaged by drone debris, sources stated that the technical teams of the ministry have intensified efforts to complete repairs on the remaining two of nine lines, as they already repaired and restored service to seven lines. Sources explained that the time required to repair the overhead lines depends on the extent of the damage. They affirmed that the ministry succeeded in repairing some lines at record speed, while others need more time to complete repairs and restore them to their original state to guarantee efficiency.



Ministry of Justice photos
Nasser Al-Sumait, Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Board of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs, tours the PAMA shelter during an inspection visit to review its readiness and ensure compliance with safety and organizational standards.

MoJ inspects PAMA shelter readiness

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Minister of Justice and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA), Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait, inspected the PAMA shelter on Friday to evaluate its readiness and ensure compliance with technical and organizational requirements, as well as the imple-

mentation of approved safety standards, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Sumait emphasized that equipping the shelter is part of the state's precautionary measures under the current circumstances, aimed at strengthening national preparedness and ensuring an effective response according to emergency

plans.

He concluded his statement by praying for the safeguarding of the State of Kuwait from all harm, the perpetuation of its security and stability, and the protection of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, and His Highness the Crown Prince, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled.

Allies assert right to defend territory

International solidarity voiced in calls to Kuwait's Foreign Minister

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on Saturday a telephone call from his Kazakh counterpart Yermek Kocherbaiev.

During the call, Kocherbaiev voiced his country's solidarity with Kuwait regarding the Iranian aggression that targeted the country, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Kocherbaiev affirmed the importance of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity, it added.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Friday phone calls from foreign ministers of Cyprus, Bhutan and Croatia who expressed solidarity with the State of Kuwait over Iran's blatant attacks.

Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos expressed solidarity with the State of Kuwait against the Iranian aggression, and affirmed importance of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and safety of its territories.

Bhutan's DN Dhunyel also expressed solidarity with the State of Kuwait and said it was highly important to respect the Gulf nation's sovereignty and territorial safety.

Croatian top diplomat Gordan Grlic-Radman condemned the Iranian attack on the State of Kuwait and the countries in the region, and that those countries have the right to adopt all measures necessary to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received on

Thursday separate phone calls from his counterparts in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay that focused on the regional military escalation and security developments.

In his call, Kenya's Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Dr. Musalia Mudavadi expressed his country's unwavering solidarity with the State of Kuwait after the Iranian attacks targeting the country.

He underscored the imperative of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity following recent regional escalations.

Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kubayev voiced a strong condemnation of the aggression targeting Kuwait and other nations in the region.

He affirmed the legitimate right of targeted states to undertake all necessary measures to protect their national security and sovereign territory.

Meanwhile, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the friendly Oriental Republic of Uruguay, Mario Lubetkin, expressed his country's solidarity with the State of Kuwait regarding the Iranian aggression.

He also emphasized the importance of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a telephone call from US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday.

During the call, the Iranian attacks on the State of Kuwait and regional countries were condemned, and that those countries retain the right of taking all necessary measures to protect their sovereignty, said a ministry statement.

Historic and strategic relations between both friendly countries and means to support and develop them were also discussed, the statement concluded.



Sheikh Jarrah

PADA suspends medical committee appointments until after Eid al-Fitr

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) announced the postponement of all medical committee appointments until after Eid

al-Fitr.

In an official statement, PADA explained that the postponement is due to the exceptional circumstances currently affecting the country. Individuals with scheduled appointments will be informed of their new dates as soon as possible.

MoSA converts wedding halls into temporary food distribution hubs

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Ministry of Social Affairs announced the allocation of several wedding halls to serve as temporary food distribution centers, aiming to reduce overcrowding and make it easier for citizens to access their food supplies.

The ministry explained that the Al-Qufidi wedding hall in Firdous will be used as a

temporary distribution center to help relieve congestion at the Firdous distribution center. This urgent measure is being implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Also, the Abdullah Al-Mubarak Development Center will serve as a temporary distribution center for residents in densely populated areas, helping to facilitate the efficient distribution of food supplies to citizens.



Kuwait University photos
Photos during Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Musa'ed Al-Mailam's visit to the Marine Science Building in Fintas.

Kuwait University President visits Marine Science building in Fintas

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Kuwait University President Prof. Dr. Dina Musa'ed Al-Mailam visited the Marine Science building in Fintas on Thursday morning, as part of the series of field visits to monitor the conditions of Kuwait University's facilities under the current circumstances.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait University, Dr. Al-Mailam reviewed the situation at the site, monitored the progress of ongoing procedures, and ensured the safety of univer-

sity staff present at the facility.

The visit is part of a series of inspection tours conducted by the university administration to its various sites to ensure direct monitoring and on-site assessment as well as the protection of staff and facilities during this period.

Dr. Al-Mailam was accompanied by Professor Haider Behbehani, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Science, Dr. Dhiaa Al-Bader, acting Head of the Marine Science Department, and Mohammed Al-Sulaiman, acting Assistant Secretary-General for Facilities Management.



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LOCAL

ICRC lauds KRCS' key humanitarian efforts

Volunteers deployed to aid State agencies

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): Mamadou Sow, head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Regional Delegation, commended Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) prominent humanitarian role regionally and internationally, lauding its efforts to support crisis and disaster victims and promote initiatives.

In a statement to KUNA during his meeting Sunday with KRCS Chairman Khaled Al-Mughames, Sow said the visit aims to strengthen coordination and cooperation between ICRC and KRCS, and explore joint areas, particularly in developing training programs and building volunteer capacities to enhance humanitarian efforts and effectively respond to current needs.

Such meetings unify humanitarian efforts, exchange expertise, boost abilities to confront growing regional challenges, and improve crisis response mechanisms, he added.

Meanwhile, Al-Mughames told

KUNA that KRCS is keen to enhance cooperation with international humanitarian organizations, especially ICRC, to support and develop humanitarian mechanisms amid regional conditions.



Al-Mughames

The meeting discussed ways to bolster collaboration, particularly in supporting volunteers, developing their skills, and raising readiness for emergencies, he explained.

Al-Mughames noted KRCS' strong emphasis on volunteer work as a core pillar of humanitarian action, with a focus on training volunteers to international standards for swift and effective interventions when needed.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Khaled Al-Maghames announced on Saturday the allocation of 150 male and female volunteers to support the state's agencies mainly preparing some shelters, as part of following the current conditions and raising

readiness.

Speaking to KUNA after the second emergency meeting of KRCS Board of Directors, Al-Maghames added those volunteers were divided into groups across all governorates within the framework of the preparation plan carried out by the society in coordination with concerned bodies.

These volunteers are part of many persons registered in the society, he said, referring to the continuity of receiving other requests of people to join voluntary groups.

These contributors had first aid training sessions and received guidelines related to the method of offering humanitarian service and dealing with emergency cases, he stated.

The meeting reviewed the approved emergency plan and discussed the recent mechanism of coordination with relevant government agencies, he said.

It also focused on some logistic and regulation measures, including boosting strategic stock of relief material and continuing activating emergency operations rooms to pursue the developments around the clock, he elaborated.

These steps show the level of high readiness of society so as to deal with different emergency conditions, he concluded.



Prime Minister Diwan photos

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited the Kuwait Sport Club for the Deaf shelter to review emergency preparedness and safety measures.

PM visits Sport Club for the Deaf shelter

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited the shelter of Kuwait Sport Club for the Deaf Saturday and was accompanied by Minister of State for Youth and Sport Dr.

Tareq Al-Jalahma.

His Highness the Prime Minister was briefed by Club officials about operations of the shelter in emergencies, the safety system, logistical and services support which provide safe environment in exceptional circum-

stances.

His Highness the Prime Minister thanked the Club officials for preparing the shelter, which reflected a high sense of responsibility and commitment to the service of the nation.

Committee for citizenship verification reconstituted

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: A decree was published on Sunday in the official gazette for reconstituting the Higher Supreme Committee for Citizenship Verification, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Article 1 of Decree No. 33/2026 states that the Supreme Committee for Citizenship Verification shall be reconstituted with the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior chairing the committee, and with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and the Secretary-General of the Cabinet serving as members.

Article 2 stipulates that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, shall implement the decree, which becomes effective from the date of its issuance and publication in the official gazette.

Platform expedites technical problem resolution

MoE launches parent support portal

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Ministry of Education launched a new online service for parents through the Student Services platform on the ministry's official website, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that the service allows parents to report any problems their child may encounter while using the Teams educational platform. Reports are received directly and immediately forwarded to the specialized technical support team for follow-up and resolution.

This mechanism helps expedite responses to technical feedback and addresses problems students may face while using educational

platforms, thereby ensuring the smooth and efficient continuation of the educational process.

The technical support team from the General Department for Technology and Information Systems follows up on received reports and contacts parents after the problem is resolved to inform them of the actions taken and confirm that the issue has been fully resolved.

The ministry encourages parents to take advantage of the new service and submit reports through the Student Services platform available on the ministry's website if they encounter any technical problems related to using the Teams platform.

Education Ministry updates 'Salem and Abeer' app

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: The Ministry of Education announced an update to the "Salem and Abeer" application to align it with the kindergarten curriculum for levels one and two, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The update offers a simplified, interactive learning experience tailored to this age group and supports the development of children's essential skills.

The ministry explained that the app now includes educational content accompanied by questions, activities, and supportive games, most notably a letter-dropping game that reinforces the recognition of letters and their sounds. The update is part of a comprehensive learning approach designed to make learning letters a fun and engaging activity for children.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait Army

The Iranian fifth column remains active. A believer does not fall into the same trap twice. The Gulf states cannot trust these claims unless Tehran dismantles these militias and stops directing them to attack the Arabian Gulf states. Only then will it be clear whether the Iranian president truly regards the Gulf states as brothers, as he claimed in his speech.

Those who have witnessed Iran's criminal and terrorist activities over the past 47 years know that words alone are meaningless without action. History shows that Iran has consistently failed to honor its commitments to the Gulf states.

Kuwait targeted

In its condolence statement, the Ministry of Interior quoted the Quranic verse, "And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision."

The ministry revealed that the two martyrs were members of the General Directorate of Land Border Security and were martyred while performing their national duties within the framework of their assigned security responsibilities.

The ministry expressed its deepest sorrow and grief over this loss, affirming that its security personnel continue to perform their duty with utmost courage and dedication in protecting the homeland and preserving its security and stability.

It prayed to Almighty Allah to have mercy on the two martyrs, grant them eternal peace in Paradise, and give their families patience and solace.

In a related development, the Ministry of Defense and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) mourned with deep sorrow the two martyrs of duty from the Ministry of Interior—may Allah have mercy on them. It implored Almighty Allah to have mercy on them, grant them eternal peace in Paradise, and give their families patience and solace.

Elsewhere, Bahrain accused Iran of striking a desalination plant on Sunday, raising fears that civilian infrastructure may become fair game in the war, as Iran's president vowed to expand the country's attacks on American targets across the region in the face of intense U.S. and Israeli airstrikes.

A late-night Israeli strike on an oil facility engulfed parts of Iran's capital, Tehran, in smoke on Sunday, while Israel renewed attacks in Lebanon. Presi-

dent Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to press ahead with the nine-day-old campaign, which has rippled across the region and appears to have no end in sight.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian threatened Sunday to step up attacks on American targets across the Middle East. He appeared to backtrack from conciliatory comments toward his Gulf neighbors on Saturday. Those comments, in which he apologized for attacks on their soil, were quickly contradicted by Iranian hard-liners.

The Gulf nations of Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, reported additional Iranian missiles launched toward them on Sunday, including several that hit new categories of civilian infrastructure.

The United Arab Emirates said that Iran launched more than 100 missiles and drones in new barrages. Only four drones fell at unnamed locations, the country's defense ministry said.

Bahrain accused Iran of indiscriminately attacking civilian targets and damaging one of its desalination plants, though its electricity and water authority said supplies remained online. The island nation, home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, has been among the countries targeted by Iranian drones and missiles. Attacks have hit hotels, ports and residential towers and killed at least one person.

The desalination plant strike came after Iran said a U.S. airstrike damaged an Iranian desalination plant. Abbas Araghchi, the country's foreign minister, said the strike on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz had cut into the water supply for 30 villages. He warned that in doing so "the U.S. set this precedent, not Iran."

Neither U.S. Central Command and Israel's military had immediate comment on the plant.

Desalination plants supply water to millions of residents in the region, raising new fears of risks in multiple parched desert nations.

Iran also said on Sunday that overnight strikes from Israel hit four oil storage tankers and a petroleum transfer terminal, killing four people. Witnesses in Tehran said the smoke was so thick from a fire that engulfed the north Tehran oil depot that it felt as if the sun had not risen.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society said on Sunday that about 10,000 civilian structures across the country had been damaged, including homes, schools and medical facilities. It warned Tehran residents to take precautions against toxic air pollution and the risk of acid rain after Israeli strikes set fires at oil depots in the area.

Iran maintains sufficient fuel, Veys Karami, Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company, told Iran's state-run news agency. Israel's military said on Saturday that the targeted oil depots were being used by Iran's military.

In crisis

She explained that information which may appear ordinary in stable circumstances can become dangerous in exceptional situations, as the temporal context plays a crucial role in determining its legal classification.

She asserted that the law considers the potential consequences in such cases and assesses whether the publication could endanger national security or public safety.

Attorney Ali Matar Al-Wawan warned against carelessness in sharing clips through social media applications, indicating that Cybercrime Law No. 63/2015 expanded the scope of responsibility to include anyone who uses information networks to publish or republish content that harms the higher interests of the country.

He indicated that the law does not distinguish between the original publisher and the person who reposts the material once the elements of the crime are established. "Contributing to the spread of content of a security nature may subject an individual to legal accountability, even if his role is limited to forwarding the material or sharing it within a closed group," he elaborated.

He stressed that the excuse, "I received it as is", does not negate general criminal intent, provided that the individual was aware of the nature and seriousness of the content.

He also pointed out that the pursuit of online fame or trending status and increased views can quickly lead to legal proceedings, emphasizing the importance of exercising self-restraint before pressing the send button.

In an analysis of Kuwaiti judicial trends, Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan explained that courts have traditionally maintained a balance between the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution and the need to protect the State and its stability. "However, this balance naturally shifts toward stricter measures whenever general circumstances become exceptional," he said.

Al-Qattan added that crimes related to State security do not require the occurrence of actual harm, it is sufficient that the act could potentially endanger the country.

He stressed that good faith alone

is not enough to guarantee immunity from punishment in such cases if it is proven that the individual knew that the material being published is related to military or security matters at a sensitive time.

He clarified that photographing defense systems or strategic sites out of pride or curiosity could be legally interpreted as the disclosure of information that hostile entities might exploit.

He emphasized that the judiciary focuses more on the nature of the content and its overall context than on personal motives.

The lawyers concluded that technology, despite providing speed and transparency, has brought with it a doubled responsibility.

The landscape is no longer confined to professional journalists or media institutions, as every smartphone user has effectively become a potential participant in producing and disseminating news.

In times of crisis, a single moment of reflection may be enough to prevent serious legal consequences. National security is not merely an institutional matter but a societal responsibility that begins with individual awareness.

Ultimately, the lawyers affirmed that a form of freedom that ends up threatening national security is not freedom at all, but rather an overreach that renders its perpetrator liable to prosecution.

Between the desire for online scoops and the duty to protect the country, the final word rests with the legal text and with a national conscience that understands that Kuwait's security is a red line.

Absconding reports

The system also allows the notification to be printed directly through the "As'hal" portal without needing to visit the Labor Department or obtain a signature or certification from PAM, which helps in expediting and simplifying procedures for employers.

The service uses a QR code to verify data and ensure the notification's authenticity.

The notification is valid for only three working days from the date of printing, during which it must be submitted to the General Directorate of Residency Affairs at the Ministry of Interior to complete procedures for reporting absences.

PAM confirmed that the launch of this service is part of its ongoing efforts to develop digital services, facilitate procedures for business owners, and enhance government efficiency.

Other Voices

Palestine 36: The truth of 1936

By Ahmad alsarraf

Zionists succeeded in using art, particularly cinema, to transform the stereotypical image of the stingy, ugly, and xenophobic Jew into a more acceptable figure by masking negative traits behind humor and creativity. This contributed to the prominence of many Jewish actors and comedians in Hollywood.

Seventy-seven years after the Nakba and the loss of Palestine, the BBC and several Arab organizations produced one of the first sophisticated artistic works capable of breaking through the barriers Zionism had constructed in the Western mind, which had long obscured the reality and historical context of occupied Palestine during the Mandate period.

The film "Palestine 36," a historical drama directed by Palestinian filmmaker Annemarie Jacir, premiered a month ago and achieved significant viewership. It recounts the events of the Arab Revolt in Palestine during the Mandate period (1936-1939),



alsarraf

using fictional Palestinian characters against a documented political backdrop. The story begins with the revolt against British rule and the authorities' inability to curb increasing Zionist immigration and the takeover of Palestinian lands.

The film portrays the general strike called by the Arab Higher Committee, the spread of armed rebellion in rural areas, and the British authorities' brutal attempts to suppress it, including mass arrests, executions, village demolitions, curfews, and collective punishment.

It features real British figures, such as High Commissioner Sir Arthur Washup and Captain Ord Wingate, who represent both harsh colonial oppression and Christian Zionist zeal.

The story follows a group of Palestinians whose lives intersect with the escalating revolt.

Youssef, a young man, leaves his village for Jerusalem to work for Amir, a wealthy and liberal magazine editor. Initially unaware of the true conditions in his homeland, Youssef gradually develops political awareness as he witnesses land confiscations, the disdain of the urban elite, and the violence of colonial rule.

Kholoud, Amir's wife, is a journalist and nationalist writer who publishes under a pseudonym. She quickly becomes committed to the revolution, sharply criticizing the elites' collaboration with the authorities, in contrast to her husband Amir, who publicly supports the national movement while secretly cooperating with Zionist institutions, presenting them as Islamic associations for personal gain.

Khaled, a port worker in Jaffa, becomes a revolutionary fighter after discovering weapons being smuggled to the Zionist Haganah in cement barrels at the port, an early sign of the military buildup that Britain not only ignored but actively facilitated. Khaled becomes a fighter and joins both the urban resistance and rural guerrilla operations.

The film opens amid escalating tensions, highlighting the rapid pace of Jewish immigration and the accelerated transfer of land ownership from Arab landowners, often non-Palestinians, to Zionist organizations. It emphasizes the stark disparity in Britain's treatment of Arabs and Jews during this period.

In one scene, a Palestinian girl asks her mother why Jewish settlers are living nearby. Her mother explains that their own country does not want them, portraying Jewish immigration as being imposed from abroad while Palestinians face an enforced demographic shift.

Youssef travels between his village and Jerusalem, witnessing two contrasting worlds - rural poverty and land loss on one hand, and the salons and newspapers of Jerusalem's elite on the other.

He observes how the British classify villages as "good" or "bad," establish checkpoints, impose curfews, and apply collective punishment against communities suspected of harboring rebels.

A major turning point occurs when Youssef's father is shot dead without provocation by armed Jews from a neighboring kibbutz being built on village land.

This is followed by a British punitive raid on the village, with troops arriving under the pretext of searching for "bandits." The forces use the operation as an opportunity to terrorize the population, illustrating how Palestinian society is trapped between settlement expansion and imperial violence.

British violence intensifies with the use of brutal tactics, including rounding up villagers, blowing up homes, burning crops, and using people as human shields.

In a harrowing scene, a village suspected of aiding rebels is besieged, a house is destroyed, and a local leader is executed on the spot.

A boy is threatened with death until his father reveals hidden weapons. The British load the suspects onto a bus and drive it along a road rigged with explosives, killing everyone on board. They then set fire to cotton fields and withdrew, taking a young villager strapped to a vehicle as a human shield.

The film is highly impactful and well worth watching. Share the link below with as many people as possible - <https://t.me/shahidmosalsalat> or <https://t.me/shahidmosalsalat> or <https://t.me/shahidmosalsalat>



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

INTERNATIONAL

Pentagon and FAA agree to conduct anti-drone laser tests in New Mexico

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP) — The Pentagon and the Federal Aviation Administration agreed to conduct anti-drone laser tests in New Mexico after the military's deployment of the lasers led the FAA to suddenly close airspace in Texas twice in the last month.

The newly announced testing was being carried out to "specifically address FAA safety concerns," the military said Friday in a statement. It was to take place Saturday and Sunday at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

Lawmakers were concerned about an apparent lack of coordination after the Pentagon allowed US Customs and Border Protection to use an anti-drone laser in early February without notifying the FAA. The federal agency that ensures safety in the skies decided to close the airspace over El Paso for a few hours, stranding many travelers.

The Trump administration said it was working to halt an incursion by

Mexican cartel drones, which are not uncommon along the southern border.

On Feb 26 the US military used the laser to shoot down a "seemingly threatening" drone flying near the US-Mexico border. It turned out the drone belonged to Customs and Border Protection, lawmakers said.

The incident led the FAA to close the airspace around Fort Hancock, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of El Paso.

"We appreciate the coordination with the Department of War to help ensure public safety," the FAA said of the testing, in a separate statement. "The FAA and DOW are working with interagency partners to address emerging threats posed by unmanned aircraft systems while maintaining the safety of the National Airspace System."

The military is required to formally notify the FAA when it takes any counter-drone action inside US airspace.

Illinois Democratic Sen Tammy Duckworth, the ranking member on the Senate's Aviation Subcommittee, called previously for an independent investigation after the two February incidents.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Newly released videos showing the fatal shooting of a US citizen by a federal immigration agent in Texas last year call into question assertions by the Department of Homeland Security that a driver intentionally rammed an agent with his car immediately before he was killed.

The videos, including from officer body cameras, offer the first visual account of the shooting of **Ruben Ray Martinez**, 23, during a beach trip last year. Hours of footage and other law enforcement records were released Friday following a public records request from The Associated Press and other news outlets.



Cars across the 'Paso del Norte' International Bridge at the US-Mexico border between Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, (bottom), and El Paso, Texas, (top), on Feb 11. (AP)

'Trump waging a war of choice'

WH and Democrats at odds over risk to US weapons stockpiles from Iran war

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP) — The US and Israeli strikes on Iran have raised concerns among Democrats and others about diminishing American stockpiles of certain weapons, illustrating a long-standing production problem that some experts say could present challenges if another conflict emerges.

