



PM briefed on shelter's work mechanism Page 2



Amir urges unity, vigilance as Ramadan enters final ten days

- Blessings extended to Kuwaitis, expats and visiting guests
Citizens called to protect nation
HH Amir condemns attacks
Losses of personnel, civilians mourned
Kuwait territory will not host attacks
Sovereignty defense affirmed
Solidarity with allies praised
Calls for international justice and accountability



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addresses the nation on the occasion of the last ten days of Ramadan.

Amiri Diwan photo

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): Safeguarding the nation is a shared responsibility and Kuwaiti citizens must remain alert to disinformation and actions that could destabilize society, said His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In his speech on the occasion of the last ten days of Ramadan, His Highness the Amir extended greetings to the citizens and residents of Kuwait, as well as visiting guests, wishing them a blessed Ramadan.

He described the month as a time to reinforce values of patience, compassion, mutual support, and societal responsibility, urging citizens to apply these principles to strengthen national unity and collective progress.

Continued on Page 5

Armed forces on high alert amid continuing threats

Amir condoles as Kuwait mourns fallen heroes

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Amid solemn military ceremonies, Kuwait laid to rest on Monday morning the two martyrs - Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Mejmed - who were killed in action while performing their national duty, repelling the brutal Iranian aggression against the country.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of condolences Sunday to the families of Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Mejmed of the Interior Ministry, who fell in the line of duty.

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah also offered condolences, praising the officers' honorable sacrifice and dedication to protecting their nation.

Chairman of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah extended similar condolences on behalf of KNG personnel, praying for mercy upon their souls. GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi likewise conveyed sympathy to Kuwait's leadership and people over the martyrdom of the two officers during "heinous Iranian aggressions," praying for their souls and for Kuwait's safety.

Meanwhile, Bahrain's Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Rashed Al-Khalifa called Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah to convey condolences and affirm Bahrain's solidarity with Kuwait against threats to its security and stability.

The military funeral took place at the Martyrs' Cem-



First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah leads mourners during the funeral of the two officers martyred while defending Kuwait.

Photo by Samer Shiqr

etry, where the bodies of the two martyrs were draped in the Kuwaiti flag, in a scene of profound reverence for martyrdom and sacrifice in defense of the homeland. Leading the mourners were First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, former Minister of Interior Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahma and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General

Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, along with a large number of senior security officials and a huge crowd of citizens who gathered to bid farewell to the two martyrs in a solemn scene exhibiting deep appreciation for the sacrifice of the security personnel in protecting the homeland and maintaining its security and stability.

Continued on Page 5



Representative of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Prime Minister during a meeting between regional and European Union leaders via video conference.

PM Diwan photo

PM calls for global action

Amir Representative condemns Iran attacks in EU-regional talks

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah strongly condemned what he described as blatant Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti territory and countries of the region.

ing a meeting between regional and European Union leaders via video conference on Monday.

His Highness stressed that such actions constitute a flagrant violation of sovereignty, international law, international humanitarian law, and the Charter of the United Nations.

This came in Kuwait's address dur-

Continued on Page 5

Maritime law breached, says Kuwaiti expert

Iran owes GCC billions over Hormuz disruption

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: International Law Professor at Kuwait University Dr. Madous Al-Rashidi affirmed that Iran is obligated to pay substantial compensation to Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Al-Rashidi pointed out that the GCC countries incurred heavy losses due to the reduction of Gulf oil production and refining rates as a result of the closure of the strait.

He said the United Nations (UN) Charter prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity of states and mandates compensation for violation of international agreements, international law and the charter itself, which forbids aggression against neighbors without justification. He asserted that the six GCC states declared before the outbreak of war that their territories would not be used for the launching of missile or drone attacks against Iran, given that the Gulf states have no interest in the war.

"Despite knowing that the missile and other attacks originated from Israel, not the Gulf states, the Tehran regime violated international norms, agreements and the principles of good neighborliness and human fraternity. It exposed the assets and wealth of the Gulf states, including Kuwait, to a major damage, in addition to reducing oil production," he added.

He stated that Iran should also pay additional economic compensation for damaging public and private properties in



Al-Rashidi

the GCC countries.

He indicated that the GCC countries strongly condemned the hostile acts of Iran, yet they did not retaliate. "Instead, they focused on defending their territories. This proves the wisdom and prudence of the GCC leaders," he stressed.

He clarified that the Gulf states' entitlement to economic compensation is based on the undeniable facts of aggression, hence, no further proof is needed. "Therefore, Kuwait and the other GCC countries have the right to resort to international courts to demand for appropriate compensation," he reiterated.

He is surprised that the Tehran regime failed to learn from the disaster caused by Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait in the early 1990s. He stressed that Iran is fully aware that Saddam Hussein paid compensation for his crime of invading Kuwait. He said the compensation will not only cover the cessation or reduction of oil production, but also the damages suffered by citizens and businesses in the GCC countries.

On the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, he revealed that international agreements prohibit parties to a conflict from closing straits or obstructing maritime navigation during wartime. "International conventions and norms affirm that obstructing straits is a grave violation, so Iran must bear the consequences of halting or restricting the passage of oil tankers and all other products through the Strait of Hormuz," he added.

In a related development, an economic source and oil analyst, who preferred to remain anonymous, said Iran will have to pay compensation to the Gulf states, exceeding hundreds of billions of dollars as a result of the losses incurred by the oil sector due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, in addition to the damages in facilities, infrastructure, services, and public and private properties.