The Trump administration has repeatedly said American forces have all of the weapons they need to fight the Iran war, now in its second week. President Donald Trump posted Friday on social media that several defense contractors had agreed to quadruple production of weapons "as rapidly as possible," although he did not detail the specific systems being manufactured.

Questions about the nation's weapons stockpiles have grown as the US campaign against Iran escalates, with many Democratic lawmakers arguing that Trump is waging a "war of choice." Missile defense systems are under the most strain, according to experts, with Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, interceptors in high demand in Ukraine and Israel, respectively.

"I'm not particularly worried about

us actually running out during this conflict," said Ryan Brobst, a scholar focused on US defense strategy at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "It's about deterring China and Russia the day after this conflict is over."

The U.S. is using both systems to take down Iranian missiles fired in retaliation for the American and Israeli attacks, but US officials have said they are struggling to stop waves of drones launched by the Islamic Republic and that they are bringing in an American anti-drone system proven to work against Russian drones in Ukraine. The system known as Me-rops also is cheaper than firing a missile that costs hundreds of thousands of dollars at a drone that costs less than \$50,000.

Sean Parnell, the Pentagon's chief spokesman, said in a statement that the US military "has everything it needs to execute any mission at the time and place of the President's choosing and on any timeline."

Defense contractor Lockheed Martin posted on X late Friday that it had agreed to "quadruple critical munitions production" and "began this work months ago." Trump and Lockheed



Smoke rises after an Iranian drone attack in the port area of Dubai, United Arab Emirates on March 1. (AP)

did not offer a timetable of when the production increases would reach their target.

Some Democratic lawmakers, meanwhile, have questioned the long-term impact to the US and its allies. "We've been told again and again

and again one reason that we can't provide interceptors for the Patriot system or other munitions for Ukraine is that they're in short supply," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., told CNN on Thursday.

SencMark Warner, D-Va., told re-

porters that American supplies are dwindling after the military fought the Houthi rebels in Yemen and engaged in more recent conflicts under the Republican administration. The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee did not specify what type of munitions he was referring to.

"Our munitions are low. That's public knowledge," Warner said. "It will require additional funding, funding where we have other domestic needs as well."

Supplies of defense interceptors are the most taxed, said Brobst, who is deputy director of the Center on Military and Political Power at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington think tank.

The THAAD system is designed for defeating medium-range ballistic missiles, while the Patriot system is for taking down short-range ballistic missiles and crewed aircraft. About 25% of the entire THAAD stockpile was estimated to be used defending Israel from Iran's ballistic missiles in the 12-day war with Iran last summer, Brobst said.

"These were already in very high demand and we had not procured enough before the conflict," Brobst said. "And

now we've probably used, between the two of them, probably several hundred more."

The exact number of U.S. THAAD and Patriot systems is classified, with administration officials and Democratic lawmakers declining to offer details.

Demand for interceptors is likely falling as the U.S. and its allies take out Iran's weapons' capabilities, Brobst said. Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters this week that the number of ballistic missiles fired by Iran was down by 86% from the war's first day.

Other munitions in demand include cruise missiles and precision-guided missiles, known as "standoff" weapons, Brobst said. Their stockpiles are likely healthier, and their use probably peaked at the beginning of the war as U.S. forces hit Iran's early-warning systems, air defenses and other targets.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said as much - that American forces used more "standoff munitions at the start, but no longer need to." He told reporters Wednesday that they would be using "500-pound, 1,000-pound and 2,000-pound GPS- and laser-guided, precision gravity bombs."



Iceland's parliament representatives hold a session at the Althingi in Reykjavik, Jan. 8, 2010. (AP)

Iceland's govt seeks vote in August on whether to restart EU membership talks

REYKJAVIK, Iceland, March 8, (AP) — Iceland's government wants to hold a referendum in August on whether to restart membership talks with the European Union, more than a decade after getting cold feet about joining the bloc.

The Cabinet approved a resolution Friday calling for an Aug. 29 vote on resuming accession talks, national broadcaster RUV reported. The proposal must be approved by Iceland's parliament, the Althingi, before the vote can happen.

The decision for the fiercely independent Arctic island nation with a population of just 400,000 comes as concerns grow about geopolitical instability and economic pressures.

Prime Minister Kristinn Freydisson's center-left coalition government, elected in 2024, had said it wanted to

hold a vote by 2027, but sped up that timetable after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to take over neighboring Greenland.

Trump several times referred to Greenland as Iceland during a heated international spat about the president's aim of acquiring the vast Arctic territory.

The rising cost of living, Russia's war in Ukraine and trans-Atlantic tensions have also contributed to growing concerns about Iceland's security. The volcanic island nation has no army and relies on NATO and a bilateral defense agreement with the United States.

For decades, Iceland avoided seeking EU membership because it was concerned it would be forced to share its rich North Atlantic fishing grounds with boats from other European nations.

It applied to join the bloc in 2009, after the country's debt-burdened banking sector collapsed during the 2008 global financial crisis. Talks were suspended in 2013, when a center-right government came to power, and they formally ended in 2015.

Iceland participates in the EU's single market through the European Economic Area, and is part of the Schengen free-travel zone.

Ten countries are currently in accession talks with the EU, with Albania, Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine top of the list.

Joining the bloc requires a yearslong process run by the European Commission assessing 35 sets of criteria from transparency and financial systems to fisheries, transport networks, agricultural regulations, and freedoms like speech and religion.

As citizen voting bill stalls in US Senate, some states forge ahead

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., March 8, (AP) — While the US Senate remains deadlocked over President Donald Trump's call for strict citizenship voting requirements, Republicans in some states are pressing ahead with their own measures that could require documentary proof of citizenship to join or remain on the voter rolls.

Proof-of-citizenship legislation won final approval this week in South Dakota and Utah, already has passed one chamber in Florida and received a committee hearing in Missouri. In Michigan, supporters of voter citizenship documentation submitted 750,000 petition signatures this week in a bid to get a constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

Federal law already prohibits non-citizens from voting in US elections, with violators subject to fines, imprisonment and potential deportation.

When people register to vote, they affirm under penalty of perjury that they are US citizens. But Trump contends that's not enough. He wants prospective voters to show proof of their citizenship.

The federal Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, or SAVE America Act, would require documentary proof of US citizenship to register to vote. That could be satisfied with such things as a U.S. passport, citizen naturalization certificate or a combination of a birth certificate and government-issued photo identification.

The federal bill also would require a photo identification to cast a ballot, which some states already mandate. The Republican-led US House approved the legislation last month on a mostly party-line vote, but it has stalled in the Senate under a filibuster threat from Democrats.

Legislation passed in South Dakota and Utah would create a two-tier voting system. People who provide documentation of their citizenship could vote in all elections. Those who don't could vote only in federal elections for president, US Senate and US House.

The bifurcated voting system is



Primary voters arrive to cast ballots at an official voter center in Dallas on March 3. (AP)

modeled after Arizona, where tens of thousands of voters who have not provided proof of citizenship can cast ballots only in federal elections. Arizona implemented its system after the US Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that the state could not require citizenship documentation for federal elections.

The bills in South Dakota and Utah would take effect upon a governor's signature, meaning they could be in place for newly registered voters ahead of the November elections.

Utah's bill also directs election officials to use an online service from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to check the citizenship status of existing voters. Those flagged would be sent notices asking for proof of citizenship to remain eligible to vote in all elections.

Neither the Michigan initiative nor legislation passed by the Florida House would require people to submit proof of citizenship when registering to vote. Instead, the measures would create a behind-the-scenes review that could result in some people being asked for citizenship documentation.

Under the Michigan measure, the

secretary of state would review driver's license records, juror records and federal Homeland Security and Social Security data to determine if registered voters are citizens. Those flagged would be removed from the voter rolls if they cannot provide proof of citizenship.

The Florida legislation would require election officials to verify the citizenship of all registered voters using the state's driver's license database. Anyone whose citizenship could not be verified would be required to submit documentary proof.

Trump and some fellow Republicans have raised alarms for several years about noncitizens voting in US elections. Though evidence of people doing so is rare, there are some cases.

In 2024, a student from China was charged with perjury and attempted illegal voting after registering to vote by showing a University of Michigan student ID and signing a document asserting he was a US citizen. He later contacted a local clerk's office requesting to get his ballot back, and ultimately fled the country.

Europe

Sweden investigates cargo ship: Swedish authorities are investigating a cargo ship sailing in the Baltic Sea that's accused of transporting stolen grain, officials said Saturday.

The Swedish Coast Guard said during a news conference Saturday that the crew of the Caffa is predominantly Russian, and the ship is on Ukraine's sanctions list, according to Swedish news agency TT.

The Caffa was also allegedly sailing under a false flag when Swedish authorities boarded it in Swedish territorial waters Friday to search it and conduct interviews, TT reported. It had been sailing under a Guinean flag.

Authorities are concerned about its seaworthiness and a person is under criminal investigation, TT reported. Other details about the Caffa and its crew were not immediately available.

Sweden last year said it would step up insurance checks on foreign ships in a move aimed at tightening controls on Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" of aging ships, which are used to transport oil and gas or to carry

stolen Ukrainian grain. (AP)

Motion to lift Babis immunity rejected: Czech Republic lawmakers rejected a motion to lift the immunity from prosecution of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš in a \$2 million fraud case involving European Union subsidies.

The legislators voted 104-81 to dismiss the measure in the 200-seat lower house of Parliament, with one abstention and 14 lawmakers absent.

Approval would have allowed Prague's Municipal Court to deal with the case and issue a verdict. The court had acquitted Babiš twice before, but an appeals court canceled those rulings, saying they didn't properly assess evidence and requested the lower court to issue a guilty verdict in a retrial.

The rejection of the motion means that he can stand trial only after his term in the house expires in 2029.

Babiš had pleaded not guilty and said that the case "is clearly politically motivated." The prosecution had originally requested a suspended sentence and a fine to be paid by the populist billionaire, who began his third term as prime minister in December. (AP)



This photo shows outside of the U.S. Embassy in Oslo, Norway in the early hours of March 8. (AP)

Police probe potential blast outside US Embassy in Oslo

OSLO, March 8, (AP) — Norwegian police are investigating a potential explosion outside the US Embassy in Oslo early Sunday, officials said.

No injuries were reported. Police received reports of a "loud bang" or explosion around 1 am. Oslo police said in a news release. Local media reported minor damage to an entrance of the embassy, and people nearby said the street was blanketed in thick smoke following the blasts. Police are seeking to talk to witnesses as they search for any perpetrators.

PST, the Norwegian police security service, called in additional personnel following the incident but has not changed the country's terror threat level, according to communication adviser Martin Bernsen.

"This is an unacceptable incident that is being treated with the utmost seriousness," said Astri Aas-Hansen, Norway's minister of justice and public security. "The police have stated that they are investigating the case with significant resources, and that nothing indicates the situation poses any danger to the public."

Head-of-state diplomacy anchor of Chinese diplomacy: Wang

Xi stresses enhancing political loyalty in military to advance defense modernization

BEIJING, March 8, (Xinhua): Chinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday stressed fully leveraging the unique strengths of enhancing political loyalty in the military, and called for concerted efforts to advance the modernization of national defense and the armed forces in a steady and sustained manner.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), made the remarks while attending a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force at the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress, China's national legislature.

Six lawmakers spoke at the meeting. After hearing their remarks, Xi delivered an important speech.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Party Central Committee has led the armed forces to improve political rectification and advance political loyalty in the military with unprecedented resolve and intensity, achieving significant results, Xi said.

There must be no place in the military for those who are disloyal to the Party, nor any place for corrupt elements, Xi warned, adding that the fight against corruption must be unwaveringly advanced.

At the very start of the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), efforts must be made to establish rigorous rules for strict oversight, and closely monitor key areas such as fund flows, the exercise of power, and quality control, Xi said.

It is essential to fully strengthen the Party's leadership and Party building in the military, and make Party organizations at all levels even stronger, Xi said, stressing the need to translate the Party's leadership strength into development momentum.

It is important to consolidate the ideological foundation that ensures of-



Chinese President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, attends a plenary meeting of the delegation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the People's Armed Police Force at the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, capital of China on March 7. (Xinhua)

ficers and soldiers follow the Party and its guidance, and ensure that modern weaponry and equipment are placed in the hands of politically committed personnel, Xi said.

Xi called for systematically training personnel for joint operations, new types of combat forces, high-level sci-tech innovation, and high-level strategic management.

He also highlighted the need to vigorously carry forward and promote the fine traditions of the Party and the military.

Zhang Shengmin, vice chairman of the CMC, participated in the meeting.

Also:

BEIJING: Head-of-state diplomacy is the anchor of Chinese diplomacy, Chinese Foreign Minister **Wang Yi** said on Sunday.

Under the guidance and stewardship of President **Xi Jinping**, China's diplomacy provides the most-needed stability and certainty to a world in turmoil and serves as an irreplaceable mainstay amid global turbulence, Wang told a press conference on the sidelines of the ongoing session of the national legislature.

The series of important initiatives and propositions put forward by President Xi demonstrate exceptional strategic foresight and broad global vision, and point out the right way forward for the changes in the world unseen in a century, the minister said.

This year, President Xi will receive guests from around the world, host major diplomatic events including the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and the second China-Arab States Summit, and make several important visits abroad, which are bound to further advance China's relations with the world in a positive direction, open up new horizon for building a community with a shared future for humanity, and enable the Chinese nation to make new contribution to world peace and development, Wang said.

Trump encourages Lat-American leaders to use military action to help US fight cartels

DORAL, Fla., March 8, (AP): US President Donald Trump said Saturday that the United States and Latin American countries are banding together to combat violent cartels as his administration looks to demonstrate it remains committed to sharpening US foreign policy focus on the Western Hemisphere even while dealing with five-alarm crises around the globe.

Trump encouraged regional leaders gathered at his Miami-area golf club to take military action against drug trafficking cartels and transnational gangs that he says pose an "unacceptable threat" to the hemisphere's national security.

"The only way to defeat these enemies is by unleashing the power of our militaries," Trump said. "We have to use our military. You have to use your military." Citing the U.S.-led coalition that confronted the Islamic State group in the Middle East, the Republican president said that "we must now do the same thing to eradicate the cartels at home."

The gathering, which the White House called the "Shield of the Americas" summit, came just two months after Trump ordered an audacious U.S. military operation to capture Venezuela's then-president, Nicolás Maduro, and whisk him and his wife to the United States to face drug conspiracy charges.

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

Trump's time with the Latin American leaders was limited: Afterward, he set out for Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to be on hand for the dignified transfer of the six U.S. troops killed in a drone strike on a command center in Kuwait, one day after the US and Israel launched their military campaign against Iran.

Trump called the American deaths a "very sad situation" and praised the fallen troops as "great heroes."

With the summit, Trump aimed to turn attention to the Western Hemisphere, at least for a moment. He has pledged to reassert U.S. dominance in the region and push back on what he sees as years of Chinese economic encroachment in America's backyard.

Trump also said the U.S. will turn its attention to Cuba after the war with Iran and suggested his administration would cut a deal with Havana, underscoring Washington's increasingly aggressive stance against the island's communist leadership. "Great change will soon be coming to Cuba," he said, adding that "they're very much at the end of the line."

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel on Saturday described the summit as "small, reactionary, and neocolonial." He wrote in a social media post that the U.S. has committed right-wing governments from the region "to accept the lethal use of US military force to resolve internal problems and maintain order and tranquility in their countries."



US President Donald Trump signs a proclamation committing to countering cartel criminal activity at the Shield of the Americas Summit on March 7, at Trump National Doral Miami in Doral, Fla. (AP)

Colombians elect new Congress and choose presidential candidates

BOGOTA, Colombia, March 8, (AP): Colombians head to the polls Sunday to elect a new Congress and select candidates from three major coalitions in a primary-style contest ahead of a presidential election this May.

The election unfolds under high alert for political violence across the South American country, particularly in rural regions dominated by illegal armed groups.

At the same time, President Gustavo Petro - the nation's first left-leaning leader - has cast doubt on the country's election software, pointing to the 2022 legislative elections, when his Historic Pact movement gained over 390,000 votes following a recount. He attributed this shift to the presence of election observers.

The European Union deployed 40 election observers in early February and said it intended to increase the size of the delegation for the upcoming congressional vote.

More than 3,000 candidates are vying for 285 legislative positions - 102 in the Senate and 183 in the House of Representatives - with 41.2 million citizens eligible to cast their ballots.

Sunday's election is set to define the political landscape for Colombia's next head of state.

Petro is ineligible for reelection because the constitution bars a sitting president from running for a consecutive second term.

Colombia's current Congress approved Petro's pension and labor overhaul, but rejected his pro-



Electoral worker helps to set up a polling station in preparation for Sunday's legislative elections in Bogota, Colombia on March 7. (AP)

posed reforms to the health care and tax reforms, and there were often tensions between him and lawmakers.

Meanwhile, the right-wing opposition is looking to reclaim its status as a dominant political force. The Democratic Center, the nation's primary opposition party, continues to be guided by the influence of former President Alvaro Uribe, who is mobilizing his base to secure a strong legislative presence ahead of the presidential vote.

Alongside the congressional vote, Colombians will vote to choose presidential candidates for the country's three major political blocs: the center, the center-left and the right. The winners of the three

"inter-party consultations," similar to American primary elections, will go on to compete in the presidential election, whose first round is set for May 31.

Presidential hopefuls have long used the primaries to gauge their support before entering the first round of voting. This strategy proved successful four years ago for Petro, who consolidated his base by winning the left-wing primary alongside Francia Márquez, who became his vice president.

However, the two candidates currently leading in the polls - leftist Iván Cepeda, from Petro's party, and far-right Abelardo de la Espriella - are not participating in the primaries, which are optional.

US imposes visa restrictions on Rwandan officials after sanctions targeting military

KAMPALA, Uganda, March 8, (AP): The US is imposing visa restrictions on "several senior Rwandan officials for fueling instability" in eastern Congo, the State Department said on Friday, intensifying pressure on the East African country after sanctions announced earlier this week.

The unnamed officials are targeted for their support of Congo's M23 rebel group, which the US government says persists despite a US-mediated peace agreement signed in December between the governments of Rwanda and Congo.

"By continuing to support M23 and violating the Washington Accords, these individuals are driving violence and undermining the stability" in the region, said the statement attributed to Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The US said it "expects all parties to the Washington Accords to fully honor their commitments," which include expectations for Congo to immediately neutralize armed groups that threaten Rwanda as well as the withdrawal from Congo of Rwandan troops.

On Monday, the US imposed sanctions on the Rwandan military and four of its senior officials for supporting M23, whose rebellion has caused the displacement of thousands of people in eastern Congo. The group is also blamed for human rights abuses there.

Rwandan authorities said US sanctions were unjust, citing what they said were violations of the peace agreement by Congo's government.

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



M23 rebels escort government soldiers and police who surrendered to an undisclosed location in Goma, Democratic republic of the Congo, Jan. 30, 2025. (AP)

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

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

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

M23 emerged in 2012 as a Tutsi-

led rebel group whose members said a 2009 agreement signed to look after their interests - including integration into the army and the return of refugees from elsewhere in East Africa - had been violated by Congo's government.

Paul Kagame, the Rwandan president, has described M23's struggle as justified in defense of the rights of Congolese Tutsis, who have sought shelter in neighboring countries over the decades.

The decades-long conflict escalated in January 2025 after the rebels made an unprecedented advance into the key cities of Goma and Bukavu, further expanding their control of several cities and towns in the hard-hit region.

Lat/Am

Peru club bombing injures 33: A bombing at a club in Peru has injured 33 people, including minors, authorities said Saturday.

The explosion happened in the pre-dawn hours at the Dali club in the province of Trujillo along Peru's northern coast, according to a statement from the local Emergency Operations Center.

It's a region that has recently been plagued by violence and crime.

It wasn't immediately clear who was responsible and a motive wasn't immediately known.

At least five of the injured were in serious condition, according to the executive director of the Trujillo Health Network, Gerardo Florián Gómez. Some of the victims suffered amputations and shrapnel wounds and were undergoing surgery, he told reporters. Among the injured are three minors: one 16-year-old and two 17-year-olds, Florián said.

Fiorella Mantilla, who was at the nightclub when the blast took place, told reporters that she had glass embedded in her legs and recalled that "it sounded as if the sound system had suddenly been turned off." (AP)

Crews repair Cuba power plant: Cuban officials said they expect to restart a large thermolectric plant on Saturday after it shut down earlier in the week, sparking a massive blackout.

Felix Estrada Rodríguez, a top engineer at Cuba's Electric Union, told state-owned Canal Caribe that the Antonio Guterres plant should be operating by Saturday



A baker hawks his baked goods through the streets of Havana, Cuba on March 5, during a blackout. (AP)

afternoon.

Crews have repaired a broken boiler at the plant that caused the outage on Wednesday, leaving millions without power in the island's western region.

Estrada Rodríguez said it was a slow process that had to be done safely. "It is a confined space with a high temperature," he said.

Cuba's Electric Union said in a statement Saturday that only 1,000 megawatts of power were available, less than half of the island's current demand. It did not say how many customers remained without power.

The blackout, the second such outage to affect western Cuba in three months, was blamed on a crumbling electric grid and a lack of fuel. (AP)

Shah registers victory against Oli in Nepal poll

KATHMANDU, March 8, (Agencies): Balendra Shah, Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) senior leader, defeated the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The Rastriya Swatantra, or National Independent Party, formed only four years ago, had already won 117 of 165 directly elected seats and led in eight other constituencies in the results published Sunday morning by Nepal's Election Commission.

While Shah, former mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, secured 68,348 votes, Oli managed to get only 18,734 votes.

Though born and brought up in Kathmandu, Shah chose Jhapa constituency 5, the home place of Oli, to challenge him. Shah is the prime ministerial face of the RSP.

Other political parties and independent candidates had won 36 seats in total so far. Officials were still counting the votes Sunday and final results were expected later in the week.

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



Balendra Shah, foreground, former mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City and prime ministerial candidate of the Rastriya Swatantra Party, arrives to receive his victory certificate after defeating former Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) in Jhapa, about 267 miles (430 kilometers) southeast of Kathmandu, Nepal on March 8. (AP)

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Sunday's session on a negative note, with the general index slipping 30.12 points, or 0.35 percent, to close at 8,519.65 points. Trading activity totaled 130.3 million shares across 9,431 cash transactions, generating a value of KD 37.5

million (approximately USD 114.7 million).

The main market index recorded a decline of 38.52 points, or 0.49 percent, finishing at 7,848.58 points. It saw 40.15 million shares traded through 3,612 transactions worth KD 4.6 million (around USD 14 million).

Expert urges Kuwait to boost reserves as Gulf tensions rise

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: When the price of oil surpassed \$98 per barrel in the recent trading amid escalating geopolitical tensions in the region, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Center for Future Foresight Consulting and Studies and economist T asserted that if Kuwaiti oil exports continue, the price increase could alleviate the budget deficit for the current fiscal year.

In a statement to the newspaper, Al-Shatti was quick to point out that this would transform from a "price opportunity" into an economic blow, impacting both revenues and logistics, if the Strait of Hormuz closes completely. "Such a closure could simultaneously affect oil, food and supply chains. Therefore, relying solely on price increases is naive. It is important to protect exports, strengthen storage capacity, diversify shipping routes, and effectively manage food and logistical reserves.

Al-Shatti stressed the need for Gulf coordination to provide regional alternatives for the transit of Gulf oil, such as the Saudi East-West pipeline to the Red Sea



Al-Shatti

(with a capacity of about five to seven million barrels per day) and the Habshan-Fujairah pipeline in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). He said these alternatives are insufficient to compensate for all the oil passing through the Strait of Hormuz, and they are not solely Kuwaiti infrastructure. He added that Kuwait needs contingency regional arrangements if it intends to utilize them, rather than assuming they are automatically available.

On the statements of Trump about protecting oil tankers and supply chains through the Strait of Hormuz, Al-Shatti said the United States can be relied upon for some protection, but not as a complete guarantee. He pointed out that the United States has a precedent for protecting Kuwaiti oil tankers, specifically through the Operation Earnest Will in 1987, when the US Navy escorted Kuwaiti tankers that re-registered under the American flag.

He added that Washington later established maritime frameworks, such as Operation Sentinel/IMSC to enhance maritime security in the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

He outlined a seven-pronged strategy for managing the crisis. The first prong involves an immediate shift from a commercial approach to a strategic stockpile approach by increasing reserves of critical commodities like wheat, rice, sugar, oils, powdered milk, medicines, animal feed and spare parts. This is crucial given that any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz affects not only fuel supplies but also container traffic, marine insurance and vessel turnaround speeds. The current crisis revealed that more than 200 to 300 ships, including tankers and cargo vessels, are stranded near the area.

The second prong revolves around the urgent need to diversify ports and shipping routes to prevent Kuwait from relying on a single maritime route for its vital imports. Alternative import contracts are required through the Red Sea, East Africa, India, Turkiye and Mediterranean ports, while maximizing Gulf land transport whenever possible, as the increased risks associated with the Strait of Hormuz also drive up global transportation and insurance costs.

The third prong is the necessity of proactive contracts rather than reactive purchasing during a crisis. Countries that wait to buy during a crisis end up paying higher prices and experiencing longer delays.

Flexible supply contracts with priority clauses, alternative delivery options, and external storage facilities are essential.

Fourth is the need for prudent rationing, not panic buying. Scarcity in many crises stems not only from supply disruptions but also from panic purchasing. This necessitates a daily government platform for transparency, clearly showing inventory levels, shipment arrivals, guaranteed goods and essential commodities. Transparency in this context is a tool for economic security.

Fifth is the importance of prioritizing domestic energy resources. Food shortages may arise from disruptions in internal transport, ports or refrigeration, rather than from a lack of food itself. Priority must be given to diesel, electricity, cold chains and logistical transport.

Sixth is the formation of a unified crisis management center comprising representatives from the oil, trade, finance, customs, ports, food, interior and defense sectors.

Seventh is using the financial power wisely. Kuwait is not a poor country, particularly given its large foreign reserves and the relatively low risks of sovereign debt despite the high deficit. This means that Kuwait has the ability to absorb a short to medium-term financial shock, but only with swift decision-making, rather than merely monitoring the situation.

Asked about the situation if Russia and China were to enter the conflict and its impact on the economy, Al-Shatti stated that current indicators still suggest that Moscow and Beijing are more inclined toward political support and diplomatic maneuvering than direct military intervention. "However, if they were to enter the conflict more broadly, the impact could be far more serious than a mere rise in oil prices, for several reasons. The first is a more severe energy shock, because the world will not only face the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, but also polarization between major producers and consumers, potentially leading to reciprocal sanctions, restrictions on maritime routes, and disruption in gas markets. Hormuz already carries around 20 percent of global LNG trade, particularly from Qatar," he explained.

He pointed out that "the second scenario is a new global inflation, especially since IMF research indicates that every 10 percent increase in oil prices raises inflation on average by about 0.4 percentage points. If the conflict escalates and other powers become involved, the situation will involve not merely a 10 percent increase, but larger and more prolonged waves of inflation in the energy, shipping and insurance sectors."

He said the third scenario is the slowdown in global growth and a decline in investment, especially since the IMF estimated in one of its scenarios that severe shocks to financial and sovereign conditions could reduce global output in 2026 by about 0.3 percent to 0.6 percent, depending on the nature of the shock. He pointed out that if an energy shock coincides with a major geopolitical shock, the outcome will likely be even worse than these figures.

He added that the fourth scenario is if Russia and China enter the war, Asia will enter a highly dangerous zone, and this will have repercussions for Kuwait. He explained this is particularly significant given that Asia imported around 14.74 million barrels per day of Middle Eastern crude oil in 2025 -- nearly 60 percent of its total oil imports. "If China, India, Japan and South Korea experience a larger energy shock, global industrial demand will weaken, trade will slow down, and Kuwait could face a severe combination of rising import costs alongside disruptions to export and investment markets," he added.

Banking services remain available through all channels

Gulf Bank reaffirms full operational continuity across all retail & corporate banking channels

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: In response to current regional developments, Gulf Bank has confirmed that its core banking systems and technical infrastructure are operating at full capacity, enabling both individual and corporate clients to conduct their transactions seamlessly and securely across all service channels, including its branch network and digital platforms.

The Bank has activated its business continuity and risk management protocols in accordance with established procedures, ensuring operational stability and uninterrupted service delivery to customers within Kuwait and internationally. These measures have been implemented in full alignment with the directives of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

In keeping with its commitment to providing a comprehensive and accessible banking experience under all circumstances, Gulf Bank offers a broad suite of digital services through its mobile application. Clients can manage accounts and cards, review financing details and repayment schedules, execute fund transfers, settle bills, and access a wide range of additional banking services at their convenience.



Gulf Bank Headquarters.

The application further provides a range of advanced features, including fast payment and collection services, secure bill-splitting functionality, and the WAMD instant payment service, which enables customers to transfer funds directly between accounts using a registered

mobile number, available at any time and from any location.

Gulf Bank customers also have continuous access to the Bank's extensive Automated Teller Machine (ATM) network, distributed across Kuwait to facilitate essential banking transactions. In addition, the

Bank's Interactive Teller Machines (ITMs) support a comprehensive range of services, including cash withdrawals and deposits, cheque processing, transfers, and credit card payments. Customers may also connect with Bank representatives via high-definition video call to receive personalised assistance and address enquiries.

The Bank's branch network, comprising more than 45 locations across Kuwait, continues to operate without interruption, with the exception of the Main Branch and Crystal Branch, which have been temporarily closed effective 8 March and until further notice. The Bank's contact centre remains available around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to assist customers with any service requirements.

Gulf Bank urges clients to monitor its official communication channels for updates and further guidance. The Bank reaffirms its unwavering commitment to maintaining the highest standards of operational readiness and business continuity, ensuring reliable and efficient banking services for all customers at all times.

War in the Middle East dominates market movements

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets were shaped by mixed economic data and heightened geopolitical risks, with investors closely monitoring growth signals and energy supply disruptions. In the United States, economic momentum showed signs of softening as February nonfarm payrolls unexpectedly fell by 92K, the largest decline in four months, alongside downward revisions to prior months, while retail sales slipped 0.2% in January, reflecting weaker consumer demand in autos, fuel, and discretionary categories. In Europe, Eurozone inflation edged higher to 1.9% in February, with core inflation accelerating to 2.4%, highlighting persistent underlying price pressures even before the escalation of Middle East tensions. Meanwhile, Australia's economy expanded 0.8% in Q4, marking its strongest annual growth in nearly three years, though easing inflation concerns reduced expectations for near-term monetary tightening by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

In Japan, unemployment rose to 2.7%, the highest level since mid-2024, signaling a modest softening in labor market conditions. On the geopolitical front, Brent crude oil prices surged more than 8% to around \$93 per barrel, its highest level since 2023, as escalating Middle East tensions raised concerns over potential disruptions to shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy transit route. The surge in energy prices supported safe-haven demand for the U.S. dollar, which remained on track for its strongest weekly gain in over a year despite a modest decline on Friday, while the euro and Japanese yen faced pressure amid rising inflation risks for energy-importing economies.

United States

U.S. Labor Market Weakens as February Payrolls Contract Sharply and Prior Data Revised Lower

The U.S. economy lost 92K jobs in February 2026, marking the largest decline in four months and falling sharply short of expectations for a 59K gain, following a downwardly revised 126K increase in January. Job losses were concentrated in health care (-28K) due to strike activity, alongside declines in information (-11K), federal government (-10K), transportation and warehousing (-11K), and manufacturing (-12K). Offices of physicians shed 37K jobs, while hospitals added 12K. Meanwhile, social assistance employment rose by 9K, supported by gains in individual and family services. Revisions also lowered prior data, with December payrolls revised from +48K to -17K and January trimmed to 126K, bringing the combined revisions 69K lower. Overall, payroll growth remained largely stagnant throughout 2025.

U.S. Retail Sales Decline in January as Weak Auto and Fuel Demand Offset Gains in Online and Household Spending

U.S. retail sales fell 0.2% month-on-month

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1776	1.1528	1.1795	1.1618	1.1500	1.1660	1.1669
GBP	1.3484	1.3250	1.3484	1.3411	1.3255	1.3450	1.3412
JPY	155.64	155.64	158.08	157.79	156.50	159.00	156.55
CHF	0.7691	0.7668	0.7878	0.7757	0.7665	0.7870	0.7682

in January 2026, the first decline since October, following flat growth in December and broadly in line with expectations for a 0.3% drop. The weakness was driven by lower sales at motor vehicle dealers (-0.9%), gasoline stations (-2.9%), electronics and appliances (-0.6%), and clothing stores (-1.7%). However, gains in furniture (0.7%), building materials (0.6%), miscellaneous retailers (2%), and non-store retailers (1.9%) helped lift the control group by 0.3%, suggesting a supportive contribution to GDP. On an annual basis, retail sales increased 3.2%.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 98.986.

Eurozone

Eurozone Inflation Picks Up as Core Price Pressures Accelerate, with Middle East Energy Risks Clouding Outlook

Eurozone inflation rose to 1.9% in February from 1.7%, driven by a pickup in core inflation to 2.4% from 2.2%, reflecting stronger price pressures in both services and goods. The data suggests underlying inflation remains persistent even before the Middle East conflict. Looking ahead, energy supply risks linked to the war in the Middle East, particularly higher LNG prices, pose upside risks to inflation, potentially pushing it back to the mid-2% range if disruptions persist. While the ECB remains cautious and vigilant about renewed inflation pressures, policymakers are unlikely to react immediately given current inflation remains relatively contained and the conflict's impact is still uncertain.

The EUR/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.1618.

Asia-Pacific

Japan's Unemployment Rate Rises to 18-Month High as Employment and Labor Force Participation Ease

Japan's unemployment rate rose to 2.7% in January 2026, slightly above both the prior five months and market expectations of 2.6%, marking the highest level since July 2024. The number of unemployed increased by 60K to a 48-month high of 1.91 million. Employment declined by 290K to 68.17 million, while the labor force fell by 210K to 70.08 million. The number of individuals outside the labor force rose by 170K to 39.45 million. The participation rate eased to 63.5% from 63.9% in December, though it remained above 63.2% a year earlier. Meanwhile, the jobs-to-applicants ratio edged down to 1.18 from 1.19, signaling a modest

softening in labor market tightness.

The USD/JPY currency pair was last seen trading at 157.79.

Australia's Economy Expands at Fastest Pace in Nearly Three Years as Investment and Commodity Sectors Drive Growth

Australia's economy expanded 0.8% in Q4 2025, lifting annual GDP growth to 2.6%, the strongest pace in nearly three years. The prior quarter was revised higher, and growth was broad-based, with public and private demand each contributing 0.3 percentage points. Household spending rose 0.3%, while the savings ratio increased to 6.9%, the highest since Q3 2022. Private investment grew 0.7% for a fifth consecutive quarter, and mining and agriculture output rose 2.6% and 2.5%, respectively, jointly adding 0.6 points to GDP. Economic output per person increased 0.9% YoY. While solid activity reinforces inflation pressures, weaker consumption and declining unit labor costs moderated market expectations, with implied odds of a March 17 RBA hike easing to 20% from 36% prior to the data.

The AUD/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 0.7030.

Commodities

Oil Prices Surge on Escalating Middle East Tensions and Rising Risks to Global Energy Flows Through the Strait of Hormuz

Brent crude oil surged over 8% to around \$93 per barrel, reaching its highest level since 2023, as escalating Middle East tensions threatened global energy supply. Risks intensified after Qatar warned that Gulf producers could halt output if tankers cannot transit the Strait of Hormuz, a critical route handling roughly 20 million barrels per day. Qatar's Energy Minister Saad Al-Kaabi also warned that oil prices could surge to \$150 per barrel in the coming weeks if tankers are unable to pass through the strait, adding that such a disruption could "bring down the economies of the world." Meanwhile, Iran ruled out negotiations, while the U.S. signaled potential measures to stabilize markets, including a possible release from strategic petroleum reserves and allowing India to purchase some Russian crude already at sea. Saudi Arabia also raised prices for Asian buyers and rerouted shipments via Red Sea ports to bypass Hormuz disruptions.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30620.

Gold prices in Kuwait reflect global trends amid economic uncertainty

KUWAIT CITY, March 8, (KUNA): Gold prices in Kuwait market followed global trends last week, with 24-carat gold reaching about KD 51.28 per gram (around 167.47 US dollars) and 22-carat gold at approximately KD 47 (about 153 dollars).

Silver prices remained stable at about KD 928 per kilogram (3030 dollars) amid continued local demand for precious metals for savings and investment, reflecting confidence in gold as a main hedge against economic uncertainty.

On the international front, gold prices closed last week at 5171 dollars per ounce amid volatility and uncertainty in global markets, driven by a mix of economic factors and geopolitical developments.

According to a report released by Dar Al-Sabaek Kuwait, recent US economic data increased demand for gold as a safe haven, while investors continue to evaluate global growth prospects and the direction of US monetary policy.

Gold price movements followed the release of US labor market data for February, which revealed unexpected weakness in the performance of the world's largest economy. The unemployment rate rose to 4.4 percent, exceeding expectations of 4.3 percent, after a sudden drop in non-farm payrolls, signaling a potential slowdown in economic activity in the coming period.

This weak performance in the US labor market led traders to reassess expect-

tations for US monetary policy, weighing the possibility of a gradual economic slowdown against the Federal Reserve's continued hawkish stance on interest rates amid ongoing concerns over inflation.

Market expectations currently suggest the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates later this year if economic weakness continues, increasing gold's appeal as a non-yielding asset that benefits from a lower opportunity cost.

Despite some pressure on gold prices during the week due to a strong US dollar and rising US Treasury yields, investment demand for gold remained supported by global economic uncertainty and ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Dar Al-Sabaek's report also highlighted growing market concerns over the prolongation of regional conflicts and their potential effects on energy markets and global supply chains, which could contribute to relatively high inflation levels in many economies.

It explained that US dollar movements played a major role in shaping gold price trends during the week, with periods of dollar strength limiting gold gains due to the inverse relationship between them, while dollar weakness following weak economic data provided support for gold prices in some sessions. Investors continue to closely monitor US inflation and economic growth data to gauge the Federal Reserve's next steps, given the delicate balance between controlling inflation and maintaining economic stability.

Long-term structural factors continue to support gold prices, as many central

banks worldwide are increasing their gold reserves to diversify assets and reduce reliance on the US dollar, providing additional support to prices over the medium and long term. Rising global sovereign debt and volatility in stock and bond markets are encouraging more investors to increase their gold holdings as a hedge against financial and economic risks.

From a technical standpoint, gold is currently trading within a range of 5100 to 5200 dollars per ounce, with 5100 acting as an important support level that could limit near-term declines, while 5200 and above represents a key resistance. Breaking this level could open the way for testing higher price points in the coming period.

Dar Al-Sabaek's report indicated that technical indicators point to continued upward momentum for gold in the medium term, despite short-term fluctuations caused by economic data, US dollar movements, and bond yields.

The report confirmed that gold's performance last week reflects a balance between supporting and pressuring factors, with the metal maintaining historically high levels, affirming that this is supported by rising investment demand and its role as a hedge against global economic and geopolitical risks, while investors await further economic data and political developments that could shape future market trends.

It is worth mentioning that an ounce is a unit of mass used in various measurement systems, also called an avoirdupois ounce, equivalent to 28.349 grams. As a unit for precious metals, it equals 31.103 grams.

The Conversation

War in Middle East brings uncertainty & higher energy costs to already weakening US economy

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

By Michael Klein, Tufts University

The "fog of war" refers to confusion and uncertainty on the battlefield and the attendant possibility of fatal error. This principle has a parallel when it comes to the economic consequences of wars as well, especially when they occur in a region that is a chokepoint for the production and shipment of one-fifth of the world's oil and a third of its natural gas.

Although no one really knows how deeply the ripple effects of the joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran will impair the global economy, the Gulf kingdom of Qatar issued a dire warning on March 6, 2026, that reflects those concerns: "This will bring down the economies of the world," Qatar's energy minister said.

As for the U.S. economy, it was already showing signs of weakness. Data released on March 6 showed an unexpected loss in jobs in February.

As an economist, I expect the biggest economic risks of this war to be inflationary pressures and slowing growth due to the rising price of oil. In addition, uncertainty from the "economic fog of war" could make consumers reticent to spend and businesses hesitant about hiring and investing. These conditions will make it challenging for policymakers to steer the economy.

There is currently, and likely to be for some time, great uncertainty about the length of the war in Iran, the range of countries involved and its costs. All of these factors will determine how much the war hurts economies in the U.S. and across the globe.

We do know there will be disruptions to the supply of oil and liquefied natural gas, which is difficult to ship through the Strait of Hormuz, and from the fiscal costs associated with this military action.

The price of crude oil has jumped by about 25% since the U.S. and Israel began bombing Iran on Feb. 28, which has driven up gasoline prices across the U.S. The majority of oil and liquefied natural gas produced in the Middle East travels through the Strait of Hormuz - but the threat of attack has made travel through this waterway uninsurable, which has brought shipping



Smoke billows after an Iranian missile struck an oil refinery in Haifa in northern Israel on June 16, 2025. (AP)

through this vital passage to a virtual halt.

This is also an expensive military campaign for the United States, which has already seen the loss of aircraft and a depletion of its stock of missiles. Early estimates of the cost of the war were nearly US\$1 billion a day.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution also brought about a spike in the price of oil, which was an important contributing factor to the United States and Europe experiencing an economic phenomenon called "stagflation" - a portmanteau of stagnant growth and high inflation.

This is unlikely to be repeated to the same extent now. Economies are less dependent upon oil and natural gas than they were in the late 1970s and early '80s. And the U.S. is not beginning the war with a previous decade of high inflation that made it more difficult to reduce price pressures, since

expectations of inflation feed into actual inflation.

Still, supply shocks are challenging to address, as the world saw with the COVID-19 pandemic, and policymakers will likely have to make some difficult choices that involve hard trade-offs.

One of the questions arising from supply shocks is whether a central bank should raise interest rates to combat inflation or lower them to offset weakness in the economy and rising unemployment. Lifting rates brings down inflation by reducing demand for loans and curbing growth, while lowering rates has the opposite effect.

In both the late 1970s and during the onset of the pandemic, the Federal Reserve opted to keep rates low to help support the economy and the job market. In both cases, this led to a spike in inflation.

The inflation of the late 1970s and early '80s was brought down by a strong reversal of monetary policy with high interest rates, causing a recession that was, at that time, the deepest since the 1930s. Notably, the reduction of inflation in the wake of COVID-19 did not require a similar economic downturn to achieve that goal. An important reason for that is the long history of low inflation in the decades before the 2020s and the "anchoring" of inflation expectations.

But there are reasons to be concerned.

While the Fed now has a well-deserved anti-inflation reputation, its credibility with financial markets is at risk because of President Donald Trump's attacks on Chairman Jerome Powell, the prosecution of Federal Reserve Board member Lisa Cook and the appointment of a new chair who many suspect will push for lower rates because that's what the president wants.

Concerns that these actions could lead to higher inflation can become a self-fulfilling prophecy that brings about the very thing that people are worried about. Seeds of new inflation pressures may be falling on fertile soil.

Uncertainty triggered by the war is not the only negative economic signal. Tariff policy, cuts to government employment, rising federal debt and the possibility of financial vulnerabilities are all weighing on the U.S. economy. A spike in the price of oil could very well set off greater weakness, and even a recession, as consumers and businesses pull back from spending. (AP)

Gas price surge, job losses

US economy shows strain despite Trump's optimism

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP): President Donald Trump promised that 2026 would be a bumper year for economic growth, but instead it has kicked off with job losses, rising gasoline prices and more uncertainty about America's future.

In his State of the Union address less than two weeks ago, the Republican president confidently told the country: "The roaring economy is roaring like never before." The latest batch of data on jobs, pump prices and the stock market suggests that Trump's roar has started to sound far more like a whimper.

There is a gap between the boom that Trump has predicted and the volatile results he has produced - one that could set the tone in this year's midterm elections as he tries to defend his party's majorities in the House and Senate. With Trump's tariffs drama ongoing, the war in Iran has suddenly created inflationary concerns regarding oil and natural gas. To the White House, it is still early in the year and stronger growth is coming.