Continued on Page 5

8 ASMEK warns regional tensions may hit SMEs

8 Energy prices soar to levels not seen in years as Iran names new supreme leader & digs in

8 Bapco Energies declares Force Majeure after Iranian attack

8 Global stocks slide as oil nears \$120 on Middle East war jitters

Ramadan Timings

Iftar ..... Tuesday ..... 04:45
Iftar ..... Tuesday ..... 17:53
Imsak ..... Wednesday ..... 04:44

Kuwait summons Iran's envoy over missile and drone attacks

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait, Mohammad Toutonchi, for the second time, protesting over the continued Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti territory with ballistic missiles and drones.

According to a statement issued

Monday, Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Al-Daihani stressed that the ongoing attacks represent a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and airspace, as well as a serious breach of the United Nations Charter and international law.

Continued on Page 5



Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Al-Daihani with Ambassador of Iran to Kuwait Mohammad Toutonchi.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:51	Asr .....	15:20
Sunrise ..	06:10	Maghrib ..	17:50
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



Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad



Emmanuel Macron

## France supports Kuwait's security and sovereignty

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call Sunday from French President Emmanuel Macron, who inquired about Kuwait, its leadership, and people after recent Iranian attacks.

Macron reiterated France's strong condemnation of the hostile acts, describing them as a clear violation of Kuwait's sovereignty and international

law, and affirmed France's support for Kuwait's security, stability, and all measures to safeguard them.

His Highness the Amir expressed appreciation for President Macron's solidarity and supportive stance during the recent attacks, wishing him continued health and well-being.

The call also addressed the latest developments regionally and internationally and the current situation in the Middle East.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah meets Ministry of Public Works officials.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah visits the control room.

## PM briefed on shelter's work mechanism

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday toured the sheltering center of the Ministry of Public Works, accompanied by Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan.

During the tour, His Highness the Prime Minister listened to an explanation about

the center's work mechanism in case of emergency, and available potential to ensure a safe environment under exceptional circumstances.

His Highness the Prime Minister was also kept posted on ongoing work at several projects of the Ministry of Public Works, as well as accomplishment phases, contributing to promoting the efficiency

of public utilities and improving service quality.

His Highness the Prime Minister voiced thanks and appreciation to the ministry's officials for carrying out this shelter, and their sincere efforts that reflect responsibility and commitment to protecting citizens and residents under any circumstance.

## Al-Shehri Diwan greets royals, dignitaries



Editor-in-Chief of Al-Seyassah and Arab Times Ahmed Al-Jarallah, Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Sabah, Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah, and Saud Al-Farhan



Sheikh Hamad Al-Salem, his son Sheikh Khalid, and Dr. Mubarak Al-Tasha



Sheikh Sabah Abdullah Al-Salem, Sheikh Jarrah Abdullah Al-Salem, Sheikh Nasser Ahmed Al-Nasser, Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Hamoud, and Abdul Latif Al-Munawer



Photos by Rizk Taufiq Dakheel Al-Khurainj and Mohammad Al-Farhan

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Diwan of Eid Mohammad Al-Shehri in Ardiya welcomed a gathering of well-wishers on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan, in a social atmosphere reflecting the spirit of camaraderie and connection that characterizes Kuwaiti society during this month, reports

Al-Seyassah daily.

The Diwan was attended by several ruling family members, relatives, friends, and residents of the area, who came to exchange greetings for the arrival of the blessed month.

Those present emphasized that these Ramadan gatherings represent an opportunity

to strengthen social bonds and engage in friendly conversation in an atmosphere of warmth and respect.

The Diwan of Eid Mohammad Al-Shehri opens its doors annually to receive well-wishers during Ramadan, welcoming guests after Taraweeh prayers.

### Bid to facilitate Kuwaitis and residents travel

## Jazeera Airways to operate flights from 'Hafar' in Saudi Arabia

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): Kuwait's Jazeera Airways announced Sunday it will soon begin operating flights from Qaisumah-Hafar Al-Batin International Airport after obtaining official approvals from authorities in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Chief Executive Officer Barathan Pasupathi said in a statement to KUNA the step aims to prioritize travel for Kuwaitis and residents to and from Kuwait via Qaisumah Airport by land amid regional developments.

He explained that Jazeera Airways will shift operations to Qaisumah Airport while Kuwait International Airport remains closed for security and safety reasons, leaving many

travelers stranded abroad and others in Kuwait seeking to return to their home countries.

Pasupathi noted passengers arriving at Qaisumah Airport, around two and a half hours from Kuwait, can continue by land, while departing travelers may reach the airport by road to board flights across Jazeera Airways network.

Operating flights from Qaisumah Airport will allow the airline to reconnect passengers with their homes and families while maintaining safety as a top priority, he said.

He expressed appreciation for the facilitation and approvals granted to Jazeera

Airways, noting the airline continues coordinating closely with authorities in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to support travelers and responsibly restore air connectivity.

He said the airline is studying cooperation with bus operators to provide land transport services to Al-Qaisumah Airport, offering additional options for passengers who do not plan to drive themselves.

Pasupathi added the airline had activated emergency response plans, preparing aircraft and crews to support passenger movement once operational approvals are granted, while monitoring developments and announcing further details on schedules, bookings and travel arrangements.