"WOW! The Golden Age of America is upon us!!!" Trump posted on social media Feb. 11 after the monthly jobs report showed gains of 130,000 jobs in January.

Since then, the job market has evaporated in worrisome ways.

Friday's employment report showed job losses of 92,000 in February. The January and December figures were revised downward, with December swinging to a loss of 17,000 jobs. Monthly data can be rocky, but a trend has emerged that shows an enduring weakness. Without the health care sector, the economy would have shed roughly 202,000 jobs since Trump became president in January 2025. Still, his administration notes that construction job gains outside of the housing sector point to future hiring growth.

Trump often brags that jobs are going to people born in the United States, rather than to immigrants. But the latest report punctured some of that argument.

The unemployment rate for people born in the U.S. has climbed over the past 12 months to 4.7% from 4.4%. This means a greater share of the people who Trump said would get jobs because of his immigration crackdown are, in fact, searching for work.

"Slashing energy costs is among the most important actions we can take to bring down prices for American consumers," Trump said in a February speech in Texas just before the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran. "Because when you cut the cost of energy, you really cut -- you just cut the cost of everything."

The president has repeatedly told Americans that keeping gas costs low would be key to defeating inflation. He has talked up the decline, citing figures that were far below the national average to assure the public that driving was getting cheaper.

But the strikes against Iran that began Feb. 28 have, for the moment, crushed that narrative. Prices at the pump have jumped 19% over the past month to a national average of \$3.45, according to AAA. The investment bank Goldman Sachs warned in an analyst note that, if higher oil prices persist, inflation could rise from its 2.4% reading in January to 3% by the end of the year.

The administration is banking on plans to contain any energy price increases, essentially betting that either the conflict will end shortly or the administration can

succeed in getting more tankers through the Strait of Hormuz.

"The president has been clear about short term disruptions due to Operation Epic Fury even as U.S. and allied forces make stunning progress against the Iranian terrorist regime," said White House deputy press secretary Kush Desai. "The long run trend, however, has been clear: President Trump's economic agenda continues to unleash robust private sector job, investment, and economic growth that's driving America's resurgence."

"You know, we set the all-time record in history with the Dow going to 50,000," Trump said Thursday at the White House.

This frequently repeated talking point has grown stale. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, one of Trump's preferred measures of success, has dropped 5% over the past month. Stocks are up during his presidency, just as they were previously when Democrat Joe Biden was president. The recent decline could be reversed if the war with Iran ends and companies see solid profits over the next year and beyond. The recent dip, however, should be a warning sign as the administration has stressed the importance of more people investing in the stock market through vehicles such as "Trump accounts" for children.

The stock market has become a barometer of how people feel about the economy, with stock investors tending to have more confidence and those without money in the markets being more pessimistic.

Joanna Hsu, the director of the University of Michigan's surveys of consumers, noted that in February a "sizable" increase in sentiment among people owning stocks "was fully offset by a decline among consumers without stock holdings."

Trump can point to a win in that the economy has become more productive - generating more value for each hour of work. That is a positive sign for long-term growth in the U.S. and a reflection of its strong tech sector.

Business sector labor productivity climbed 2.8% in the fourth quarter of last year, the Labor Department reported Thursday. But the challenge is that the gains might not be spread to workers in the form of higher pay as labor's share of income last year fell to the lowest level on record, noted Mike Konczal, senior director of policy and research at the Economic Security Project, a nonprofit aligned with liberal economic issues.

"Under the Biden administration, America was plagued by the nightmare of stagflation, meaning low growth and high inflation - a recipe for misery, failure and decline," Trump said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January.

The scoreboard tells a far different story, one that makes Biden's track record in 2024 look better than Trump's performance last year. The U.S. economy grew at a 2.8% pace during Biden's last year, compared with 2.2% under Trump in 2025.

As for inflation, the primary measure used by the Federal Reserve is the personal consumption expenditures price index. It was 2.6% in both 2024 and 2025.

Trump has staked his economic argument on doing better than Biden. But while he has avoided the inflation spikes that haunted Biden's presidency, he has not delivered stronger growth or more hiring.

UAE airports partially resume flights after disruptions

DUBAI, March 8, (Xinhua): Airports in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) partially resumed flight operations on Sunday, following disruptions caused by recent regional tensions.

Dubai International (DXB) and Al Maktoum International (DWC) have resumed limited operations, while airports in Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah are also operating a reduced number of flights. Access to terminals is restricted to passengers with confirmed bookings, according to airport authorities.

Major UAE carriers, including Emirates, Etihad Airways, flydubai, and Air Arabia, have resumed a limited number of flights

and advised passengers to check flight statuses, as schedules remain subject to change.

On Saturday, flight operations at several UAE airports were temporarily suspended due to regional security concerns but gradually resumed later in the day.

The Chinese Consulate General in Dubai confirmed that several airlines, including Air China, China Southern Airlines, China Eastern Airlines, and Emirates, are preparing to resume flights between Dubai and cities in China, including Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, to assist stranded passengers. Several confirmed flights are scheduled to operate on March 8.

Business leaders warn of heavy losses

Tension halts Iranian tourism to Türkiye's Van

ANKARA, March 8, (Xinhua): In early spring, the streets of Van, a border city in eastern Türkiye, usually buzz with Persian accents. Iranian families stroll past shop windows, couples linger in lakeside cafes, and tour boats drift across the sparkling waters of Lake Van, the country's largest lake and the Middle East's second-largest.

In recent years, hundreds of thousands of Iranians have made their way to Van annually for short holidays, shopping sprees, and seasonal getaways, with early spring marking the peak season.

To cater to Iranian visitors, Persian-language signs now line the city's main streets. Retailers adjust prices and product selections to match Iranian tastes, while hotels, restaurants, and transport services have expanded rapidly to keep up with growing demand.

"Tourism and border trade are of vital importance for Van," Necdet Takva, president of the Van Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told Xinhua, noting that the latest figures show the number of Iranian visitors to the city has surpassed 800,000 in a single year.

But in the past few days, a tense quiet has settled over the border city.

On Feb. 28, the United States and Israel launched sudden strikes on Iran, prompting widespread Iranian retaliation across the region.

As the regional conflict intensifies, Van, a city whose economic recovery has long de-

pendent on cross-border tourism, is increasingly bearing the brunt of its fallout.

These days, Iranian visitors are barely seen on the streets of Van. "We were expecting one million Iranian tourists for 2026," Takva noted. "But under the current circumstances, this will not materialize."

Van shares a 285-km border with Iran, forming part of the roughly 530-km frontier between the two countries.

"There may not be limitations on tariff-based trade in goods, but daily border trade has been seriously affected," Takva said. "Commerce and tourism revenues are expected to drop by hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars," according to the business leader.

The timing of the conflict has left Van's tourism sector even more on edge. Nowruz, the Persian New Year holiday starting in March, is usually a peak season when hotels are booked to the rafters, as Iranian visitors flock to the city to ring in the New Year abroad.

This year, however, reservations are thinning.

"In normal years, we would be preparing for near full occupancy during Nowruz," Oktay Aksoy, general manager of the five-star Elite World Van Hotel, said. "This year, we see a sudden stop in arrivals. Guests are postponing their plans."

Iranian visitors typically stay several nights and spend across a wide range of sectors, from hotels and restaurants to clothing

and electronics stores. Even a short-term disruption, Aksoy noted, sends ripples through the wider urban economy.

"If uncertainty continues, it will affect not only this season but also future investment decisions," the hotelier pointed out.

Over the past decade, local investors have expanded their businesses in Van, assuming stable bilateral relations and relatively smooth border crossings between Türkiye and Iran.

That assumption is now being put to the test, particularly after Türkiye's Ministry of National Defense claimed on Wednesday that a ballistic missile fired from Iran toward Turkish airspace was intercepted by NATO air and missile defense systems over the eastern Mediterranean.

Although Iran denied launching any missile at Türkiye, the incident has nonetheless stirred unease in Ankara.

Local business leaders say they are closely monitoring diplomatic developments and hope de-escalation efforts will restore predictability before the summer season.

"If the war drags on," Takva warned, "every tourist and trade opportunity that Van has worked so hard to build will be at risk."

For now, shopkeepers wait, hotel managers revise their forecasts, and the boats on Lake Van continue their slow circuits, carrying fewer passengers than usual as uncertainty looms over Türkiye's eastern frontier.

'War may spike oil to \$150, gas to \$40/MMBtu'

Qatar warns: Gulf energy exports could halt in days

DOHA, March 8, (KUNA): Qatari Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Managing Director and CEO of Qatar Energy, Saad Al-Kaabi warned on Friday that the ongoing war in the Middle East will force Gulf states to halt the production and export of energy within days.

In an interview with the Financial Times, carried out by Qatar News Agency, Al-Kaabi indicated that continued hostilities could drive oil prices to USD 150 per barrel, predicting that gas prices would rise to USD 40 per million British thermal units (MMBtu).

Al-Kaabi pointed out that "if this war continues for a few weeks, GDP growth around the world will be impacted, energy

prices will rise for everyone, and there will be shortages of some products, leading to repercussions on factories that will be unable to supply."

He stressed that if the war ended immediately, it would take Qatar "weeks to months" to return to the normal cycle of deliveries.

At the same time, he warned that a prolonged disruption would significantly impact global energy markets and could lead to a "collapse of the world's economies."

Qatar declared force majeure and halted liquefied natural gas production last Monday, as Iran continued to target its territory and that of other Gulf states.

Cairo, Ankara urge de-escalation amid strait security fears

Egypt warns of global trade disruptions

CAIRO, March 8, (Xinhua): Egypt on Thursday warned that any attempts to obstruct maritime navigation in the Middle East could trigger widespread disruptions in global markets and serious consequences for the international economy.

Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty made the remarks in a phone call with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, emphasizing the importance of securing strategic maritime straits as vital arteries for global trade

and energy supplies.

The ministers also stressed the need to de-escalate regional tensions and prioritize diplomacy. Abdelatty condemned any attempts to target Türkiye or violate its sovereignty, calling on all parties to exercise restraint to prevent the region from sliding into chaos.

On Wednesday, the Turkish Defense Ministry said NATO air and missile defense units intercepted a ballistic projec-

tile allegedly launched from Iran, tracked across Iraqi and Syrian airspace before approaching Turkish territory.

The strike followed joint U.S.-Israeli attacks on Tehran and other Iranian cities on Saturday, which killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, his family members, senior Iranian commanders, and civilians. Iran has since launched missile and drone attacks across the region targeting Israeli and U.S. assets.

BUSINESS

Retirement savings plans can be used to fund a home down payment. But should you?

LOS ANGELES, March 8, (AP): Raiding retirement savings for a down payment on a home can be tempting, especially if you've struggled to scrape together enough money to buy. But should you?

Most 401(k) and similar retirement savings plans like Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) allow homebuyers to withdraw or borrow a limited portion of their nest egg for making a cash payment toward the final purchase price, but there can be hefty tax penalties and other short- and long-term financial impacts to consider.

"Planning is the name of the game here," Stephen Kates, a financial analyst at personal finance website Bankrate, said. "Running the numbers, having a solid understanding of what you can financially cover and financially manage is going to be really important before you step into this."

Years of inflation, high mortgage rates and skyrocketing home prices have made buying a home a major hurdle for many Americans. At the same time, the S&P 500 stock market index has had only five down years between 2005 and 2025, which has helped juice the value of retirement savings accounts.

At Fidelity Investments, the average 401(k) balance based on 24.8 million accounts was \$146,400 as of Dec. 31, a whopping 66% gain over a 10-year period, according to the company. And the average IRA balance based on 18.9 million accounts stood at \$137,095 at the end of December, a 51% gain since the last day of 2015.

Still, many savers may have a ways to go before their accounts grow enough to fund a home down payment. The median U.S. down payment on a home in December stood at \$64,000, according to an analysis by Redfin.

Compare that to the median balance for 401(k) plans and IRAs as of Dec. 31: \$34,400 and \$10,476, respectively, Fidelity said. (Median figures tend to skew lower than the average because workers who recently enrolled in a retirement savings plan haven't had time to build up a balance.)

Last year, it took the typical U.S. household seven years to save for a down payment on a home, down from a peak of 12 years in 2022 but still roughly double the time it took before the coronavirus pandemic,



A 'for sale' sign is posted outside a home in Nashville, Tenn., on Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026. (AP)

according to an analysis by Realtor.com. Some 46% of all homebuyers between July 2024 and June 2025 relied on savings to fund their down payment, according to the National Association of Realtors. That includes 59% of first-time buyers. Others got financial help from friends or relatives, or used money from an inheritance, proceeds from selling stocks or bonds.

Raiding one's retirement savings, however, wasn't a popular choice. All told, 6% of all homebuyers and 11% of first-time buyers tapped their 401(k) or pension to fund their down payment, while another 3% took funds from an IRA account.

Those who elect to take some of their retirement savings to buy a home need to consider how it would

affect their finances once they retire.

"Most likely, somebody who's taking money out of the 401(k), they're going to have to retire later than they otherwise would have, especially if they're taking a relatively large portion of their balance," Kates said.

Most 401(k) plans allow participants to take out a loan toward the purchase of a primary residence, but there may be different requirements, for example, on how long the borrower has to pay it back.

The IRS also has rules that govern 401(k) plans. The agency limits loans to 50% of a borrower's vested account balance or \$50,000, whichever is less.

Savers with less than \$10,000 in their plan can borrow the full amount, if their plan sponsor allows it.

Weigh the tradeoffs before taking out a loan against your retirement savings.

The funds you borrow need to be paid back, so you'll have to budget for that payment, in addition to the costs that come with homeownership: mortgage payment, homeowners' insurance, taxes, and so on.

However, the biggest risk with a 401(k) loan is what happens if you lose your job before paying it off.

In such a scenario, the unpaid balance becomes a distribution that the borrower has to report as taxable income. It's also subject to an additional tax of 10%, unless the borrower is at least 59 years and six months old.

And, if that wasn't painful enough, your retirement savings takes a hit because the loan isn't getting paid back.

The IRS permits 401(k) savers to make what's known as a hardship withdrawal to help them cover specific financial needs, such as medical or funeral expenses, tuition and buying a principal residence.

This isn't a loan, so you don't have to pay it back, but it comes at a cost to your retirement savings. And if you are more than six months away from turning 60, you will face a 10% tax penalty on the funds, which are also taxable as regular income.

"The best option of the two that are available - either the loan or the hardship withdrawal - the loan is the more preferable option, because you can borrow from yourself, you're going to pay yourself back with interest," Kates said.

IRAs operate differently than 401(k) plans. They don't allow loans but do permit savers to withdraw up to \$10,000 without a 10% tax penalty, even if they're younger than 59 and a half, as long as the funds are going toward buying a home and the saver is a first-time homebuyer.

As with 401(k) withdrawals, one must weigh the benefits of accessing the funds against the impact it will have on how much they have to live on when they retire.

Regardless of the type of retirement plan, aspiring homebuyers should consult with a financial planner and their retirement plan sponsor before making any decisions.

Walmart shines as Target struggles in sluggish retail climate

Retail sales slip in Jan as consumers cut back

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP): American consumers pulled back their spending to start 2026, extending the malaise in retail sales that began late last year.

Retail sales fell 0.2% in January following a flat reading in December. January's figure came in below the forecasts of economists, who were expecting another flat reading, according to the Commerce Department's report issued on Friday. The report was delayed because of the 43-day government shutdown.

Sales at health and personal health stores were among the worst performers, falling 3% from December. Gas stations saw declines in receipts of 2.9% and sales at clothing stores fell 1.7% from December.

Among the categories that saw gains were home furnishings and building materials, which includes landscape and gardening supplies. Sales at furniture and home furnishing stores rose 0.7%, while building materials sales rose 0.6%.

The snapshot offers only a partial look at consumer spending and doesn't include many services, including travel and hotel lodges. But the lone services category - restaurants - registered a dip of 0.2%.

The retail sales report comes as major retailers in recent weeks have reported their fiscal fourth-quarter reports, and so the results have been a mixed bag.

Walmart Inc. delivered another impressive quarter as lower prices and speedy deliveries attracted Americans ranging from cash-strapped to wealthier households. But rival Target reported earlier this week another quarterly decline in profits and sales during the critical holiday period as the discounter struggles with its own merchandising missteps and confronts a consumer who is focusing more on essentials.

Meanwhile, Home Depot's fourth-quarter performance was tempered by ongoing caution from American consumers in a weak housing market, but the home improvement retailer's results topped Wall Street expectations.

Retailers are confronting a shifting tariff landscape, making it hard for retailers to make decisions on hiring and merchandise orders.

The Supreme Court struck down the biggest and boldest of Trump's tariffs - though President Donald Trump is replacing them with new ones. The job market remains under strain as uncertainty around tariffs and the economy have made employers cautious about hiring.

American employers unexpectedly cut 92,000 jobs last month, according to the Labor Department's report on Friday. The unemployment rate moved up to 4.4%. Hiring deteriorated from January, when companies, nonprofits and government agencies added a healthy 126,000 jobs. Economists had anticipated 60,000 new jobs in February.

Price cuts deepen crisis

West Africa's cocoa crash pushes farmers to mining

KONA, March 8, (AP): Manu Yaw Fofie was born into the cocoa farming business, but the land bequeathed to him has become more of a burden than a blessing. A sharp fall in cocoa prices over the past year has left beans rotting in some West African warehouses, while global chocolate makers scramble for supplies and consumers seek their fix.

With less money coming in, the 52-year-old Fofie in Ghana has taken the desperate step of giving part of his land to illegal sand miners, a lucrative practice driven by high construction demand since sand is used in concrete.

The cost is severe, however: the sand mining makes the land infertile.

Aware of the danger, Fofie said he had been left with little choice. He said annual cocoa bean yields has been declining over the years, from the past heyday of 300 bags to 50 bags in 2025, affected by factors including climate change.

Fofie is one of many cocoa farmers in Ghana and Ivory Coast - countries responsible for nearly 70% of the global cocoa bean supply - who are putting their land for other uses after the price of the once high-flying commodity crashed.

Ivory Coast, the world's leading cocoa producer, had to purchase an excess supply of cocoa beans from farmers in January and this week slashed the price by more than half for 2026.

While a global commodity like cocoa beans is prone to occasional crisis, Ghanaian authorities were not prepared for one at this scale, said Edward Karaweh, former general secretary of the General Agricultural Workers Union.

"Preparation allows you to mitigate the crisis. It is not that you prevent the crisis altogether," Karaweh said.

Hundreds of thousands of farmers in West Africa rely on cocoa farming for a living. In Ivory Coast, cocoa bean exports make up 40% of the total export revenue. In neighboring Ghana, they make up nearly 15%.

Government regulators set a fixed price for the cocoa bean at the beginning of every planting season, and the majority of the beans are sold through government-licensed parties to protect farmers from price fluctuations on the international market.

However, after a surge in cocoa futures in 2024 on international markets, the futures - a contract to buy a commodity at an agreed-upon price on a future date - reached more than \$12,000 per metric ton, the highest in decades. Then it crashed to around \$4,000 as supply outstripped demand.

The downturn in price meant global traders would run at a loss if they purchased cocoa beans from the two African countries.

That led to a mounting stockpile of rotting cocoa beans in warehouses, while farmers who already sold their stocks to governments have not been paid for months.

With structural issues, farmers said they missed out on benefiting from the original surge. The whiplash in prices made some decide enough was enough.

Walking through his cocoa trees in Ivory Coast, François N'Gbin pointed to blackened, dried-up pods caused by disease and a lack of rain.

He said he also has given up part of his land, for a fee, to illegal gold miners, then obtained a mining license out of fear of the authorities.

The mining area, partly filled with murky, yellowish water, covers at least 1,000 square meters (1,200 square yards) on his farm.

"Today, gold is more profitable than cocoa," he said. "We get 1,500 CFA francs (\$2.67) per gram of gold, and we're about to negotiate an increase."

Many other farmers are finding other uses for their farms, including leasing them to illegal gold miners, according to Moussa Koné, president of the Ivorian cocoa farmers' union.

"Cocoa is not selling, but farmers still need money to feed their families," he said.

Ghana has initiated efforts to loosen regulations on price controls, and in January slashed its fixed price for cocoa beans by 28% to 41,392 cedis (\$3,881) per metric ton, in an attempt to make the beans more accessible to buyers.

This week, Ivory Coast also slashed the price paid to cocoa farmers by more than half to 1,200 CFA (\$2.13) per kilogram (\$0.97 per pound) for 2026.

Farmers say the price cut has left their profit margin very slim when they factor in the costs of production.

"Accepting the current price means my son will have to drop out of school," said Mercy Amponsah, a 50-year-old cocoa farmer in Ghana. She was among the farmers who visited the capital, Accra, in January to protest the price cut.

Some cocoa producers elsewhere in the world - South America and Asia - have improved their supply but West Africa still makes up the bulk of production.

Farmers like Fofie say they must find other ways to survive, however.

"If I keep this cocoa farm for the next 10 years, I would die a poor man," he said.

Gold deal with Venezuela excludes Russia, Iran, North Korea & Cuba

Trump hails 'historic' gold deal with Venezuela

WASHINGTON, March 8, (KUNA): US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the gold agreement signed last week with Venezuela allows the two countries for cooperation, including facilitating the sale of other Venezuelan minerals.

Trump made the remarks in a speech at the opening of the "Shield of the Americas" summit, which he hosted in the city of Miami, Florida, attended by 12 presidents from Central and Latin American countries.

Trump said "We've actually legally recognized them. We have also just reached a historic gold deal. It's called the gold deal with Venezuela to allow our two countries to work together to facilitate the sale of Venezuelan gold and other minerals. They have great amounts of gold."

The US has issued a license Friday that authorizes dealings with Minerven, Venezuela's state-owned gold mining company, in the latest sign of the Trump administration's intent to exercise more

control over that country's natural resources.

The license was issued after U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum met in Venezuela with acting President Delcy Rodriguez this week, as well as representatives of more than two dozen US mining and minerals companies. Many of them previously operated in Venezuela.

Under the license, people and companies from Russia, Iran, North Korea and Cuba are not authorized to engage in any contracts with Minerven.

HK firm seeks \$2 bln over Panama port seizure

HONG KONG, March 8, (AP): A subsidiary of a Hong Kong-based company that has lost control of two critical ports on the Panama Canal said it is seeking \$2 billion of compensation in damages from Panama over its "illegal" takeover of the ports.

Panama Ports Company, a unit of Hong Kong's CK Hutchison Holdings, said in a Friday statement that it is demanding the sum under international arbitration proceedings that it had already started.

Panama's government last week seized control of the Balboa and Cristobal ports on each end of the Panama Canal, a crucial waterway for maritime trade, after the country's Supreme Court declared earlier that a concession allowing the Panama Ports Company to run the pair of ports was unconstitutional.

Panama Ports Company operated the two ports since 1997 and had only renewed its concession in 2021 for another 25 years. Beijing and Hong Kong's governments had also hit back at Panama over the seizure of the two ports.

The two ports came into the spotlight after U.S. President Donald Trump, early last year, accused China of "running" the Panama Canal.

After CK Hutchison announced a deal in March last year that it would sell

the bulk of their dozens of global ports, including the two Panama ports, to a consortium that involved U.S. investment firm BlackRock in a \$23 billion deal. Beijing was quick to protest and the deal has been largely stalled over the past months.

CK Hutchison and the Panama Ports Company "will not relent and they are not coming for some token relief - they will assert all of their rights and damages they are due because of the radical breaches and anti-investor conduct of the Panamanian State," Friday's statement said.

In the statement, Panama Ports Company also said the Panamanian state had previously misstated the compensation figure sought in press comments. Panama Economy Minister Felipe Chapman had earlier said the company was seeking \$1.5 billion in compensation.

In a separate statement on Friday, CK Hutchison accused Panama of occupying the two ports and taking the property and personnel of the Panama Ports Company "without transparency." The company also said it would continue to "pursue recourse to available national and international legal proceedings" on the matter.

Dragon City hubs create vital employment

Chinese traders boost jobs in South Africa's jobless crisis

JOHANNESBURG, March 8, (Xinhua): Chinese-owned trading businesses are playing a growing role in job creation in South Africa, providing opportunities for many people in a country struggling with high unemployment.

South Africa's official unemployment rate stood at 31.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2025, according to Statistics South Africa. Against this backdrop, small and medium-sized trading enterprises have emerged as an important source of employment in Johannesburg through wholesale distribution and informal supply chains.

"South Africa's unemployment situation means every job and every employer matters," said a wholesale operator specializing in hair accessories at Dragon City in Fordsburg. Dragon City is a massive Chinese wholesale hub often described as a "reseller's paradise," housing over 800 shops that provide affordable clothing, electronics, cosmetics and household goods.

For many youths, the mall is a daily destination for job-seeking. "I wait here every day hop-

ing for a permanent spot," said Jabulani Nkomo on Friday.

The ecosystem also sustains auxiliary services. Denis Moyo, who operates a small hire truck at the mall, said "many people buy stock in bulk and hire me to transport their goods. I have been here since 2023, and these businesses rely heavily on local workers to function."

Since expanding across South Africa in the early 2000s, Chinese traders have built extensive networks that support local logistics companies, security services and maintenance contractors. For many people, these stores provide a vital entry point into the labor market.

"Before starting here, I struggled to find work for almost a year," said Siphon Mokoena, an employee at a wholesale store at China Mall near Langlaagte in Johannesburg. "Now I have a stable salary and can support my family."

Transport contractor Mpumelelo Gumede said that Chinese wholesalers help sustain small logistics operators. "Moving goods from their

warehouses to shops across the province keeps my drivers employed and helps our small business grow."

Though margins in this sector can be thin, the high-volume distribution model is a major employer. Local observers said that in a country with high unemployment, the contribution of small retail and wholesale businesses cannot be ignored.

Consumers also benefit from the affordability these hubs offer. "These stores provide variety and keep prices lower," said shopper Lerato Khumalo. "Crucially, they employ people from the immediate area when jobs are scarce."

As trade ties between South Africa and China continue to deepen, analysts said these economic links are likely to further encourage local entrepreneurship.

"For many of us, these businesses are the difference between having a job and having none," said Zanele Bhebe, who works at a clothing wholesaler in the China City wholesale center in Johannesburg.

Actress says 'Love Story' is false, damaging and misogynistic

Hannah blasts TV portrayal of her in Kennedy-Bessette drama

LOS ANGELES, March 8, (AP): Daryl Hannah has issued a scathing response to the new TV series about John F. Kennedy Jr. and wife Carolyn Bessette, denouncing the way she's been portrayed in the FX and Hulu show as false, damaging and misogynistic.

"How Can 'Love Story' Get Away With This?" was the headline of the actor's guest essay Friday in the New York Times.

"Love Story: John F. Kennedy Jr. & Carolyn Bessette" is a romantic look at the love affair and marriage of the famously stylish couple, who died in 1999 along with Bessette's sister, Lauren, when a small plane piloted by Kennedy crashed into the Atlantic on a hazy night.

Hannah had dated Kennedy before he met and married Bessette, and is portrayed in what can only be described as a distinctly unflattering way in the series. The character is played by Dree Hemingway.

"The character 'Daryl Hannah' portrayed in the series is not even a remotely accurate representation of my life, my conduct or my relationship with John," Hannah, 65, wrote. "The actions and behaviors attributed to me are untrue."

She went on to refute specific actions attributed to her character, who appears in the first three episodes. "I have never used cocaine in my life or hosted cocaine-fueled parties," Hannah wrote. "I have never pressured anyone

into marriage. I have never desecrated any family heirloom or intruded upon anyone's private memorial.

"I have never planted any story in the press," she continued. "I never compared Jacqueline Onassis' death to a dog's. It's appalling to me that I even have to defend myself against a television show."

FX said it had no immediate comment on Hannah's charges.

Hannah is not the first to bitterly criticize the show and accuse producers, especially executive producer Ryan Murphy, of profiting off the Kennedy family's tragic past in an unseemly way. Jack Schlossberg, Kennedy's nephew who is running for Congress in New York, has been particularly vocal.

But Hannah's criticisms were more personal, since she is a character on the show. She noted that producers had been clear already that they were positioning Hannah as an obstacle to the central love story. She said it was thus no accident she was portrayed as "irritating, self-absorbed, whiny and inappropriate."

Hannah quoted published comments from producer Nina Jacobson, saying: "Given how much we're rooting for John and Carolyn, Daryl Hannah occupies a space where she's an adversary to what you want narratively in the story."



Daryl Hannah poses in the press room at the Oscars, March 2, 2025, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Jacobson also said in the same interview that creators "always try to come from a place of compassion" when portraying real-life characters, and try to be "very mindful of giving people the dimension and complexity that they deserve as human beings."

Clearly, that is not how Hannah felt she was treated.

The former actor said she now works in environmental advocacy, documentary filmmaking and animal-assisted therapy for seniors living with dementia and Alzheimer's. "My professional life is built on compassion and responsibility," she wrote. "Reputation is not about ego; it is about the ability to continue doing the meaningful work I love. Like any career, doing good work requires an intact reputation. This is why I am choosing to stand up for myself now."

She began her essay recalling words spoken to her by Kennedy's late mother.

"Jacqueline Onassis once gave me some wise advice: She told me that while tabloids, magazines and newspapers often sold ridiculous lies, they were nothing more than bird cage liner by the next day," Hannah wrote, saying that at the time, those words were comforting.

"But today they no longer hold true," Hannah added, noting that in the digital age, "lies live online forever."

She also said she saw misogyny in the focus on her as an unappealing rival to Bessette.

"Popular culture has long elevated certain women by portraying others as rivals, obstacles or villains," Hannah wrote. "Isn't it textbook misogyny to tear down one woman in order to build up another?"

Music

Pop reinvented

Styles' new album swings, surprises

LOS ANGELES, March 8, (AP): There is one experience Harry Styles will never get to have, though he's been asked about it ad infinitum: Communing in the crowd at a Harry Styles concert.

On "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally," the superstar's fourth solo album and first full-length project in four years, Styles aims to soundtrack the anonymous exhilaration of being in the audience. It's a bold choice, following 2022's synth-pop "Harry's House," which earned him album of the year at the 2023 Grammy Awards, with bolder reference points.

Styles started working on the 12-track album in early 2025 in Berlin, with his longtime producer Kid Harpoon and Tyler Johnson. The location proved to be a source of inspiration for him: Styles' listening habits became more electronic, in line with the German capital's reputation. His running playlists featured acts like Four Tet, Floating Points and Jamie xx as well as techno DJs Ben Klock and Fadi Mohem. Repetitive, physical productions - synths that rumble with arpeggios and bass kicks - get very close to meditation. That's clear on "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally," a remarkably consistent album dead-set on evoking mood without sacrificing music.

The first taste arrived in the form of "Aperture," a Styles' opening track if there ever was one, a five-minute slow-burn built of accelerating synths. He said the song was at least partially inspired by seeing LCD Soundsystem live and listening to '80s English post-punks The Durutti Column. Freedom, he seemed to be teasing, comes from anonymity, a dance floor, and braking as music speeds.

And it does, with some restraint. Spirited experimentation carries throughout the album, in particular, its stellar back half. The gamble pays off on the funky "Dance No More," a loose rush of dopamine. (It takes a strong party to press play and not come off wanting to join in the chant, "Gotta get your feet wet / Respect / Respect your mother!," recalling both Rick James' "Super Freak" and drag culture all in one.) Or the maximalist production and Spanish guitars of "Ready, Steady, Go!," or the suggestive "Pop," a lustful, electric good time. The 2010s dance-punk band Hot Chip feels like a direct source of inspiration.

Elsewhere, Styles' voice is sacrificed, buried beneath his ambitious production, like on "Season 2 Weight Loss." In others, he's front and center, as on "Coming Up Roses," written by Styles alone and featuring a 39-piece orchestra arranged by conductor Jules Buckley.

A familiar Styles, too, emerges in spurts, like in that song's romance, or the album's two lyrical references to Simon & Garfunkel on the closer "Carla's Song" and "Dance No More." There's also the late-'60s, early-'70s channeling "Paint By Numbers," his acoustic guitar, singer-songwriter, "Matilda" moment.

"Oh, what a gift it is to be noticed," he sings. The simple statement becomes an existential revelation, Styles' realizing his fame is a conduit for community, not its source: "But it's nothing to do with me."

"Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" takes big swings, but Styles' approach is often understated - like on "Are You Listening Yet?," which never really resolves but satiates, or the midtempo "American Girls."

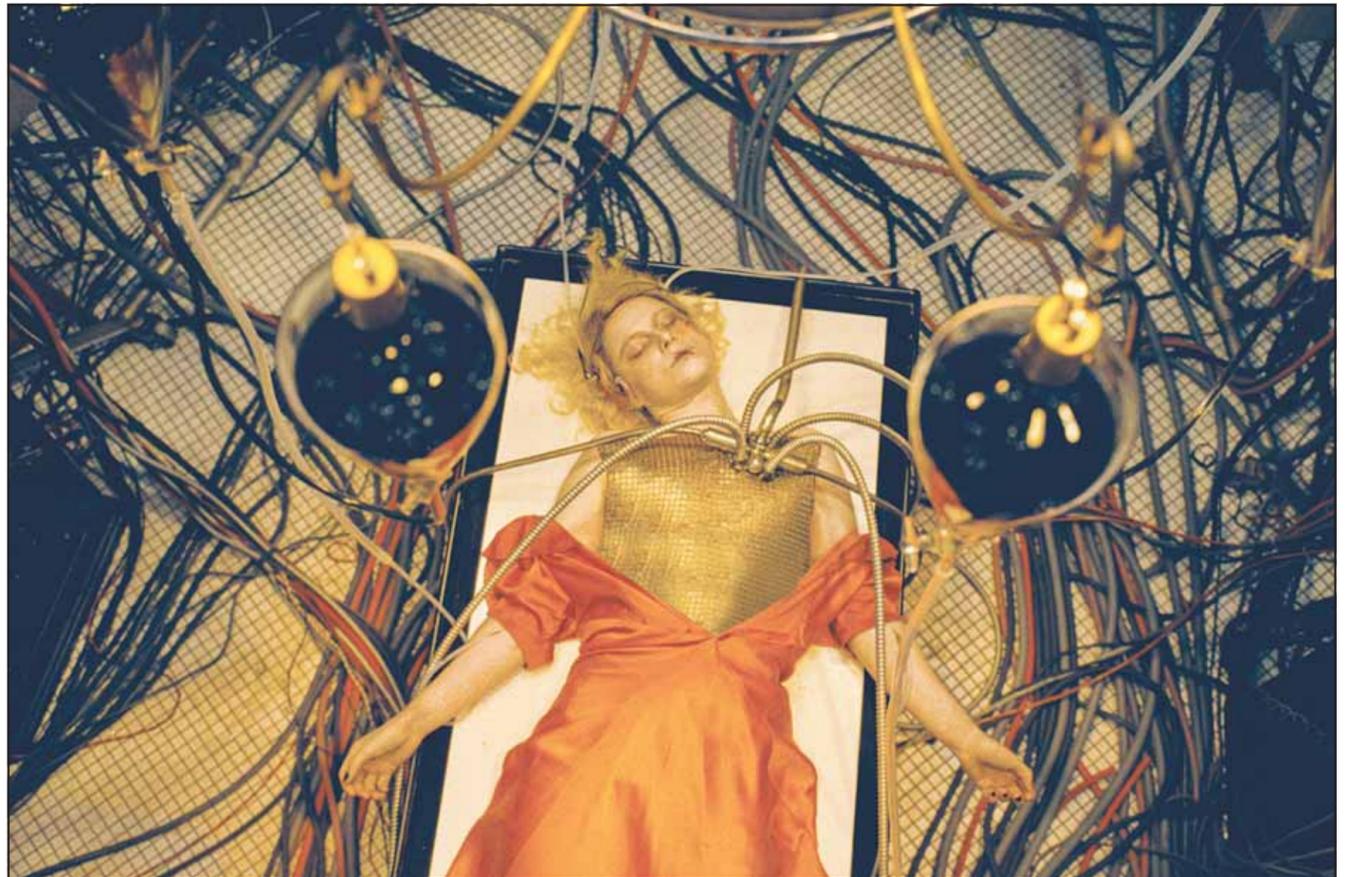
The freedom Styles appears to have been chasing has built a subversive album, one that doesn't play into any contemporary pop star rule book. It'll prove to be divisive for his loyal listeners, or at the very least, unexpected. Still, risk doesn't mean "Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally" is wholly unrestrained, which may be its central hope. Because at the end of the day, even in the early morning haze of a sweaty nightclub, strangers' bodies holding strangers' bodies, he is still Harry Styles.

But the effort to unshackle himself from expectation? That sounds like elation.



This cover image released by Columbia Records shows 'Kiss All the Time. Disco, Occasionally' by Harry Styles. (AP)

Film



This image released by Warner Bros Entertainment shows Jessie Buckley in a scene from 'The Bride!' (AP)

Gyllenhaal pushes creative boundaries with new film

'The Bride!' dares you to meet your monster

LOS ANGELES, March 8, (AP): Maggie Gyllenhaal had earned a little currency as a filmmaker and wanted to make something big. Something epic. Something honest. Something that wouldn't just hit a vein, as she'd done with her first film, an adaptation of Elena Ferrante's "The Lost Daughter," but burst it wide-open. She wanted there to be blood all over the room - both proverbially speaking and, in the case of her new film "The Bride!" literally too.

What started as a curiosity about an image of Elsa Lanchester's "Bride of Frankenstein" she saw on a tattoo, evolved, through her wild imagination, into one of the year's most audacious, electric films. Like her studio brethren "Sinners" and "One Battle After Another," "The Bride!" is a kind of genre-defying spectacle that's bursting with personality and full of things that the filmmaker loves. It's got romance, action, dancing, matinee idols, professional women, big ideas, thorny themes and Jessie Buckley, a kindred spirit who, like Gyllenhaal, is fascinated by the idea of meeting your monster.

"Both Jessie and I ... we're interested in the edges of what we know about ourselves, and the edges of what we know about ourselves in relation to the world and really getting into a place where we can learn something," Gyllenhaal said.

After working half her life as an actor in Hollywood and on the stage, Gyllenhaal has found her calling as a filmmaker. In front of the camera, her ideas, her intelligence, her creativity were only occasionally valued or even heard. Behind the lens, it was a different story. Her first film was a small one, made for around \$5 million, but it made a splash with three Oscar nominations, for her actors, Buckley and Olivia Colman, and her adapted screenplay. "The Bride!" shot her to another level.

"I was curious to know what would happen if I was very honest, as honest as I could manage to be, in a different format, in a much bigger format, in a pop, hot, roller coaster ride of a format?" Gyllenhaal said.

"The Bride!" is an ambitious studio production with major stars, including Christian Bale, Annette Bening, Penélope Cruz, her brother Jake Gyllenhaal and her husband Peter Sarsgaard, a production budget north of \$80 million and a wide theatrical release with IMAX screens and all. As a filmmaker, it was Gyllenhaal's first time with test screenings and meaningful studio



Maggie Gyllenhaal, (left), and Jessie Buckley poses for portrait photographs for the film 'The Bride!' in London, Friday, Feb. 27, 2026. (AP)

feedback. It was a learning experience that even led to some changes, and she knew behind it all was a champion in Warner Bros. co-chair and co-CEO Pamela Abdy.

"If you're getting the same note from a group of people, even if you feel defensive initially, or it's hard to hear, it's probably something you should consider," she said. "It was very helpful to me all the way along in all sorts of places to hear the things that were working for people or not."

At the center of "The Bride!" is Buckley, who by the film's second weekend in theaters is likely to be a newly minted Oscar-winner. While the anguished mother of "Hamnet" is quite a different role than the Bride, it's also just further proof that she is one of the most arresting and original actors working today.

But when she first read this script, she had no idea what to do with the character. In the movie her task is three-fold: She's

an omniscient Mary Shelley, a 1930s woman entrenched in a world of gangsters, and a reanimated corpse brought back to life against her will for the sole purpose of being a companion to Frankenstein's very lonely, very romantic monster, Frank (Bale). She's also a live-wire full of questions and ideas.

In the 1935 movie, the Bride of Frankenstein is on screen for less than three minutes and doesn't even speak. In Gyllenhaal and Buckley's hands, she becomes an accidental revolutionary, a feral, punk vigilante who speaks the truth and runs wild and free with Frank by her side. Buckley gave herself a year to figure it out - a wild act of creation and destruction in its own right. But that's how she and Gyllenhaal like to work.

"I want to go down to the bottom of the ocean of myself and touch the edges that maybe haven't been touched for a long time or maybe never have been touched and find a way to bring that back up to the topside world," Buckley said. "To bring the unconscious back into the consciousness, and kind of like stir the collective, ripple it a little bit, you know? What if I put this thing that I'm scared of into the world and the topside world?"

The film arrives in theaters at a time of profound transition in the industry, as Warner Bros., one of the last big studios operating that actually supports original ideas and bold filmmaking, stares down new ownership under Paramount. At the film's London premiere last week, Bale said it feels like, "we're sort of in the death throes of theatrical release movies."

Being part of go-for-broke movies like "The Bride!" is "more than having fun," he said. "It's like just exhausting yourself in the most joyful way possible because you feel like this might be the end."

And Gyllenhaal made it to be seen on a big screen, with a big crowd. For her, it's what makes film such a unique and potent art form.

"Ideally, to see a film like ours, which does dare you to think differently, does dare to let some of the monster inside of you up to the surface, does sort of say, hey, have you ever felt love that looks like this instead of what they tell you it's supposed to look like? To do that in a room with other people? That really turns me on," Gyllenhaal said. "That makes me feel like we're doing something radical and exciting that could have an effect on people's hearts and minds."

Variety

BERLIN: From an expanded visa-free transit policy to broader unilateral visa-free access, a series of measures is making China increasingly attractive to international visitors, who love to explore Chinese culture, scenery and new experiences.

China's growing appeal was showcased at ITB Berlin 2026, the global tourism trade fair that wrapped up its 60th anniversary this year on Thursday. The event once again drew tourism professionals from around the world, with the "Nihao China" pavilion generating strong interest among a steady stream of visitors throughout the fair.

"May I take a photo here?" a young blonde woman asked at the China pavilion, standing before a bamboo installation

evoking the charm of a classical Chinese garden.

Carefully adjusting her Chinese-style outfit, she smiled at her companion and said, "It feels like I've really stepped into an ancient Chinese painting."

Behind her, the pavilion unfolded in soft blue-green hues, echoing the elegance of classical Chinese aesthetics. Translucent hanging decorations, calligraphic design elements, and touches of bamboo gave the space a light, flowing feel.

"Traditional Chinese culture is one of the strongest draws of travel to China," Jack Pinnick, an American who has lived in China for 16 years, told Xinhua. This year, representing central China's Hubei Province, he performed a Wudang martial arts routine at the China pavilion, drawing a steady crowd of onlookers. (Xinhua)

ADDIS ABABA: The China Film Festival was launched Fri-

day in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, with more than 200 guests present at the launching ceremony.

The event was held at Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia's largest and oldest higher learning institution, in the presence of senior officials from Ethiopia's Ministry of Culture and Sports, AAU, and Chinese embassy in Ethiopia.

The China Film Festival, running from March 6 to 28, features eight outstanding Chinese films, with "My People My Devotion" screened at the launching ceremony, a film that tells true stories of dedication, responsibility, and service to improve people's lives and promote development across China.

Speaking at the event, Ethiopia's State Minister of Culture and Sports Nebiyu Baye said the festival provides a precious platform for Chinese and Ethiopian filmmakers to exchange expertise, co-create content, and connect with audiences in both nations. (Xinhua)

'Americans deprived of vital information'

Court reviews NYT bid to block Pentagon press access policy

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP) — A Pentagon policy limiting journalists' access to the building is depriving Americans of vital information about US military operations while the country is at war, a New York Times attorney argued Friday in urging a judge to block the new rules.

"It's more important than ever for the public to know as much as they can," Times attorney Theodore Bortous told US District Judge Paul Friedman during the first hearing for the newspaper's lawsuit against the Defense Department.