## 'Qiyam' prayers begin as big number heads for mosques

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Kuwaiti mosques welcomed large numbers of worshippers on Sunday evening for Qiyam prayers in a deeply spiritual atmosphere, reports Al-Rai daily. The gatherings were held in compliance with directives from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and with precautionary security measures in place to ensure safety amid the current circumstances in the country.

Worshippers, including both citizens and residents, attended to observe the last ten nights of Ramadan by performing Qiyam prayers, reciting the Quran, and offering supplications. The turnout reflected the Kuwaiti community's dedication to its religious values and eagerness to benefit from these blessed nights.

The Qiyam prayers were conducted

according to the regulations and instructions issued by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, beginning at midnight and concluding around 12:30 am.

Mosque administrations ensured adherence to the specified guidelines and coordinated with security personnel stationed at several mosques.

An atmosphere of tranquility and reverence prevailed in the mosques, as the sounds of Quranic recitation and supplications for God to protect Kuwait and its people and to maintain the blessings of security and stability filled the air, especially in light of the events and developments unfolding in the region. During the Taraweeh prayers, imams offered abundant prayers for the nation, its wise leadership, and the people of Kuwait, asking for their safety and well-being.

## PAAET puts off distribution of graduation certificates

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) has temporarily suspended the acceptance of applications for graduation certificates and postponed the distribution of certificates to graduates until further notice, as part of precautionary measures being taken in light of the current circumstances in the region.

PAAET explained that the decision was made to ensure the safety of students and graduates and to prevent gatherings in its premises, in accordance with the regulatory measures aimed at maintaining public health and safety.

It urged the applicants to wait for further instructions, confirming that the distribution of certificates will resume as soon as the conditions allow.

# World slams Iran attacks

Support, condolences offered

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah received on Sunday a phone call from his Jordanian peer Dr. Jaafar Hassan who expressed condemnation of the blatant Iranian attacks on Kuwait.

Hassan, also minister of defense, affirmed his country's support for Kuwait in all steps it takes to safeguard its security and stability.

He conveyed the greetings of Jordan's King Abdullah II and Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Prime Minister extended the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Jordan's King Abdullah II and Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II.

Jordan's premier expressed heartfelt condolences to Kuwait, its leadership and people over the martyrs in the heinous attacks against Kuwait.

He prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant



HH the Prime Minister

mercy and paradise to those martyred, wishing those injured a rapid recovery.

His Highness the Prime Minister voiced deep thanks and sincere evaluation to this good initiative, lauding Jordan's stance supporting Kuwait in all steps aiming to safeguard its security and territorial integrity.

### Malaysia Premier

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah received a phone call on Monday from Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, condemning the Iranian attacks on the country.

During the call, the Malaysian premier voiced support to all measures taken by Kuwait to safeguard its security and territorial integrity, and conveyed his sincere condolences and sympathy to Kuwait's leadership and people over the victims of the attack, wishing the injured a swift recovery.

### Vietnam

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Monday from Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, condemning the Iranian attacks on the country.

During the call, the Vietnamese premier voiced support to all measures taken by Kuwait to safeguard its security and territorial integrity, and conveyed his sincere condolences and sympathy to Kuwait's leadership and people over the victims of the attack, wishing the injured a swift recovery.



KAC's Acting CEO Abdulwahab Al-Shatti receives the returning Kuwaiti citizens.

158 Kuwaitis return home

## Kuwait Airways to operate Cairo-Dammam flight Wed

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): Kuwait Airways announced Monday it will operate a flight from Cairo to Dammam next Wednesday to facilitate the return of passengers to Kuwait.

In a press statement, the airline said flight KU542D will depart Cairo International Airport at 11:00 a.m. local time and is expected to arrive at King Fahd International Airport in Dammam at 3:00 p.m.

It urged travelers near that destination who wish to return to Kuwait to head to Cairo and book seats on the flight, noting that residents must obtain a Saudi transit visa.

It added that bookings can be made by

contacting the customer service call center at 171 or through WhatsApp messages at 009651802050.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways (KAC) said its flights carrying Kuwaiti citizens from Manchester city, the United Kingdom, arrived at Dammam airport in east Saudi Arabia, and the passengers proceeded to Kuwait borders by land.

The 158 passengers have arrived home safely on Saturday night thanks to close coordination among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) and other state bodies, KAC's Acting CEO Abdulwahab Al-Shatti told KUNA.

## Kuwait emerges stronger, united in times of crises

"AT this critical juncture, the Kuwaiti Army, the National Guard, the Kuwait Fire Force, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Information have demonstrated their ability to confront the attacks Kuwait is facing," columnist **Sheikh Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"These institutions, along with all ministries, have shown Kuwait's strength, as everyone works as one team. This effort is appreciated by citizens and residents alike.

"Of course, these tremendous efforts come in response to the directives of the political leadership, represented by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness the Prime Minister.

"The unwavering commitment of everyone reassures Kuwaitis that the situation is under control.

"We in Kuwait say unequivocally - We will not be easy prey for any aggressor. The Kuwaiti Armed Forces are achieving remarkable feats and making the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of the nation.

"These circumstances only strengthen the Kuwaiti people's commitment to national unity. The martyrs who fell defending national security will never be forgotten. Undoubtedly, our hearts are heavy with sorrow, but this will not prevent us from standing together and safeguarding national unity.

"Everyone, citizens and residents alike, is facing a great test of vigilance to preserve their security and the security and stability of Kuwait.

"Our forefathers forged strength from weakness, making this blessed land a safe haven for all. We are a people who understand the meaning of assistance and solidarity, and what is happening today is a profound experience, even on an individual level.

"Unity is the foundation for emerging from this war. Today, Kuwait is stronger than before, and society has become more aware. We must seize all these opportunities for a better future.

"The Arab world needs greater solidarity after two and a half decades of devastating crises and senseless wars to escape the predicament into which irresponsible adventures have plunged it.

"Nevertheless, Gulf states have managed to overcome difficulties at every stage.

"In Kuwait, there are many wise leaders, foremost among them the political leadership, who are working to transform the ordeal of war into an opportunity for a more secure and prosperous future.

"May God protect Kuwait, its people, and its leadership."

### Also:

"On Saturday, February 28, Iranian officials, including Supreme Leader Khamenei, were attending a meeting in a heavily guarded compound in the heart of Tehran when they were suddenly targeted by an American-Israeli airstrike. The Supreme Leader, considered by many as a major obstacle to a permanent nuclear agreement and a peaceful Middle East, was killed. President Trump announced his death," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The era of a man who ruled Iran with an iron fist for 37 years had ended. Some Iranians rejoiced at the news, though many chose to remain indoors.

"Khamenei ruled harshly. Under his leadership, Iran experienced one of the worst economic crises in its history. The national currency collapsed, inflation eroded citizens' savings, and unemployment was high, especially among young people.

"Khamenei's legacy is marked by violence and repression. He brutally suppressed the 1999 student uprising, crushed protests following the 2009 election, and ordered security forces to fire on demonstrators during the 2019 protests over gasoline price increases. He also oversaw the killing of more than 550 people in the Mahsa Amini protests of 2022, and during the January 2026 protests, his security forces reportedly caused the deaths of 6,488 demonstrators and arrested 53,700 others.

"Beyond Iran, he built a network of regional proxies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, various Iraqi factions, and Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, to expand Iranian influence and increase Tehran's leverage.

"Following the American-Israeli attack on Iran, Tehran launched, and continues to launch, armed drone attacks on Gulf states, damaging infrastructure, causing injuries and deaths, and hitting oil refineries. Saudi Arabia described the attacks as a "cowardly Iranian aggression."

"The question is - What will Iran's new leadership look like? Will it be religious, or will the Revolutionary Guard attempt to install one of its own to lead the country?"

"Iran faces three possible scenarios:

- First, openness, which means to hold serious negotiations with the West and build good neighborly relations with the Gulf states to prevent collapse

- Second, hardening, with the Revolutionary Guard and hardline conservatives consolidating power and appointing an extremist successor, which would worsen the suffering of the Iranian people

- Third, chaos, as the country could descend into civil war, affecting neighboring nations, triggering a refugee crisis, and fracturing the resistance axis into warring factions.

"Historical experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq show that toppling a regime does not necessarily lead to democracy. The power vacuum created by a regime's collapse is often filled by further extremism or even greater chaos.

"Five days into the war, President Trump stated, "The Iranians want to negotiate, and I said it's too late." Israeli Defense Minister Yisrael Katz said, "We have cut off the head of the Iranian octopus, and we are working to crush its tentacles."

"Following news of the Supreme Leader's death, Hezbollah in Lebanon launched rockets at Israel, which responded with a barrage of missile attacks. These strikes continue to target Hezbollah positions and have prompted the evacuation of Lebanese civilians from southern Lebanon to weaken the group. The Lebanese government called on Hezbollah to disarm, but the group refused and openly mocked the demand, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement.

"Hezbollah is a reckless party, preoccupied with sectarian loyalty and allegiance to Iran rather than the security and welfare of Lebanon and its people. The government has abandoned it to face the consequences of its actions."

"Legal awareness is one of the most important pillars for building an organized and safe society. It helps inform individuals of their rights and obligations and reduces conflicts and violations that often arise from ignorance of the law," Kuwaiti writer **Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"The law was not established solely to impose penalties, but also to regulate relationships between people and achieve justice and equality. A citizen's knowledge of fundamental laws, such as civil, criminal, labor, and family laws, helps protect them from exploitation and enables them to claim their rights through proper legal channels. Adherence to the law enhances respect for public order and strengthens trust between members of society and its institutions.

"Lawyers, legal institutions, and the media play a vital role in spreading legal culture through awareness campaigns, guidance, and simplifying legal concepts for the general public. A legally aware society is a more stable society with fewer conflicts. Respect for the law begins with knowledge. Spreading legal awareness is a fundamental step toward achieving justice and building a society characterized by security and mutual respect.

"With the escalating spread of drugs in their various forms and names, often disguised behind deceptive labels and dangerous marketing methods that target minds before bodies, I want to send a message to fathers and mothers - Strengthen your bond with your children, for parents are the first line of defense. I urge parents to monitor their children without harshness, guide them without reprimand, and enhance open communication with them. A sincere word at the right time can save a son or daughter from falling into an endless, dark tunnel.

"My second message is directed to young people - Be cautious of what is presented to you, and do not be deceived by changing names or the disguised poisons in new forms. Dear young people, always remember that the first trial can be the first step down a dark path from which it is difficult to return. Your strength lies in your awareness, and your courage in your ability to say no. Your future is in your hands. Confronting the drug problem is a shared responsibility that can succeed only through the combined efforts of families, youth, and the community, working together as one. This is how we equip our children with awareness and protect our society from a threat to its security and stability.