Friedman didn't immediately rule on whether to order the Pentagon to reinstate press credentials for reporters who walked out of the building last October rather than agree to the new rules. But the judge's remarks suggested he was skeptical of key arguments in the government's defense of the policy.

Friedman, who was nominated to the bench by Democratic President Bill Clinton, suggested it is "more important than ever" for Americans to hear "a variety of views" about the activities of the federal government and its elected leaders.

"A lot of things need to be held tightly and secure, but openness and transparency allows members of the public to know what their government is doing," the judge said.

Justice Department attorney Michael Bruns said the credentialing policy reflects the government's "compelling interest" and its "statutory obligation" to protect national security information.

"This is not a trivial exercise," Bruns argued. Friedman said he intends to issue "as prompt a decision as I can, because I know it's important for lots of reasons." The Times sued the Pentagon and Defense Secretary Pete

Hegseth in December, claiming the credentialing policy violates the journalists' constitutional rights to free speech and due process.

Times spokesperson Charles Stadtlander said the U.S. attacks on Iran - and the resulting deaths of American troops - "illuminate the public's right to access deep, impartial reporting on the details of the military actions happening as we speak."

"Today was an important opportunity for The New York Times's lawyers to make our case for the clear importance and public service of allowing journalists to report fully on the Pentagon," Stadtlander said in a statement.

The current Pentagon press corps comprises mostly conservative outlets that agreed to the policy. Reporters from outlets that refused to consent to the new rules, including those from The Associated Press, have continued reporting

on the military from outside the building.

The AP, meanwhile, is awaiting a decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court of Appeals on its separate lawsuit against President Donald Trump's administration. The AP contends that Trump's team punished it by reducing its access to presidential events because the outlet hasn't followed the president's lead in renaming the Gulf of Mexico.

The Pentagon has argued that the policy imposes "common sense" rules that protect the military from the disclosure of national security information.

"The goal of that process is to prevent those who pose a security risk from having broad access to American military headquarters," government attorneys wrote.

Times attorneys claim the policy is designed to silence unfavorable press coverage of Trump's administration.

Television

HBO series explores father-daughter bond

Good dad intentions are at the heart of Steve Carell's new series 'Rooster'

LOS ANGELES, March 8, (AP) — Recently, Steve Carell had a misunderstanding with his adult daughter over whether or not to give her a ride home. While both preferred she take an Uber, they agreed Carell could go hours out of his way to drive her instead - thinking it was what the other really wanted to do. His wife, Nancy, eventually stepped in, telling them to stop "acting like idiots" and to just be honest. That's when Carell realized he was "trying too hard" to do what he thought was a good dad deed.

"She would really have preferred to take the Uber and I would really have preferred to just go home without dropping her off," Carell said in a recent interview.

That type of push and pull between a father and his adult daughter is at the center of Carell's new series "Rooster," premiering Sunday on HBO. Carell plays Greg Russo, a successful author of "beach reads" whose protagonist is named Rooster. When Greg's daughter Katie (Charly Clive), a professor at Ludlow College, finds herself in the middle of a humiliating breakup, he takes a job at the small liberal arts school to stay close to her. The series, created by Bill Lawrence and Matt Tarses, is Carell's first outright television comedy since leaving "The Office" in 2011.

Carell said he was already a fan of Lawrence but reading the pilot episode was all he needed to be "in instantly." He loved the tone and how unique it was. Casting Carell to be the lead in your comedy is like winning the lottery, says Tarses. "You're excited, you get this guy, and then he exceeds your expectations, and then, he's a nicer guy than you think."

They credit Carell for taking moments that weren't meant to be funny and adding comedic touches, like when Greg folds his puffy coat before handing it to an attendant at a party.

In another scene, Katie explains to Greg why she has a problem with him being at the school. As she speaks, Carell opted to eat a handful of corn nuts, causing a noisy distraction.

"We had to turn the volume down,"



This image released by HBO shows Steve Carell, (left), and Charly Clive in a scene from 'Rooster.' (AP)

said Lawrence. "I could have watched it for two hours."

While Carell is making a return to comedy with "Rooster," Danielle Deadwyler, known for dramatic roles like "Till" and "The Piano Lesson," is making her debut in the genre. She plays a poetry professor who finds herself promoted to dean.

"I needed something to balance me out and to allow my nervous system to recoup itself after years of drama," said Deadwyler, who says she's learned that comedic acting is still "just acting" and a "through line of everything is the need to stay extremely grounded."

John C. McGinley of "Scrubs" plays the president of Ludlow College with a penchant for gossip. He invites faculty and students to partake in a backyard cold plunge and sauna as a sort of "safe space" for sharing feelings.

It's a daily ritual in McGinley's own life that he's been doing for about 25 years. Lawrence knew this about McGinley and decided to make it a regular practice for his character. "One of Billy's biggest strengths is he writes from familiarity," said McGinley. Phil Dunster is Archie, Katie's nar-

cissistic estranged husband. He already had a relationship with Lawrence from working on "Ted Lasso." Like Carell, Dunster was impressed by the script.

"When I read the script, it was just like, 'Oh man, I wanna watch this show.' I think that's a really nice feeling when you have come across something that you go, 'Oh, I'd love to watch this.'"

A hallmark of a Bill Lawrence show is that there are quirky supporting characters who end up becoming a running joke throughout the series and "Rooster" is no different. There's a police officer who often misplaces his gun and an administrative assistant who throws herself at Greg when no one is watching.

Lawrence says "part of the fun is just kind of leaning into the curve of what's working" and being open to writing more about those characters, big or small, who pop on screen.

"The only hassle with this show is too many things, at least to us, are working, and now we have to figure out a way to keep this whole world of people together, because they're all blowing up," he said.

NEW YORK, March 8, (AP) — When the members of B2K - J-Boog, Omarion, Lil Fizz and Raz-B -- went their separate ways, the ensuing years were filled with verbal attacks and discord.

But now, the jokes are flying and the camaraderie is sincere for the platinum-selling 2000s R&B group. It seems a miracle that they're speaking to each other, much less prepping for B2K's first major tour in years, co-headlining with Bow Wow.

"O washed his hands with all of us: 'I'm not working with y'all,'" J-Boog said recently of Omarion while laughing. "I did," Omarion replied with a smirk. "I was dead serious."

The Boys 4 Life Tour kicked off Friday in Louisville, Kentucky. The tour is presented by Black Promoters Collective.

It's been more than two decades since B2K's breakup, but group members have since battled internal dysfunction, public disses and years-long periods of not speaking. For diehard fans, it may be hard to believe this reunion is here, but the "Bump, Bump, Bump" artists are just as surprised.

"It definitely starts with maturity," said Fizz, now 40. "We've all taken the time to heal and work, to grow, to get to this mature space."

"It goes beyond the scope of anything that has to do with entertainment," said Omarion, 41, piggybacking off Fizz. "I hope people really get that message because brotherhood can be difficult - or it can be a beautiful thing."

The tour will hit 28 cities. Other notable millennial acts like Amerie, Pretty Ricky, Crime Mob, Waka Flocka Flame will join as support. B2K, whose name means boys of the millennium, and Bow Wow toured together in 2002 during the wildly popular Scream Tour II.

"I never would have thought in a million years that me and the boys would be able to tour again together," said Bow Wow. "For this to just come full circle, it's amazing."

The tour arrives amid a surge of early 2000s nostalgia, including fashion, film and TV, and even food, as Taco Bell introduced its Decades Y2K Menu last fall. Hilary Duff has made a comeback, and the Backstreet Boys have held a successful residency at The Sphere in Las Vegas.

In an era where cellphones weren't



Bow Wow, (center), poses for a portrait with Raz-B, (from left), Omarion, Lil Fizz, and J-Boog of B2K on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026, in New York. (AP)

ubiquitous, there was no YouTube and today's iteration of social media didn't exist, the then-15 and 16-year-old teen sensations gained worldwide fame in 2001, packing malls with screaming fans and selling out arenas with hits like their top-40 debut single "Uh Huh," and "Bump, Bump, Bump" featuring Diddy which hit No. 1 on Billboard's Hot 100.

But the group disbanded after only six years and three albums. Internal friction and financial disagreements with manager Chris Stokes were all contributing factors, as well as feelings of betrayal when Omarion stayed with management to launch what would become a successful solo career.

The high-energy dance quartet delivered a surprise performance at last year's BET Awards, and group members joined Omarion on stage for his final Millennium tour stop last April.

B2K's last tour came in 2019 after more than a decade apart. Later, Fizz joined the cast of the reality series "Love & Hip-Hop: Hollywood" along with April Jones, the mother of Omarion's children, and shocked viewers by revealing they were in a relationship. The "Ice Box" and "Touch" singer said he was "unbothered" by the relationship, creating an instant viral catchphrase that would become the title of his book.

"It had to start with me and the mistakes that I had to own up to," said Fizz to the AP about rebuilding his friend-

ship with Omarion. "When you do that work, and you heal from it - and you have the hard conversations - you can move past and then start learning how to trust again."

Bow Wow, 38, also needed to smooth things out with Omarion. The pair have toured together throughout the years, building a tight bond early on that led to their popular 2007 dual "Face Off" album. But the relationship became frosty in later years, and while on tour last year, they didn't perform any songs together - or speak to each other.

"I love the fact that we can put our differences to the side. And plus, O knows me - O knows I can be a little bit crazy at times," Bow Wow said with a grin. "I'm just happy that we came back around. ... It starts with growth."

There aren't many faces more recognizable with the Y2K era than Shad Moss. As a 13-year-old, then called Lil Bow Wow, he released "Bounce with Me" featuring Xscape in 2000, hitting No. 1 on Billboard's hot rap tracks, leading the way for his multi-platinum debut album. Other hits included the youth friendly "Take Ya Home" and joining Destiny's Child's "Jumpin' Jumpin'" remix before later finding adult success with "Like You" featuring Ciara and "Shortie Like Mine" with Chris Brown and Johnita Austin.

'Immersive dining experience'

Can gastronomy be Denmark's new art?

COPENHAGEN, Denmark, March 8, (AP) — Imagine dining on "edible plastic" made from algae and collagen from fish skins. While you ingest the dish, ocean-borne plastic pollution seemingly floats above you, projected across the restaurant's huge domed ceiling. It's an experience - and dish - inspired by large garbage patches found in our seas.

In Denmark, chef Rasmus Munk doesn't offer dishes at the Alchemist restaurant. Instead, he whisks guests on an "immersive dining experience" combining performance, music, projections in its planetarium-like domed dining room, and, of course, food.

Opened in 2019 at the site of a former industrial harbor area in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, Alchemist was named the world's fifth-best restaurant in 2025. It has two Michelin stars, signifying excellence in cuisine, out of a maximum three possible for one establishment.

Guests at this restaurant can experience 50 "impressions," most of them edible. Dining there means trying various foods - a large eyeball dish featuring caviar and codfish eye gel, nettle butterflies served atop cheese and artichoke leaves - over many hours, in a slow process that invites reflection on the food and surrounding projections.

"We convey messages through our food, our food is our medium of expressing ourselves," said Munk, whose dishes also explore issues such as state surveillance and animal welfare.

Once known for herring, and rye bread, the Scandinavian country's cuisine has been in ascendancy since 2003 when René Redzepi's world-beating Noma first burst onto the scene, preaching a "New Nordic" philosophy that celebrated foraging, fermenting and Scandinavia's seasonal larder.



A dish named 'Butterfly' featuring nettle butterflies sitting atop cheese and artichoke leaves served at restaurant Alchemist in Copenhagen, Denmark, Feb. 11, 2026. (AP)

Emboldened by the success of the New Nordic movement, Denmark's Michelin-starred restaurants are now asking a new question: Can gastronomy be art?

Culture Minister Jakob Engel-Schmidt said in January that Denmark would explore whether gastronomy could be formally recognized as an art form. If realized, it could become the first nation to legally place cooking - or at least the highest versions of it - on a similar pedestal to painting.

It's not clear how the culture ministry's plans will be impacted by the country's March 24 general election.

Munk, 34, who says he spent almost a decade honing his "artistic practices," has been a driving force behind the move and described it as a "big milestone."

"I don't think all food is art ... I think the craftsmanship needs to be on the highest level," he said, noting that ultimately it's a politi-

cal decision what gets called art and what not and that, for now, "this is a closed society for chefs."

The change, still in its exploratory phase, would eventually require a vote in Denmark's 179-seat parliament to reclassify gastronomy from craft to art.

It could also make the country's chefs eligible for state subsidies and funding from private foundations - like writers and musicians - to get their projects off the ground.

Other nations with famed food cultures, including France and Japan, haven't made similar moves. Last year, UNESCO granted Italian cooking cultural heritage status.

Denmark has previously expanded what constitutes art and culture, for example by awarding a lifetime national arts honor to heavy metal act King Diamond. Last year, the Sonning Prize, Denmark's largest cultural award, was awarded to French gastronomic artist and chemist Hervé This.

The Nordic nation of 6 million people has become a dining destination, home to 37 Michelin-starred restaurants, including Copenhagen's two-star Kadeau, which was opened in 2011 by head chef and creative director Nicolai Nørregaard.

"I approach it like I would approach making a piece of art, like an artwork or a piece of writing," Nørregaard said. "It's about getting sort of an experience."

The 46-year-old head chef, whose recipes reference the seasonal flavors of Danish island Bornholm, said that such recognition would be a "big step."

"To acknowledge that this can also be looked upon as art ... that's what's important for me," he said.

But not everyone, even some within the industry, are toasting the idea. Nick Curtin, the American executive chef and owner of Copenhagen's Michelin-starred Alouette restaurant, argues that art and gastronomy are fundamentally different.

"Art's sole purpose is expression. It's to evoke emotion. Food must be consumed," he said. "(Art) can evoke disgust or disappointment or pain or sorrow or joy or longing. Food actually can't express all of those things. It can, but it shouldn't."

Some in Denmark's art scene also have expressed concern that such a change might see greater competition for funding between chefs and more traditional artists like painters.

Holger Dahl, the architecture and art critic at Denmark's 277-year-old Berlingske newspaper, is more blunt: "I think it's quite silly, there's no use, it doesn't make any sense."

"It's a little bit like a bicycle and a car - they have round wheels, they'll take you from one point to another point, but it's not like a very good bicycle all of a sudden turns into a car," he said. "It doesn't happen."

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Lower-volume alarms help prevent heart risks in firefighters

US fire departments adopt gentler alarm systems to reduce stress

DANBURY, Conn., March 8, (AP): Until recently, a call coming into the Danbury Fire Department meant alarms and tones immediately blasting at high volume - startling the firefighters before they headed out to scenes that could get their hearts pumping even faster.

Capt. Kevin Lunnie said the effect could be "overwhelming." He noticed a big jump in his heart rate when the alerts went off, which isn't a good thing in a profession where heart problems are the leading cause of on-duty deaths.

But the city is now taking a gentler approach. A new system that went online in September includes alarms that start softer before gradually increasing in volume, while a computerized voice calmly announces the information the firefighters need to know about the incoming emergency.

"It's much easier on your nervous system," Lunnie said.

Danbury, a city of around 87,000 people in southwestern Connecticut, is using the new alerts in its five fire stations, joining thousands of other departments around the U.S. and world aiming to both reduce stress and im-



The Danbury Fire Department's new Phoenix G2 alerting system receives a call, Jan. 22, 2026, at the station in Danbury, Conn. (AP)

prove response times.

On a recent weekday, a call came into Danbury's main fire station and the alert began with a single, soft tone. "Truck 1," said the automated female voice. "Respond to sick person," it said, giving the patient's address.

Around the firehouse, warm, red lighting flashed while monitors displayed the nature and location of the emergency. A timer display began to count down from two minutes, with the goal of firefighters leaving the station before the time ran out.

It's both calmer and clearer than the old system, which began with full-volume single tones followed by cacophony of longer ones that fluctuated between high and low pitches. Dispatchers would previously announce the calls over the station speaker system, which firefighters said could be static-y and hard to understand.

"Most people found it very jarring," Lunnie said of the system, which would jolt firefighters awake day or night.

The new setup is integrated into the computer-aided dispatching system. So when a dispatcher takes an emergency call and logs the initial information, it can alert the stations and units faster than department staff, while also sending the call information to firefighters' phones and watches.

The result, according to Danbury Assistant Fire Chief William Lounsbury, is quicker response times.

Danbury tapped around \$500,000 in funding from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act to pay for the new Phoenix G2 system, made by Honeywell subsidiary US Digital Designs. That same system is in nearly 6,000 firehouses around the U.S., according to Honeywell.

Other companies make similar alerting systems that are in many stations nationwide.

Advocates of the gentler approach point to a decade-old study that found alert systems using an immediately loud sound increased firefighter heart rates by a median of seven beats a minute, compared with five beats a minute under a system that phased in the volume.

Although the difference was relatively small, researchers said it was statistically significant.

"When the alarm was used in a ramp-up fashion - so a gradual buildup on the alarm - the heart rate was lower to the alarm, so it put less stress on their body," said Dr. Jay MacNeal, associate emergency medical services director for the Beloit Fire Department in Wisconsin and one of the study's authors.

More than 40 Beloit firefighters took part in the study, which was published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene in 2016 by researchers at the Emergency Medicine Department at Mercyhealth in Janesville, Wisconsin, and Yale University in Connecticut.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, of the 51 on-duty firefighter deaths in the U.S. in 2024, 20 were caused by sudden cardiac death, the leading cause of the fatalities.

Last year, the NFPA issued new standards for fire station alerts that include using alarms and tones that start at lower volumes, as well as calm, computerized voices, citing the need to reduce stress.

The International Association of Fire Fighters, a union representing more than 360,000 firefighters and paramedics in the U.S. and Canada, also supports progressive-volume alerting systems. But it is seeking specific standards on how they are designed.

Research on the best way to alert firefighters to emergency calls is lacking, and each system now on the market is different, said Sean DeCrane, the IAFF's assistant to the general president for health and safety.

"We would like to see an industry standard that really starts to define the decibel levels, the intervals, the integration of turning on the lights, what that progression should be, and we believe the standard should be based on research," DeCrane said.

TMS key in improving trauma outcomes

Trauma patients recover faster when medical teams know each other well

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



By Linda Argote, Carnegie Mellon University and Jeremy M. Kahn, University of Pittsburgh

When a trauma patient enters the emergency department, their potential for survival often depends on what happens within the first minutes after their arrival. After studying trauma resuscitation teams at UPMC Presbyterian in Pittsburgh, the largest major trauma center in Pennsylvania, it's clear that trauma teams aren't organized ahead of time - they're formed on the fly. Some team members may have worked together many times before, while others may be meeting for the first time.

Those minutes can be chaotic, fast-paced and high-stakes. The patient is usually rolled in on a stretcher, bleeding, barely breathing and surrounded by alarms and shouting. At the bedside are emergency physicians, anesthesiologists, surgeons, nurses and respiratory therapists - a large team of dedicated health care providers. Everyone has a job. Everyone is moving fast. When it works well, it looks almost effortless. When it doesn't, small delays can have big consequences.

Medical professionals often say that "teamwork matters" in health care. But only a few studies show how teamwork affects patient outcomes or point to concrete, practical ways to make teams work better together.

This knowledge gap motivated us to get together to study this issue. One of

us is an intensive care unit physician and the other is an organizational scientist who studies teams in a variety of settings. We based our approach on a classic concept from behavioral science called transactive memory systems.

Traumatic injuries, such as car crashes, falls and gunshot wounds, are the leading cause of death for young people worldwide. Across all ages, trauma is one of the top killers. Because trauma is widespread, even small adjustments to how emergency teams coordinate can help save lives and shorten recovery periods for patients.

This is where transactive memory systems, TMS, come in. TMS are a shared understanding within a team of who knows what and who is good at what. A team doesn't succeed because everyone knows everything, but because people rely on one another's expertise. The team works best when each person knows what they are responsible for, what other team members are experts in, and whom to turn to when a specific problem comes up.

Think of a group of friends playing basketball. The best basketball teams aren't the ones where everyone has the same skills. They're the ones where one person is great at rebounding, one person can shoot from a long distance, and another is good at dribbling the ball up the floor. Importantly, everyone knows each other's skills, so when a certain skill is needed, they know whom to go to.

In trauma care, this kind of knowledge could save lives. When seconds matter, the team needs to instantly know who would be best at placing a breathing tube and who would be best at reading the ultrasound. Strong TMS means fewer questions, less hesitation

and smoother coordination.

For each trauma patient, we measured three things: shared team experience, transactive memory systems and patient outcomes, based on how long patients stayed in the ICU and in the hospital overall. We were looking for teamwork that showed good coordination, trust in expertise and clear division of responsibility.

Our results were striking. First, teams with more shared experience had stronger transactive memory systems. The more often people had worked together before, the better they seemed to know each other's skills and coordinate their tasks. If you add up how many times two team members had worked together on a previous resuscitation and divide by the number of dyads, or pairs, on the team, the average in our study was 10 times. As that number increased, transactive memory systems became stronger.

Second, stronger transactive memory systems were linked to better patient outcomes. These improvements were substantial: Patients cared for by teams that were well above average in their transactive memory systems stayed in the hospital about three fewer days and spent nearly two fewer days in the ICU.

Third, TMS explained why shared experience mattered. It wasn't just that experienced teams were better, but that shared experience helped teams build a clearer mental "map" of each other's expertise. That map is what helped patients get better faster.

Trauma care is unpredictable - you can't always control who is on a team or how often people work together. But it may be possible to design training procedures and work schedules that help teams build transactive memory faster. (AP)



The coastline of Efate Island, Vanuatu is visible on July 19, 2025. (AP)

Southeast Asia faces highest threat

The sea is higher than we thought and millions more are at risk: study

NEW YORK, March 8, (AP): Climate change's rising seas may threaten tens of millions more people than scientists and government planners originally thought because of mistaken research assumptions on how high coastal waters already are, a new study said.

Researchers studied hundreds of scientific studies and hazard assessments, calculating that about 90% of them underestimated baseline coastal water heights by an average of 1 foot (30 centimeters), according to Wednesday's study in the journal Nature. It's a far more frequent problem in the Global South, the Pacific and Southeast Asia, and less so in Europe and along Atlantic coasts.