"The golden rule is that early prevention, responsible awareness, and community solidarity are essential tools for protecting future generations from this growing danger."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Dawood Al-Sabah

Don't try to open door; call 112: KFF

## Stay calm, don't panic if stuck in elevator

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) has issued a set of awareness guidelines for proper action in the event of an elevator stoppage, stressing the importance of remaining calm and following instructions to ensure safety until help arrives, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The department highlighted important guidelines, including staying calm and avoiding panic, pressing the alarm button inside the elevator to call for assistance, and refraining from attempting to open the elevator doors or force an exit, as this could be dangerous.

It also urged people to call the Emergency No. 112 if needed, noting that sitting on the elevator floor can help reduce stress while waiting for rescue teams.

KFF affirmed that adhering to these guidelines helps ensure safe handling of such incidents and enhances public safety.

## Decree appoints Al-Enezi to judge appeals by CAPT

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: An Amiri decree was issued for appointing Counselor Dr. Jamal Mubarak Al-Enezi, Deputy Head of the Court of Cassation, as Chairman of the Committee assigned to judge appeals submitted against decisions issued by the Board of Directors at the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT). The appointment is for the remaining period of the committee's term.

Decree No. 34/2026, published in the official gazette "Kuwait al-Yaum," stipulates that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs shall implement its provisions, and that it is effective from the date of issuance.

The appointment follows the approval of the Cabinet and the Supreme Judicial Council in its session No. 3/2026 held on February 12.

This appointment comes after accepting the resignation of the previous committee chairman, Qais Mohammed Nisf Al-Nisf, pursuant to Ministerial Resolution No. 1/2026 issued on January 5, 2026. The resignation became effective at the end of the workday on December 31, 2025.



Dr. Al-Enezi

## Al-Khaldi term upheld

## Kuwaiti gets 11 years jail for running fake accounts

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Criminal Court sentenced a Kuwaiti citizen, identified as "S.F.," to 11 years in prison and fined him KD 5,000 after convicting him of managing 16 fake accounts on social media. The sentence also included a one-year prison term and a KD 2,000 fine for his accomplice, identified as "N.B.," who remains at large, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

The Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of S.F., who confessed to managing multiple fake accounts used to spread false news, malicious rumors, and defame citizens. Several mobile phones used to operate the accounts were also seized.

During the investigation, the accused admitted to collaborating with "N.B.," a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda, to jointly manage the fake accounts in exchange for money.

**20 years jail upheld:** The Court of Appeals has upheld four sentences issued by the Criminal Court, each sentencing Salman Al-Khaldi to five years in prison with hard labor, reports *Al-Anba* daily.

He was convicted on charges of insulting the country, the judiciary, and a Gulf state through his social media accounts.

Al-Khaldi also faces several other charges related to violations of the State Security Crimes Law.

## No damage caused by falling shrapnel - Mol

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Ministry of Interior has denied reports circulating on social media about a house being damaged by falling debris, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

In an official statement, the ministry explained that the incident was caused by construction materials falling from the house itself onto vehicles parked in front of it due to strong winds and the contractor's negligence in carrying out the construction work. The incident resulted only in material damage, with no injuries. No foreign objects or evidence of falling debris were found.

The ministry urged everyone to be accurate, refrain from spreading rumors, and obtain information from official sources, reiterating its previous announcement regarding the current situation, and emphasizing the need to avoid filming or sharing videos related to security incidents or accident sites.

## KU 'Science Faculty' to conduct exams online

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The College of Science at Kuwait University has decided to conduct the first semester exams -- standardized and non-standardized -- for the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year online starting Wednesday, until further notice.

This decision is part of the organizational measures being taken in view of the current circumstances. The newspaper obtained a copy of the decision on the implementation of the distance learning mechanisms to ensure the continuity of the educational process and prevent disruption of the academic assessment schedule.

The college stressed the importance of explaining the exam access procedures to the students and sending them the instructions in advance.

Students must turn on their cameras during the exams. Questions will vary between objective and essay formats to ensure academic fairness and prevent cheating.

The college instructed the academic departments and faculty members to utilize the approved educational platforms such as Moodle or Microsoft Forms for conducting the exams.

Students must be notified of the new exam schedule as soon as possible, and their ability to access the online systems before the exam date must be verified to avoid technical problems.

The college stressed the importance of keeping copies of the question papers and student results for documentation and academic follow up.

It also affirmed the commitment of all academic departments to implement the instructions to make sure that the exams are conducted in an efficient manner.

## Judiciary collects over KD6 mln fees

Delay, don't dismiss cases

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Statistics and Research Department at the Ministry of Justice revealed that the total revenues collected by the Judicial Fees Department in December 2025 reached KD6,101,605.**

The Capital Governorate Court accounted for the largest share -- 61.3 percent of the total revenue, followed by the Farwaniya Governorate Court with 29.5 percent, Hawally with 4.1 percent, Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 3.7 percent each and Jahra with 1.5 percent.

The statistics also showed that the total expenditure on bail and deposits at the Capital Governorate Court reached KD 963,533 during the same period, while the total number of newspapers submitted for fee assessment reached 19,741.

Farwaniya Governorate ranked first with 31.3 percent, followed by the Capital with 25.2 percent, Hawally with 20.6 percent, Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 11.3 percent each, Jahra with 9.4 percent and Kuwait Lawyers Association with 2.2 percent.

Moreover, the Case Review Department received 9,825 cases in December. The Capital Governorate Court topped the list with 5,420 cases, followed by Hawally with 1,800, Farwaniya with 1,435, Jahra with 866, and

Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 304. The number of cases reviewed reached 9,798.

In the Audit and Review Department, 6,226 cases were received, while 7,963 cases were reviewed. The Farwaniya Court recorded the highest number of cases with 2,932, followed by the Capital with 2,568.

In the Claims Department, 3,017 fee assessment orders were issued. The Capital Governorate had the highest number with 1,187 orders, followed by Farwaniya with 1,030, Hawally with 432, Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 282 and Jahra with 86.

**Call to delay hearings:** Vice President of the Court of First Instance Judge Khaled Al-Othman issued Circular No. 3/2026 for the agents and judges at the Court of First Instance.

The circular is about judicial work under current circumstances to ensure the proper administration of justice.

It stipulated the postponement of cases involving the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) -- in which the necessary documents have not been submitted -- until a suitable date due to the fire incident at the headquarters of PIFSS, even if the lawyer of the latter did not attend the hearings.

It added that cases where litigants did not appear in court should be postponed rather than dismissed, considering the current circumstances.

It also emphasized the commitment to continue judicial work in a way that guarantees justice and protects the rights of litigants.

## Road repairs shut Mangaf street

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The General Traffic Department announced the complete closure of Fahad Hamlan Street in Mangaf, from Abdullah Humaidi Street to Hamad Al-Dabbous Street in both directions, starting Monday, March 9, until the completion of street maintenance work on Sunday, March 15, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

**3 shops closed:** The Public Relations

Department of Kuwait Municipality reported the closure of 3 shops and the removal of 40 illegal awnings and 9 camps in the Abdullah Al-Mubarak area in the month of February, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

Engineer Fahad Al-Muwaizri, Head of the Violations Removal Department at Farwaniya Municipality, noted that 61 warnings were also issued for various violations, including encroachments on state property and obstructions to services.

**MUGHAL MAHAL** مفـل محـل  
SINCE 1985

**CELEBRATE IFTAR WITH DELICIOUS FLAVOURS!**

**Iftar Buffet HAWALLY**  
KD 6.450 ONLY  
CHILDREN AGE: 3 TO 10 KD 3.750

**20KD Gift Voucher Special For You**  
In Just **16 KD**

**20% OFF**

**FREE DELIVERY**

**SCAN & ORDER**

**1800 188**  
JUST ORDER - WE'RE ON THE WAY!

**SERVING ALL ACROSS KUWAIT**  
**@mughalmahalkuwait**





A number of well-wishers.



Ahmed Al-Rish, Abdulwahab Al-Essa and Fayeze Al-Rish



Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah and Saud Al-Farhan offering their congratulations.

## Al-Rish Diwaniya hosts Ramadan gatherings

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Al-Rish Diwaniya in Faiba welcomed well-wishers during the nights of the holy month of Ramadan in a fraternal atmosphere that embodied the spirit of camaraderie and social connection characteristic of Kuwaiti society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The Diwaniya hosted a number of family members, friends, and residents of the area who came to exchange greetings and blessings for the holy month.

Such Ramadan gatherings are marked by love and brotherhood, reflecting the deeply rooted social values that Kuwaiti diwanias uphold in strengthening bonds among members of society.



Some of the well-wishers.

Photos by Rezk Tawfik

## Worshippers gather after week-long suspension

# Taraweeh and Qiyam prayers resume across Kuwait under strict guidelines

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: On Saturday evening, Kuwaiti mosques witnessed a large turnout of worshippers for Taraweeh prayers, marking a return to the spiritual atmosphere of the mosques after a week-long suspension due to the circumstances the country has faced since the start of the Iranian aggression against Kuwait, reports Al-Rai daily.

The resumption of Taraweeh prayers followed the Ministry of Islamic Affairs' announcement permitting their reinstatement in accordance with regulations to ensure the safety of worshippers.

Mosques were filled with worshippers who flocked to perform Taraweeh prayers in a deeply spiritual setting, returning after the interruption caused

by the ongoing situation. The mosques once again welcomed worshippers during the blessed nights of Ramadan.

The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, under the directives of the Undersecretary Dr. Eng. Suleiman Al-Suwailem, confirmed that Taraweeh and Qiyam prayers are permitted in all mosques, with organizational measures in place to ensure the prayers proceed in an orderly and safe manner.

It issued a circular to imams and muezzins stating that, "Due to the current circumstances in the country, and in the interest of the safety of worshippers and the public good, it has been decided to hold Taraweeh and

Qiyam prayers in all mosques in Kuwait, while Ramadan centers and Quran recitation sessions will be canceled."

The circular clarified that Taraweeh prayers will begin on Saturday evening and will not exceed 20 minutes after the Isha prayer. Qiyam prayers will be held for 30 minutes, beginning at midnight and ending at 12:30 AM.

Many worshippers expressed their happiness at the return of Taraweeh prayers to mosques, emphasizing that the spiritual atmosphere reflects unity and supplication for God to protect Kuwait and grant continued security and stability.

## Continued from Page 1

### Amir urges

Addressing recent regional developments, His Highness the Amir underscored the importance of vigilance, awareness, and trust among all citizens and institutions.

The Amir reaffirmed Kuwait's position that its territory and airspace will not be used in military operations against any state, noting that recent attacks targeting Kuwait's civilian and strategic infrastructure resulted in the loss of military personnel and innocent civilians.