The cause is a mismatch between the way sea and land altitudes are measured, said study co-author Philip Minderhoud, a hydrogeology professor at Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands. And he attributed that to a "methodological blind spot" between the different ways those two things are measured.

Each way measures their own areas properly, he said. But where sea meets land, there's a lot of factors that often don't get accounted for when satellites and land-based models are used. Stud-

ies that calculate sea level rise impact usually "do not look at the actual measured sea level so they used this zero-meter" figure as a starting point, said lead author Katharina Seeger of the University of Padua in Italy. In some places in the Indo-Pacific, it's close to 3 feet (1 meter), Minderhoud said.

One simple way to understand that is that many studies assume sea levels without waves or currents, when the reality at the water's edge is of oceans constantly roiled by wind, tides, currents, changing temperatures and things like El Niño, said Minderhoud and Seeger.

Adjusting to a more accurate coastal height baseline means that if seas rise by a little more than 3 feet (1 meter) - as some studies suggest will happen by the end of the century - waters could inundate up to 37% more land and threaten 77 million to 132 million more people, the study said.

That would trigger problems in planning and paying for the impacts of a warming world.

"You have a lot of people here for whom the risk of extreme flooding is much higher than people thought," said Anders Levermann, a climate scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Cli-

mate Impacts Research in Germany, who wasn't part of the study. And Southeast Asia, where the study finds the biggest discrepancy, has the most people already threatened by sea level rise, he said.

Minderhoud pointed to island nations in that region as an area where the reality of discrepancy hits home.

For 17-year-old climate activist Vepaiamele Trief, the projections aren't abstract. On her island home in the South Pacific archipelago of Vanuatu, the shoreline has visibly retreated within her short lifetime, with beaches eroded, coastal trees uprooted and some homes now barely 3 feet (about 1 meter) from the sea at high tide. On her grandmother's island of Ambae, a coastal road from the airport to her village has been rerouted inland because of encroaching water. Graves have been submerged and entire ways of life feel under threat.

"These studies, they aren't just words on a paper. They aren't just numbers. They're people's actual livelihoods," she said. "Put yourself in the shoes of our coastal communities - their lives are going to be completely overturned because of sea level rise and climate change."

Experts build 3D facial database for digital humans

Chinese experts develop flexible material to power wearables, IoT

BEIJING, March 8, (Xinhua): A Chinese research team has developed a highly efficient flexible thermoelectric polymer material, providing critical support for future technologies such as wearable devices, adhesive refrigeration, and Internet of Things sensors, according to a study published Friday in the journal Science.

Thermoelectric materials enable the conversion between thermal and electrical energy, allowing power generation and refrigeration. The entire process requires no fuel and produces no pollution. Statistics show that over 60 percent of the world's energy is lost as waste heat. Reusing the waste heat holds significant potential for energy conservation and emission reduction.

Currently, there are two main types of such materials. Flexible inorganic thermoelectric materials can achieve a thermoelectric figure of merit (ZT value) of 1.4 at room temperature, while organic materials can reach a ZT value of 1.2, with complex preparation processes becoming a bottleneck for practical applications.

The team from the Institute of Chemistry under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, led by Prof. Zhu Daoben and Prof. Di Chong'an, has developed an

irregular hierarchical-porous thermoelectric polymer (IHP-TEP). It achieves a ZT value of 1.64 at 343 kelvin (about 70 degrees Celsius), establishing a new benchmark for flexible thermoelectric materials in this temperature range.

This unique structure of this new material significantly suppresses heat conduction and creates efficient charge-transport channels that are close to those of an ideal model in thermoelectric materials. The IHP-TEP film is also compatible with spray-coating technology, enabling large-area, low-cost manufacturing similar to newspaper printing.

The new material's flexibility allows it to adhere to various curved surfaces, offering broad application prospects in wearable devices and the Internet of Things.

For instance, it offers a power supply solution for sensors deployed in diverse environments. Wherever a temperature difference exists, whether on the human body, a building's exterior or in the field, it can consistently power the sensors.



Chinese scientists have developed a high-precision three-dimensional (3D) face database and achieved a break-

through in personalized modeling, which will strongly support more natural human-computer interaction.

To enable virtual humans to express vivid emotions, recognize human identities and demonstrate embodied intelligence, the key technology is 3D facial keypoint detection.

However, the lack of large-scale and precisely annotated 3D facial datasets means that most current 3D facial landmark detection algorithms rely on 2D texture assistance or non-photorealistic digital 3D faces. Such 3D facial keypoint detection has long been hindered by insufficient data and poor generalization ability.

A research team from the Shenzhen Institutes of Advanced Technology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Fujian University of Technology has developed a new curvature-fused graph attention network (CF-GAT) capable of predicting facial landmarks directly from raw point clouds, which helps achieve an essential improvement from "one-size-fits-all" to personalized modeling.

This study was published last week in the journal IEEE Transactions on Circuits and Systems for Video Technology.

Daily exercise

Life expectancy in China hits 79

BEIJING, March 8, (Xinhua): The average life expectancy of the Chinese reached 79.25 years in 2025, an increase of 1.32 years from 2020, Lei Haichao, head of China's National Health Commission, said on Saturday at a press conference held on the sidelines of the annual session of the top legislature.

Lei described the past five years as a period of historic progress for China's healthcare sector, with improvements visible on multiple aspects.

He said a policy prioritizing grassroots services has driven a steady rise in visits to primary-level healthcare institutions, which handled 52.6 percent of all medical diagnosis and treatment nationwide in 2025, and more healthcare workers serve both urban and rural communities.

Today, over 90 percent of the population can reach their nearest healthcare facility within a 15-minute walk, he added. By the end of 2025, China had more than 1.1 million medical and healthcare institutions and over 16 million healthcare workers. The expansion of healthcare resources, Lei noted, has helped improve fairness and accessibility of basic medical services for the country's 1.4 billion people.

Looking ahead, he said efforts will focus on strengthening primary-level healthcare services and improving paediatrics, mental health, general practice, rehabilitation nursing, and other services. Mobile medical teams, telemedicine and online consultations would continue to be used to expand public access to healthcare services.

Lei pledged to deepen reforms of the healthcare system and enhance public health security capacity.

China aims to increase the average life expectancy of its people to around 80 years through efforts planned for the 15th Five-Year Plan period from 2026 to 2030, he said. Meanwhile, China has rolled out an initiative of 15-minute inter-class break and two hours of daily physical activities for primary and junior high school students in all its provincial-level regions. Education Minister Huai Jinpeng said on Saturday.



Guljaina Kazezkhan poses for photos at Nanshan Station of the Xinjiang Astronomical Observatory under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Feb. 11, 2026. (Xinhua)

Small figure, big job

Woman engineer holding up China's giant telescope

URUMQI, March 8, (Xinhua): Growing up in a Kazakh family in northwest China, Guljaina Kazezkhan often spent her childhood summer nights lying on a carpet in the yard and gazing at the stars.

In the Kazakh language, "gul" means flower, and "jaina" means shining light. Her parents gave her a name that seemed to foretell her path.

"I would lie there for hours, just imagining what the universe looked like," recalled the 34-year-old, sitting in her office at the Xinjiang Astronomical Observatory under the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Her office is a three-hour drive from the construction site of a scientific marvel.

Guljaina is one of the few female engineers working on the Qitai radio telescope project, which features a 110-meter-wide fully steerable aperture that will be the world's largest of its kind when completed in 2028. Located in a valley basin in Qitai County, the 6,000-tonne structure will scan the cosmos for pulsars, test Einstein's theories, and search for faint signals from distant galaxies.

Her life today is different from that of many of her relatives, who still maintain the old ways of Kazakh nomads, such as moving with their herds to spring pastures, living in small yurts and eating meat with their hands. But the instincts of nomadic people, who have long relied on the stars to navigate, seem to give her some innate advantages in this cutting-edge scientific career.

Much of the project's engineering work must be carried out in barren terrain, where engineers like Guljaina have to endure icy winds and scorching heat. But she is no stranger to such weather. The main task of this small-figured woman is to control heavy equipment with high precision under harsh conditions.

Since 2021, soon after joining the observatory, Guljaina has been assigned to a task about the telescope's secondary reflector. This component, weighing over six tonnes and the size of a small truck, requires engineers to maneuver it at a height of roughly a 35-story building, using robotic systems to make the adjustments.

SPORTS

Nets stun Pistons with 23-point comeback to end skid

OKC beats Warriors for 5th straight win

DETROIT, March 8, (AP): Ziaire Williams made two 3-pointers in the final three minutes and the Brooklyn Nets ended a 10-game losing streak by rallying to beat the Detroit Pistons 107-105.

Brooklyn trailed by 23 points in the third quarter and were still down by double figures with 5:29 left, but outscored Detroit 18-6 down the stretch.

Michael Porter Jr. had 30 points and 13 rebounds for the Nets, while Williams finished with 23 points.

Tobias Harris had 18 points and 10 rebounds for Detroit and Jalen Duren had 17 points and 14 rebounds. The Pistons, who have lost three straight for the first time this season, were missing Cade Cunningham (quadriceps) and Ausar Thompson (ankle).

Brooklyn got within eight at 95-87 on Day'Ron Sharpe's 3-pointer with 6:22 left and it was 103-99 on Sharpe's putback with 2:56 to go.

Tobias Harris' offensive foul gave Brooklyn the ball back and Williams knocked down a 3-pointer to make it a one-point game. The Nets then forced a shot-clock violation to get a chance to take the lead.

Robinson, though, missed a potential go-ahead 3 and Duren's putback try bounced off the rim as time expired.

Thunder 104, Warriors 97

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated

the Golden State Warriors for their fifth straight win.

Gilgeous-Alexander made just 6 of 15 field goals, but he made 14 of 15 free throws to maintain his usual production. He has scored at least 20 points in 125 consecutive games. He can tie Wilt Chamberlain's record of 126 straight games with at least 20 points Monday at home against Denver.

Oklahoma City is 5-0 since Gilgeous-Alexander returned from an abdominal strain. The defending champion Thunder have the league's best record and became the first team in the league to win 50 games this season.

Isaiah Joe added 18 points and Jaylin Williams had nine points and 14 rebounds for Oklahoma City.

Gui Santos had 22 points and 11 rebounds, Brandin Podziemski scored 17 points and Draymond Green added 16 for the Warriors, who were held to 40.9% shooting.

This matchup wasn't as star-studded as many past matchups between these longtime rivals. Golden State's Stephen Curry (right knee) missed his 13th straight game. The Thunder were without regular starters Chet Holmgren (illness), Jalen Williams (strained right hamstring) and center Isaiah Hartenstein (left calf bruise).

Clippers 123, Grizzlies 120

In Memphis, Kawhi Leonard had 28 points, Darius Garland scored 11 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and the Los Angeles Clippers held on for a victory over the Memphis Grizzlies.

Benedict Mathurin finished 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Derrick Jones Jr. added 16 points as the Clippers won for the fourth time in five games despite hitting only four 3-pointers, a season low. Los Angeles was 4 for 17 from distance.

Ty Jerome led Memphis with 23 points and seven assists. Taylor Hendricks scored 18 and Cedric Coward 15 as Memphis lost its third straight.

The game was close throughout, and the Grizzlies held a 118-117 lead with about two minutes left. Leonard and Jordan Miller each made a pair of free throws to give Los Angeles a 121-118 edge. Mathurin's two free throws with 4.4 second left sealed the win as Jerome's closing 3-point try for Memphis was off the mark.

The Clippers, who were 15 games under .500 earlier this season, now sit at 31-32. They are in ninth place in the Western Conference, and in the running for a postseason bid.

Meanwhile, the Grizzlies' season



Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard, center, handles the ball between Memphis Grizzlies guards Javon Small, center left, and Walter Clayton Jr. (4) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Memphis, Tenn. (AP)

has been marred by injuries. Six rotation players were on the injured list for Saturday's game, including guard Ja Morant, who missed his 20th game with a left elbow UCL sprain.

Bucks 113, Jazz 99

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points, nine rebounds and eight assists as the Milwaukee Bucks snapped a four-game skid by beating the Utah Jazz.

Antetokounmpo did all that while playing just 27 minutes as the Bucks continue to monitor the two-time MVP's workload in his return from injury. Milwaukee was playing for the third time since Antetokounmpo came back from a right calf strain that caused him to miss 15 straight games.

Utah has lost eight of its last nine games. The Jazz had ended a seven-game skid Thursday by winning 122-112 at Washington.

The Jazz were missing leading scorer Lauri Markkanen because of impingement in his right hip and

Isaiah Collier due to personal reasons. Multiple other Utah players already have been ruled out for the season.

Milwaukee's Kevin Porter Jr. missed a second straight game with swelling in his right knee. Before the game, Bucks coach Doc Rivers had no update on when Porter might return to the lineup.

The Bucks broke open a tight game by closing on a 13-2 run. Kyle Kuzma scored nine of his 18 points during that game-ending spurt and made a pair of 3-pointers to close the game.

Hawks 126, 76ers 116

In Atlanta, Jalen Johnson had 35 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists and Nickeil Alexander-Walker added 24 points as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Philadelphia 76ers for their season-best sixth straight victory.

Atlanta, which had two five-game runs during the season, has won seven of its last eight games and moved two games over .500 at 33-31.

CJ McCollum scored 13 of his 17 points in the first half and added sev-

en assists. Dyson Daniels finished with 15 points and nine rebounds, and Onyeka Okongwu had 10 points as the Hawks overcame a seven-point halftime deficit.

Tyrese Maxey led the 76ers with 31 points before injuring his right hand in a collision with teammate Adem Bona with 16 seconds remaining in the game. Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse had no update on the extent of Maxey's injury after the game and said the All-Star guard would have X-rays on his hand.

Magic 119, Timberwolves 92

In Minneapolis, Desmond Bane scored 30 points, Paolo Banchero added 25 points and 15 rebounds, and the Orlando Magic won their third straight game by beating the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Jalen Suggs added 14 points and Tristan da Silva had 11 points for the Magic, who moved atop the Southeast Division.

Anthony Edwards scored 34 points, including 13 of 14 from the free-throw line, but Minnesota had it's

five-game winning streak snapped.

Julius Randle scored 14 points and grabbed a team-high nine rebounds for the Timberwolves. Naz Reid added 13 points off the bench, and Rudy Gobert added 12 points.

Minnesota shot just 35.7% in scoring its second-fewest points of the season. Starters Donte DiVincenzo and Jaden McDaniels were a combined 0 for 15.

Bane was 10 of 17 from the field and made all 10 free throws for his 11th 30-plus point game of the season. Banchero made 10 of 18 shots.

Jett Howard had five points and Bane, Wendell Carter Jr. and Suggs each added four during a 17-4 Magic run for an 81-61 lead midway through the third quarter.

Edwards had seven points in a 68-second span and Randle followed with a steal and dunk to key a surge to get Minnesota within 90-78 entering the final quarter, but Orlando scored seven of the first eight fourth-quarter points to push the lead back to 18.



Brooklyn Nets guard Ochai Agbaji, left, goes in for a layup against Detroit Pistons forward Isaiah Stewart, right, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Detroit. (AP)

Italy topples England for first time

Townsend redeemed, Scotland upsets France to ignite Six Nations title chase

EDINBURGH, Scotland, March 8, (AP): Gregor Townsend is not one to gloat when he so easily could.

Exactly a month ago, his Scotland started the Six Nations with a dull loss to Italy in the Roman rain. His 10-season tenure was already under intense scrutiny after a miserable autumn test series.

Now the coach has Scotland the closest it's ever been to the Six Nations crown since it won the last Five Nations in 1999.

Impressive wins over England and Wales were upstaged by a mind-blowing 50-40 win over Grand Slam-pursuer France at Murrayfield on Saturday. It was Scotland's highest score against France in 116 years of matchups.

France was prevented from clinching the title while Scotland rose into a tie on points with France at the top of the table going into the final round next Saturday. Scotland head to Ireland, also in title contention, while France close against England in Paris.

The odds still favor France retaining the title but Scotland's rebound from the Italy defeat with three straight wins for the first time since 2020 has awed all comers.

Captain Sione Tupulotu was grateful that they could win for Townsend and take some pressure off their coach.

The victory was marred only by the sight of player of the match Kyle Steyn being carted off with a gashed right thigh. But Steyn was confident afterward he would be available to play Ireland.

France coach Fabien Galthie praised



Scotland's Darcy Graham scores a try during the Six Nations rugby match between Scotland and France in Edinburgh, Scotland. (AP)

Scotland, especially centers Tuipulotu and Huw Jones, but was confident his side will keep the crown. France lost to Scotland for the sixth time on Townsend's watch.

Italy beat England for the first time in a rugby international.

Italy triumphed 23-18 at the Stadio Olimpico, finally knocking off the only team it hadn't beaten since it joined the Six Nations in 2000.

In a scrappy match, the home side claimed the lead for the third and final time with eight minutes to go after a Leonardo Marin try converted by Paolo Garbisi, who was a perfect five-off-five off the kicking tee.

Italy erupted in joy at fulltime, and a little relief. Having beaten Scotland at home in round one, Italy believed it had its best ever chance to topple a deflated England.

Defeat was England's third in a row following a 12-match winning streak, and it could get worse. England faces title-chasing France in Paris in the final round next Saturday with the possibility of suffering four defeats in the same championship for the first time in 50 years.

There's even a very slim chance England could end up with the wooden spoon if a heavy defeat to France follows a big win by Wales over Italy. As

it stands, Italy has overtaken England in the table to fourth place.

Asked why things have gone so wrong for England, captain Maro Itoje said, "We have to figure it out. If we knew we wouldn't be in this position. We have to stick together. Teams go through tough periods and we are going through a tough period now."

England's win-loss record against Italy was 32-0 since the 1991 Rugby World Cup in tests capped by both sides, and 26-0 in the Six Nations. England averaged 36.2 points at Stadio Olimpico.

But England contributed to its historic defeat when it received two late yellow cards while in the lead.

At 18-10, flanker Sam Underhill was sin-binned for head contact on Italy prop Danilo Fischetti. Garbisi slotted that penalty kick and another soon after off the post to cut the gap to two.

Itoje was sin-binned in the 64th for illegally slapping the ball in a maul and 13 men were playing Italy's 15.

England held out and got Underhill back. Then Italy produced the try of the match.

Garbisi kick-passed to left winger Monty Ioane near halfway. Ioane charged and offloaded to Tommaso Menoncello, who bumped off Elliott Daly and passed inside to midfield partner Marin to finish off.

Until then, England looked like hanging on after coach Steve Borthwick named a new backline amid 12 team changes, three of them positional, in the most changes by England in the Six Nations era.

11 years after first clash

Oliveira tops Holloway to win BMF title at UFC 326



Charles Oliveira, right, punches Max Holloway in a lightweight fight during UFC 326 in Las Vegas. (AP)

LAS VEGAS, March 8, (AP): Charles Oliveira finally avenged a loss that has stuck with him mentally by unanimously outpointing Max Holloway to win the BMF title at UFC 326.

It took nearly 11 years. All five judges scored the fight 50-45, in favor of Oliveira (37-11), as the third-ranked lightweight controlled the bout from the outset.

Holloway (27-9), who closed a -235 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook, won the first meeting on Aug. 23, 2015, after Oliveira sustained an esophageal injury less than two minutes after the fight began.

Holloway, 34, who is ranked fourth in the lightweight division, was never able to get into his own rhythm with Oliveira's relentless approach landed more strikes while working his way into superior positions on the ground.

Nevertheless, the new BMF champion was respectful of one of the most respected fighters in the sport.

"Max is the toughest guy I've ever fought against," said Oliveira, 36, holding his son tight with his wife standing next to him during the post-fight interview. "I had to come here and dominate."

Oliveira, whose family was in attendance for the first time to see him fight in the United States, needed only 30 seconds into the bout to go on the attack before slamming Holloway on his back. Oliveira would control much of the first round while looking to apply a rear-naked choke, but Holloway continued to break free, much to the delight of the sold-out crowd, which erupted when he looked into the camera and smiled with 30 seconds left in the round.

The second, third and fourth rounds were much of the same once they hit the canvas, as Oliveira controlled the action and Holloway weathered shots to his head and legs, and subsequent attempts to apply a submission chokehold.

After the two embraced momentarily at the start of the fifth round, Oliveira came out swinging, and it was Holloway who ended up on top as the two hit the ground, for the first two minutes. Oliveira ended up in Holloway's guard for the final stretch.

The long stretches of little to no action brought out the boo-birds for the Holloway-favored crowd.

"I respect you so much," Oliveira said, directing his comments toward Holloway. "We're different than other people. These dudes come here and talk a lot of crap. We come here and do a lot of beautiful things."

"If this division has two BMF's, those BMF's are Charles Oliveira and Max Holloway."

The UFC introduced the BMF belt on Nov. 2, 2019. While it's not identified by a weight class, and its name is unprintable by the standards of The Associated Press and most media outlets, it's held by the fighter who most exemplifies the ferocity and electricity that define the sport.

Billed as the co-main event, albeit only a three-round middleweight bout, seventh-ranked Caio Borralho (18-2-0) beat No. 8 Reinier de Ridder (21-4-0).

After surviving a knee to the groin in the first round, Borralho fought his fight, avoiding the ground for the most part while standing toe-to-toe for most of the match. All three judges scored the fight 30-27.

WNBA labor talks intensify as union files counterproposal

WASHINGTON, March 8, (AP): The WNBA players' union sent a collective bargaining agreement counterproposal to the league, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of negotiations.

The union proposal, which was sent Friday night, comes a few days before a Tuesday deadline set by the league, which said it would need at least a handshake agreement with the union to start the season on time.

It's unknown what changes the union made in its latest proposal. Revenue sharing is the key sticking point between the sides.

The union's previous proposal from a week ago had asked for an average of 26% of the gross revenue - revenue before expenses - over the course of the CBA. That would include only 25% in the first year of the new deal. The league has said that number was unrealistic.

The New York Post was the first to report on the union's latest offer.



In this file photo, New York Liberty co-owner Clara Wu Tsai speaks during a WNBA basketball news conference in New York. (AP)

The WNBA's last few proposals have offered more than 70% of net revenue, with that number going up as the league continues to grow.

Caitlin Clark said at USA Basketball training camp on Saturday that the two sides should stop sending proposals and instead meet face-to-face until a deal gets done.