His Highness the Amir condemned the aggressions as flagrant violations of international law and norms, calling on the international community to uphold justice and accountability.

He praised the solidarity expressed by friendly and sister nations during these challenging times and emphasized that Kuwait stands firmly in defending its sovereignty and security in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

"Thanks to Allah and to the awareness and cohesion of our people, Kuwait can overcome any challenge," His Highness the Amir said.

"History has shown that wisdom prevails, and unity in the face of crises shapes a nation's future," His Highness added.

His Highness the Amir concluded by invoking Allah's protection for Kuwait, its citizens, and residents, wishing safety, prosperity, and peace during the remaining nights of Ramadan.

He also prayed for the souls of all departed leaders and martyrs of Kuwait, asking for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

### Amir condoles

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior expressed its deepest sorrow over the loss, affirming that its security personnel continue to perform their duty with utmost courage and dedication to protect the homeland.

The ministry prayed to Almighty Allah to grant the two martyrs His abundant mercy, admit them to His spacious Paradise, and grant their families patience and solace.

Before his martyrdom, Al-Majmad conveyed a final message to his brother. He said "everything is fine. Sleep well. Heroes are watching over you after Allah."

These words came from the heart of an officer steadfast in his position of honor, reassuring his family and his country that Kuwait remains in the care of its devoted men.

He uttered these words while performing his national duty alongside Al-Sharrah. Both of them ascended to martyrdom in the field of glory and honor while defending the homeland.

These words are not merely a passing message, but a testament to the efforts to guarantee the nation's peace and confidence in its men—words that prove the martyr's courage and firm belief in his duty until his final breath.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef stood at the forefront of the families of the two martyrs, embodying the highest meaning of their sacrifice.

He was keen to remain and share the

moments of mourning with the families of the martyrs until the end of the mourning period, affirming that the blood of the martyrs will forever be a source of pride and honor, and that their sacrifice in defense of Kuwait will be embedded of the nation's conscience.

Also, former Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim said that the two martyrs are regarded as martyrs in the eyes of Allah, praying to the Almighty to elevate them to the highest ranks of Paradise and grant their families patience and steadfastness.

He added "may Allah reward the people of Kuwait and the families of the martyrs, and we congratulate them on this martyrdom and their attainment of the highest Paradise. The actions of the two martyrs reflect the sacrifices of Kuwait's sons and their brothers in the military institutions."

Al-Ghanim emphasized to reporters that the feelings of grief and pride intertwine when losing martyrs: grief over the loss of a loved one, and pride in the honor and glory achieved through their sacrifice.

He implored Almighty Allah to protect Kuwait and its Amir and strengthen the armed forces as they fulfill their national duty against all those who attempt to harm national security.

During the condolences, the father of Al-Majmad stated "what can I say? May Allah grant us patience, My son attained martyrdom, praise be to Allah. This is a blessing from the Lord of the Worlds. This is a sacrifice for the homeland. We are proud of him. People are offering congratulations, because he attained martyrdom. This is a badge of honor on our chests."

Meanwhile, Defense Ministry spokesperson Colonel Saud Al-Atwan announced Monday that the Kuwait Armed Forces destroyed three ballistic missiles in the southern of the country over the past 24 hours.

Speaking at the third media briefing on the current developments in the country, Al-Atwan affirmed that the air defenses intercepted and destroyed some of the hostile drones detected over the Kuwaiti airspace.

He also paid tribute to the martyrs, Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Majmad, who were killed in the early hours of Sunday while performing their national duty as part of the security tasks assigned to the Ministry of Interior. He prayed to Almighty Allah to have mercy on them, grant them paradise, and give their families patience and solace.

He added that the military, in cooperation with various State institutions, is working hard to fulfill its duties in defending the national security and sovereignty, as well as ensuring the safety of the public.

He reiterated the call for the public to avoid approaching or touching shrapnel or foreign objects and to report any sightings to the relevant authorities through emergency hotline 112.

He affirmed that the Kuwaiti army officers, non-commissioned officers and personnel are at the highest level of readiness, operating with high efficiency and morale, and are exerting tremendous efforts to protect the nation.

Moreover, Interior Ministry spokesperson Brigadier General Nasser

Bouslaib disclosed that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams responded to 24 field reports on falling shrapnel from the defensive interceptions, bringing the total number of such reports to 298 since the beginning of the aggression.

He added that the sirens were activated eight times recently, bringing the total number of alerts to 75.

In addition, official spokesperson of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Gharib said KFF responded to 362 routine and unusual reports since the beginning of the Iranian aggression.

#### PAFN creates emergency team

The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) announced the formation of an emergency team comprising several relevant departments to enhance preparedness, ensure business continuity, and activate Article 28 concerning the release of food shipments to expedite entry procedures and maintain a smooth supply chain, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Dr. Shaima Al-Asfoor, Director of the Community Nutrition Affairs Department and official spokesperson for PAFN, explained in a press release that this measure does not replace the application of approved inspection and monitoring procedures, which ensure food safety and protect consumer health.

PAFN had previously confirmed the availability of food supplies and affirmed that the food situation is safe and stable thanks to ongoing monitoring efforts.

Dr. Al-Asfoor emphasized that the emergency teams are fully prepared and will continue field monitoring to ensure food safety and the smooth flow of supplies in the markets.

Elsewhere, Iran named the hard-line Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei to succeed his late father as supreme leader on Monday, signaling no letup in the war launched by the United States and Israel. Oil prices surged as Iran attacked regional energy infrastructure and the U.S. and Israel bombed targets across Iran.