"I don't understand why we don't just get in a room and iron it out and shake hands," she said. "That's how business is. You look each other in the eye, you shake hands, you respect both sides. For me, that's what I would love to see." Union vice president Breanna Stewart agreed with Clark's idea.

"I think that would be great for us all to sit in a room until we really get it done," the New York Liberty star said. "If that means sitting in there for hours and hours at a time, let's do it. That's for the better of the player. While a situation like that has never happened before, there's a first time for everything."

SPORTS

Unheralded Zenere take shocking third place

Shiffrin extends World Cup lead as 35-year-old Curtoni wins Super-G

VAL DI FASSA, Italy, March 8, (AP): Mikaela Shiffrin moved closer to a sixth career World Cup overall title Sunday by scoring points in a rare start in super-G that her closest rival Emma Aicher did not finish.

Shiffrin placed 23rd in the race won by 35-year-old Elena Curtoni, who would have set a series of World Cup age records for women but for the recent comeback of 41-year-old Lindsey Vonn.

A stellar race for the home Italian team also saw unheralded 29-year-old Asja Zenere take a shocking third place wearing the low-ranked start bib No. 33.

In just her second start in a super-G in more than two years, Shiffrin wore the No. 31 bib starting a half-hour after Aicher surprisingly skied out in the middle of a fast run that was set to take the lead.

Shiffrin earned just eight World Cup points though extended her lead over Aicher to

125 with six races left this season, including two in the slalom discipline she has dominated. Shiffrin is also the Olympic champion in slalom.

Aicher is an all-event racer, which is unusual in modern Alpine skiing, though she rarely scores top-10 results in giant slalom.

Curtoni completed an unexpected sweep of the three-race weekend for the home team in the sun-splashed Dolomites mountains. Laura Pirovano won both downhill by the minimum margin of 0.01 seconds and looked a little fatigued Sunday when placing eighth, 0.46 back.

"Seeing Laura being at the top the last two days, it was charging me," said Curtoni, who has been waiting since 2022 to get a fourth career World Cup win. "It was a roller coaster, I knew I was not done."

At 35, Curtoni is now the oldest winner of a women's super-G in the World Cup, and only Vonn was

older when winning any World Cup race. Vonn's last victory was a downhill in January.

Curtoni was 0.26 faster than runner-up Kajsa Vickhoff Lie and Zenere pushed Romane Miradoli, the Olympic silver medalist last month, and Alice Robinson into a tie for fourth.

Zenere had never been better than ninth before her 50th career World Cup start Sunday.

Robinson closed the gap on Sofia Goggia, leader in the season-long super-G standings, ahead of a duel between them at the final race March 22 at Kvitfjell, Norway. Aicher can no longer top the discipline standings.

Goggia, a four-time winner of the season-long downhill standings, would have sealed her first career super-G title with victory Sunday but was 0.64 back in ninth.

The Italian veteran's lead over Robinson was cut to 63 points with 100 on offer for the race winner in Norway.



Italy's Elena Curtoni speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G, in Val di Fassa, Italy. (AP)

Yamal lights up San Mamés as Barca maintains 4-point lead



Barcelona's Marc Casado is challenged by Athletic Bilbao's Alex Berenguer during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Athletic Bilbao and Barcelona in Bilbao, Spain. (AP)

Atletico edges Sociedad

BARCELONA, Spain, March 8, (AP): Lamine Yamal once again showed his ability to decide a game when Barcelona's teenage star broke the deadlock with a gorgeous strike to earn a 1-0 win at Athletic Bilbao.

The game was wide open with Athletic attacking in waves at its San Mames Stadium before Yamal tilted the match in favor of the La Liga leaders.

The 18-year-old Spain forward received a pass from Pedri González that finally left him with some room to work on the right side of the area, where he used one touch to open a shooting angle before curling a left-footed strike off the upper edge of the far post.

The 68th-minute winner kept Hansi Flick's side four points clear of second-placed Real Madrid and on course to successfully defend its domestic title. Last round, Yamal scored his first hat trick in a league victory in a 4-1 win over Villarreal.

His 19 goals this season are already one more than he scored in the entire last campaign.

"We know what Lamine can do. He just put it in the corner, where the goalkeeper couldn't reach it," Pedri said. "The only thing he needs to avoid is settling for what he has already done. He just needs to keep working hard to give it his all."

The hard-fought away win at the Basque club came four days after Barcelona lost in the Copa del Rey semifinals to Atletico Madrid.

Flick rested some of his regular starters ahead of Barcelona's trip to Newcastle on Tuesday to start their Champions League round-of-16 matchup. Pedri, Raphinha, and Fermín López remained on the bench until the final half hour. Marcus Rashford, Marc Bernal, and Marc Casadó started in their place.

Éric García and João Cancelo also started for injured full-backs Jules Koundé and Alejandro Balde.

Barcelona needed goalkeeper Joan García to keep the game scoreless until Yamal came through.

Argentina midfielder Nico González scored twice in the second half to lead Atletico Madrid to a 3-2 win over Real Sociedad in a matchup featuring the two Copa del Rey finalists.

Sociedad also booked a place in the cup final next month in Seville after beating Athletic Bilbao earlier this week in the semifinals.

New York City FC rolls Orlando City 5-0

Messi scores again as Inter Miami holds off D.C. United

BALTIMORE, March 8, (AP): Lionel Messi scored in the 27th minute, and Inter Miami held on for a 2-1 victory over D.C. United in front of 72,026 at the home of the Baltimore Ravens.

With interest in Messi obviously high, the game was held in downtown Baltimore instead of at D.C. United's smaller venue in Washington. Messi gave many fans what they came to see when he put Inter Miami (2-1-0) ahead 2-0 in the first half.

"It's definitely nice to be able to go to away stadiums and know that you probably have more supporters than the actual home team," Inter Miami goalie Dayne St. Clair said. "Obviously that won't be the case in every single stadium. I think it was definitely a case tonight."

Rodrigo De Paul also scored for Inter Miami. Tai Baribo pulled United (1-2-0) within one in the 75th minute, but D.C. was unable to score again on St. Clair, who played college soccer nearby at Maryland. "I know a couple of my college coaches were here and a couple of

my college teammates were here," St. Clair said. "So definitely a full-circle moment to be able to go from playing at the University of Mary-



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (10) celebrates after his goal against D.C. United during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Baltimore. (AP)

land to obviously such a big stadium here."

It was an eventful week for Messi and his team, which visited the White House on Thursday as defending MLS Cup champion.

Messi then scored his third goal of the young MLS season, slipping behind the D.C. defense to receive Mateo Silvestri's pass, then flicking the ball with one touch past goalie Sean Johnson.

Inter Miami has won two straight since dropping its league opener 3-0 to Los Angeles FC.

D.C. United broke through in the second half. Jackson Hopkins' shot forced a one-handed save by St. Clair, and Baribo put away the rebound.

Keaton Parks scored twice in the second half, and New York City FC rolled past Orlando City 5-0 in its home opener.

New York City (2-1-0) moved into sole possession of first place in the Eastern Conference with the win. Orlando (0-0-3) played most of the game with 10 men after goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau was sent

off in the 16th minute with a red card.

Rookies Sergi Solans and teenager Aiden Hezarkhani scored four minutes apart in the first half and Real Salt Lake went on to spoil Atlanta United's home opener with a 3-2 victory.

Solans scored his first goal in the 23rd minute of his first start with an assist from first-year forward Morgan Guilavogui, also making his first start.

Hezarkhani, 18, notched his second goal in his third start this season, scoring unassisted in the 27th minute for a two-goal advantage.

Atlanta United got a goal back on a score by Alexey Miranchuk in the 38th minute. Newcomer Efraim Bábé notched his first assist on the club's first goal of the season after back-to-back 2-0 losses on the road. Teenager Cooper Sanchez, 17, also collected his first assist.

Pep Biel scored two goals, Idan Toklozati added his first of the season, and Charlotte FC beat short-handed Austin FC 3-1.

Cai turns 'ordinary' grit into China's first title

Forster wins Paralympic downhill gold by razor-thin margin in Cortina

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy, March 8, (Xinhua): Germany's Anna-Lena Forster celebrated a dramatic victory in the women's sitting downhill at the Milan-Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games, claiming gold by just five hundredths of a second.

Wrapped in the German flag, the 30-year-old Para Alpine skier could hardly contain her excitement as she began a series of interviews after the race.

"I can't believe it," Forster said after securing the fifth Paralympic gold medal of her career. "I adore races like that when things are so tight and you find yourself on an emotional rollercoaster." Forster completed the challenging course just 0.05 seconds ahead of Spain's Audrey Pascual Seco, while China's Liu Sitong took bronze, 5.48 seconds behind the winner.

"I already thought the victory was gone," Forster said after Seco pushed her close in the final meters. "Goodness, this is thrilling." Tears ran down her cheeks as she added: "I am overwhelmed and can't believe I have made such a perfect start to the Olympics. It takes you through all sorts of emotions." The German, competing in her fourth Paralympic Games, improved on the silver medal she won in the downhill event four years ago in Beijing.

She said the medal carried special meaning with family and friends able to watch in person.

"We competed in front of our families and friends," she said. "Games in Europe come with these special feelings for us."

Forster's parents, Sybille and Jurgen, were among those waiting to congratulate her shortly after the finish.

In preparation for the Games, Forster and her team worked extensively on refining her equipment, particularly the damping of her mono-ski, to handle the demanding downhill course.

The veteran athlete, who also devotes time to mentoring young talents, acknowledged the physical demands of the event.

"At an advanced age, it takes more energy to face these steep downhill races at a speed of around 100 kilometers," said Forster, who also works as a customs officer.

She said she had adopted a simple mental strategy heading into the Milano-Cortina Games.

"I just tell myself: just do it, just go." The victory provides a strong start to her campaign in Italy, where she is scheduled to compete in four more events.

"This gold gives you much more confidence when entering the remaining events," she said.

Cai Jiayun likes to describe himself as "just an ordinary person," but the 25-year-old Chinese biathlete delivered an extraordinary performance, winning China's first gold medal at the Milan-Cortina Paralympic Winter Games.

Cai captured the men's standing 7.5km biathlon title at the Tesero Cross-Country Skiing Stadium, securing not only China's first gold of the Games but also the first international victory of his career.



Silver medalist Audrey Pascual Seco, of Spain, from left, gold medalist Anna-Lena Forster, of Germany, and bronze medalist Liu Sitong, of China, pose on the podium of the alpine skiing women's downhill sitting competition at the 2026 Winter Paralympics, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. (AP)

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Manchester City's Omar Marmoush, left, and Newcastle's Lewis Hall run for the ball during the fifth round FA Cup soccer match between Newcastle and Manchester City in Newcastle, England. (AP)

Sports

Mercedes roars to 1-2 finish as Russell wins Australian GP



Red Bull driver Isack Hadjar, left, of France and Ferrari driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain steer their cars out of turn two at the start of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix at Albert Park, in Melbourne, Australia. Inset: Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain celebrates after winning the Australian Formula One Grand Prix. (AP)

Leclerc ends Ferrari podium drought

MELBOURNE, Australia, March 8, (AP): Mercedes' George Russell has won a thrilling season-opening Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix, with teammate Kimi Antonelli following him home, after a double-stacked pit stop under the virtual safety car outmaneuvered a lightning quick start by Ferrari.

It was McLaren's 61st one-two result and first since 2024's Las Vegas Grand Prix.

"We knew it was going to be challenging," Russell said. "I go onto the grid; I saw my battery level. I have nothing in the tank, made a bad start and honestly some really tight battles with Charles (Leclerc).

"I was really glad to cross the finish line, but honestly, thank you so much for the whole team because it's been a long time coming to have this car beneath us, and I'm yeah, going to start off in a better way."

Pole sitter Russell had a sluggish start, as did Antonelli who dropped to seventh, allowing Ferrari's Leclerc - making best use of his smaller turbo for a quicker spool-up and getaway - to take the lead into turn one.

The Monégasque then diced for the top spot

with Russell, passing and re-passing, before the lap 12 deployment of the virtual safety car to cover the stopped Red Bull car of Isack Hadjar saw both Mercedes cars take an opportunistic pit stop - a move that proved decisive.

Russell's teammate was again relieved to fight back to second, having dropped down to seventh at the start before weaving his way back into the podium positions.

"Yeah, the racing was incredible," Antonelli said. "The first few laps, the overtake is so powerful that you can give a lot of action. So, it was really good fun at the beginning and yeah, now, a bit of rest and looking forward to China."

Leclerc was third for his first podium for Ferrari since Mexico last year, with the 28-year-old frustrated to not get one place higher after the Scuderia erred by failing to follow Mercedes' quick thinking for a cheap pit stop under the virtual safety car, as the rest of the field drove at a slower pace.

Leclerc, though, didn't think the win was possible.

"I don't think so, but maybe I'm wrong," he said. "Yeah, it looked like Mercedes maybe had a bit more pace than us today. But, maybe not as much as what we saw yesterday, so that's a good thing. But I don't think we could have won."

Leclerc's teammate Lewis Hamilton was fourth, 0.6 seconds behind at the flag, having chased him hard in the closing laps. The seven-time world

champion was vocal over the radio at Ferrari's strategic blunders.

"At least one of us should have come in," Hamilton said as both Mercedes' pitted.

Earlier, the local fans in the stands were heartbroken after McLaren's Oscar Piastri crashed out on the way to the grid at the exit of turn four, likely due to an energy spike in his power unit, which ruled him out of his home race before the start.

Lando Norris, the sole McLaren in the race after Piastri's crash, closed out the top-five. The reigning world champion not only clawed his way back from outside the top-10 after a slow start - but in the closing laps, fought off Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who rocketed from 20th on the grid to finish sixth after 58 laps. The Dutchman was the last racer to finish on the lead lap, albeit 54.6 seconds behind winner Russell.

Oliver Bearman was seventh, up from 12th on the grid, and the sole Haas to finish in the points, with his teammate Esteban Ocon finishing 11th. Bearman finished ahead of 2026's sole rookie, Arvid Lindblad, who scored four points on his F1 debut for eighth place - but was as high as fourth during the race.

Gabriel Bortoletto was ninth for German giant Audi's first points in its first race, while Alpine's Pierre Gasly closed out the top-10, earning his first point since last year's São Paulo Grand Prix.

Sheikh Fahad Nasser: Sports to resume once conditions stabilize

KUWAIT CITY, March 8: Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, confirmed that the suspension of sports activities was necessary due to the exceptional circumstances in the region, emphasizing that the safety of athletes and fans remains the top priority.

In remarks to Al Arabiya, Al-Nasser said the committee is closely coordinating with relevant authorities and will resume sports activities as soon as conditions improve and stability returns, expressing hope for peace and security across the region.

The suspension, announced on March 1 by Dr Tareq Al-Jalahma, applies to all sports events and competitions nationwide as a precautionary measure to protect players, fans, and the broader sports community. Official competitions, tournaments, and public sporting activities across all disciplines will remain on hold until further notice.



Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwait Olympic Committee

Clubs have paused daily training sessions, though some continue remotely through home workouts or fitness facilities to maintain players' physical conditioning during the suspension.

City tops Newcastle

Chelsea survives Wrexham scare

LONDON, March 8, (AP): Against the world champion, Wrexham came agonizingly close to another spectacular plot twist.

Substitute Lewis Brunt was a matter of inches offside when he headed in what looked like an equalizing goal in a thrilling FA Cup fifth round clash against Premier League giant Chelsea.

Wrexham - in front of Hollywood owners Ryan Reynolds and Rob Mac - led twice at the Racecourse Ground and, even down to 10 men in extra time, pushed Chelsea right down to the wire before eventually losing 4-2.

Goals from Alejandro Garnacho and Joao Pedro in extra time ultimately proved the difference between Club World Cup champion Chelsea and a Wrexham team that was playing non-league soccer just three years ago.

But even in defeat, Wrexham issued a statement of its potential as it aims to secure a fourth straight promotion this season and face the likes of Chelsea on a regular basis in the Premier League.

That was some admission, considering Chelsea has played Bayern Munich, Barcelona and Napoli in the Champions League this season. But it was a measure of just how close Wrexham came to a famous Cup upset in front of its fans.

Reynolds and Mac - formerly known as McElhenney - were up on their feet and applauding Phil Parkinson's players when the drama was finally brought to an end. The actors have witnessed some spectacular moments since their \$2.5 million takeover in 2021 transformed the fortunes of the once down-on-its-luck Welsh club. And, even in defeat, this was another match that will live long in the memory of Wrexham supporters.

"It's been a great cup run. Tonight was a great spectacle and we were competitive against a very good side. We will take a lot of positives from it," said Parkinson, the Wrexham manager.

The home crowd erupted in the 18th minute when Sam Smith chased a long ball from Callum Doyle and fired low past Robert Sanchez to put Wrexham in front.

There were more chances to extend the lead, but Chelsea leveled in fortuitous circumstances before the break.

George Thomason denied Garnacho an equalizer when clearing his goalbound effort off the line. But his clearance hit the back of goalkeeper Arthur Okonkwo and rebounded into the net.

Wrexham led for the second time in the 78th when Doyle produced a clever backheel flick from Josh Windass' shot from distance.

Four minutes later the game was tied again - Josh Acheampong firing powerfully past Okonkwo from close range.

A red card for George Dobson in added time meant Wrexham had to play out extra time with 10 men and Chelsea took advantage through Garnacho's goal in the 96th.

Brunt thought he'd leveled the game again with his header from Kieffer Moore's flick on - but VAR showed he was fractionally offside.

With time ticking down Lewis O'Brien fired narrowly wide and Chelsea could finally breathe easily when Pedro killed off the game in the fifth minute of added time. Omar Marmoush continued his outstanding scoring record against Newcastle with two goals in Manchester City's 3-1 win at St James' Park.

The Egypt international has scored seven goals in five appearances against Newcastle since joining City last year.

His second-half goals on Saturday helped Pep Guardiola's team secure a comeback win that maintains City's four-pronged trophy pursuit.

Harvey Barnes put Newcastle ahead in the 18th, with Savinho leveling shortly before halftime.

Tournament-record crowd at Sydney's Stadium Australia

Philippines ousts Iran as South Korea edges Australia for top spot in Group A

SYDNEY, March 8, (AP): South Korea edged host Australia for top spot in Group A at the Women's Asian Cup on goal difference after a 3-3 draw Sunday in front of a tournament-record crowd at Sydney's Stadium Australia.

Philippines maintained a chance of advancing to the quarterfinals with a 2-0 win over Iran in another Group A match that kicked off simultaneously in wet conditions at Gold Coast Stadium.

The Iranian women's team exited the tournament on three losses and faces a return to a country embroiled in war. Organizers have not announced details for Iran's departure from Australia.

The top two teams in each of the three groups advance to the quarterfinals along with the two best third-place teams, meaning Philippines will have to sweat on other results after placing third in Group A.

South Korea will play the third-place team from either Group B or Group C in the quarterfinals, while Australia will have to face either defending champion China or three-time champion North Korea.

Australia twice rallied from a goal down in front of a crowd of 60,279, with Chelsea forward Sam Kerr playing a key role and with Alanna



Philippines' Jael Guy, right, kicks the ball past Iran's Atefeh Imani during the Women's Asian Cup soccer match between Iran and the Philippines in Robina, Australia. (AP)

Kennedy scoring twice, including the late equalizer in stoppage time. Both teams finished unbeaten in the group, but 2022 finalist South Korea finished with a goal difference one better than Australia's.

The crowd surpassed the attendance of 44,379 at Australia's opening game against Philippines in Perth on March 1, which was a Women's Asian Cup record.

Kerr and Caitlin Foord both missed scoring chances for Australia before South Korea opened with a counter-attacking goal in the 13th minute after Jeon Yu-gyeong outpaced the defense and set up Mun Eun-ju for the score.

Kennedy made it 1-1 in the 32nd after lead-in work from Foord and Mary Fowler and Kerr gave Australia a 2-1 lead going into halftime

with Kerr scoring from close range just before the break.

Kim Shin-ji and Kang Chae-rim came on as substitutes in the second half and had a quick impact, giving South Korea a 3-2 lead. Kim Shin-ji's penalty kick made it 2-2 in the 53rd and she delivered the cross for Kang's goal four minutes later.

Kennedy's goal eight minutes into stoppage time ensured Australia finished unbeaten, albeit not entirely happy with the result.

"We all know we needed to win tonight, so it felt like a loss to be fair," Kerr said.

South Korea coach Shin Sang-woo felt like his team should have won.

"I'd like to say thank you to all of my players because they did not give up and gave 100% to the end. I slightly feel sorry that we couldn't end this game with three points, but I'm still delighted with the first goal to be winner of this group."

Philippines scored a goal in each half in a tough encounter against the Iranian women's team to clinch third place and maintain a chance of progressing.

Sara Didar had an early chance for Iran but her strike in the sixth minute was comfortably saved by goalkeeper Olivia McDaniel.



Wrexham's George Dobson, left, and Chelsea's Josh Acheampong fight for the ball during the fifth round FA Cup soccer match between Wrexham and Chelsea in Wrexham, Wales. (AP)

Dortmund regains momentum

BERLIN, March 8, (Xinhua): Borussia Dortmund returned to winning ways with a 2-1 victory at Cologne.

Cologne started energetically, pushing Dortmund back early on. Isak Bergmann Johannesson threatened within minutes and Yousoupha Niang tested Gregor Kobel with a header as Cologne piled up six early corners but failed to convert.

Dortmund scored with its first clear opportunity. After a corner was only partially cleared, Maximilian Beier recycled the ball into the box, where Serhou Guirassy stretched to steer it past Marvin Schwabe in the 16th minute.

Cologne attempted to respond

through Said El Mala and Niang but lacked accuracy, and its situation worsened in first-half stoppage time when Jahmai Simpson-Pusey fouled Beier from behind. The referee initially showed a yellow card, but a VAR review upgraded it to red.

Despite being a man down, the host nearly equalized after the restart. Kobel denied Kaminski from close range and Julian Ryerson blocked Niang's follow-up, but Dortmund punished the missed chance almost immediately. A quick exchange between Beier and Julian Brandt ended with Beier curling into the far corner in the 60th minute to make it 2-0.