The secretive 56-year-old cleric has close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which has been firing missiles and drones at Israel and Gulf Arab states since Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had ruled Iran for 37 years, was killed during the war's opening salvo.

The appointment marked a new sign of defiance by Iran's embattled leadership after more than a week of heavy U.S. and Israeli bombardment, suggesting Tehran is not close to giving up on what it considers a fight for the Islamic theocracy's survival.

World markets plummeted and Brent crude oil, the international standard, surged to nearly \$120 a barrel Monday, about 65% higher than when the war started, before retreating.

Iran's attacks in the Strait of Hormuz have all but stopped tankers from using the key shipping lane through which a fifth of the world's oil is carried. Fire broke out at an oil facility that Iran attacked in the United Arab Emirates. Bahrain's only oil refinery was apparently also hit and Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted several drones attacking its Shaybah oil field.

Turkey meanwhile said NATO defenses had intercepted a ballistic missile that entered the country's airspace for the second time since the war

started.

Later Monday, Israel defense forces said they began "a wide-scale wave of strikes" on Isfahan as well as Iran's capital, Tehran, where witnesses reported seeing new strikes, and in southern Iran.

In the United Arab Emirates, authorities said two people were wounded by shrapnel from the interception of Iranian missiles over the capital, Abu Dhabi. By mid-afternoon, the Emirati Defense Ministry said 15 ballistic missiles and 18 drones were fired on the country on Monday, raising the total 253 missiles and 1,440 drones launched at the UAE since the war began. So far in the war, four foreign nationals have been killed in the UAE and 117 wounded, it said.

Iran also attacked Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, where it hit a residential area, wounding 32 people, including several children, according to authorities. Another attack appeared to have started a fire at Bahrain's only oil refinery, sending thick plumes of smoke into the air.

Bahrain has also accused Iran of damaging one of its desalination plants, though its electricity and water authority said supplies remained online. Desalination plants supply water to millions of residents in the region, raising new fears of catastrophic risks in parched desert nations.

In Iraq, air defenses downed a drone as it attacked a U.S. military compound inside the Baghdad International Airport, a security official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press. No injuries or damage were reported. It was not immediately clear who was behind the attack, but Iran-backed militias have previously targeted the base.

Elsewhere, the U.S. military said a service member died of injuries from an Iranian attack on troops in Saudi Arabia on March 1. Seven U.S. soldiers have now been killed.

The U.S. State Department early Monday ordered nonessential personnel and families of all staff to leave Saudi Arabia following the escalation in attacks.

Several other U.S. diplomatic missions have ordered all but key staff to leave, including Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, the UAE and the consulates in Karachi, Pakistan, and Adana, Turkey.

### Amir Representative

His Highness emphasized that Kuwait is not a party to the war and that its territory will not be used to launch military operations against any side.

He revealed that Kuwaiti armed forces had intercepted 234 ballistic missiles, 423 drones, and one cruise missile during the attacks, which targeted civilian facilities and vital infrastructure including Kuwait International Airport and oil refineries.

The attacks resulted in the death of civilians, including a child, the martyrdom of four personnel from the armed forces and the Ministry of Interior, and 91 injuries, His Highness added.

He also affirmed Kuwait's legitimate right to self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and reiterated support for the right of countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to defend themselves against aggression.

His Highness commended the steps taken by Iraq to halt hostile actions carried out by certain Iraqi factions that launched ballistic missiles and drones against Kuwait on March 3, noting that such measures help preserve the deep-rooted relations between the two countries.

Kuwait Amir Representative stressed Kuwait's commitment to protecting civilians residing in the country and said preparations are underway to facilitate the safe return of stranded individuals to their home countries through neighboring states.

Regarding economic implications, he noted that Kuwait had declared force majeure on crude oil sales and taken measures to reduce production due to ongoing threats to maritime security and attacks targeting oil tankers and commercial shipping.

His Highness warned that such actions threaten global energy security, market stability, and international supply chains, underscoring the importance of safeguarding airspace and key maritime routes, including the Strait of Hormuz and Bab Al Mandeb Strait.

GCC states remain committed to de-escalation and prioritizing dialogue and diplomatic solutions, stressing that pursuing calm does not mean accepting the status quo and that peace remains a strategic choice tied to safeguarding sovereignty and regional security.

His Highness concluded by calling for intensified diplomatic efforts to end Iranian attacks immediately and prevent further escalation, urging coordinated international action, particularly with the EU and through the UN framework, to ensure accountability and preserve regional and international security.

On Sunday, Kuwait's Cabinet mourned the martyrdom of Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Mejmed of the Ministry of Interior, praising the courage and dedication of Kuwaiti security personnel defending the nation.

This came during the cabinet's meeting on Sunday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Following the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Al-Muwaishirji briefed on the key outcomes.

The cabinet was informed about the recent phone call between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the President of the UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, during which both leaders expressed concern over the recent Iranian attacks targeting Kuwaiti and UAE territories and airspace.

The cabinet was also briefed on a call from French President Emmanuel Macron, who condemned the attacks on Kuwait, reaffirmed France's support for Kuwait's sovereignty, and expressed readiness to assist in safeguarding its security and stability.

Additionally, the cabinet touched on calls received by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah from several kings, presidents, and prime ministers of friendly and brotherly nations condemning the Iranian attacks and affirming support for Kuwait's right to defend its sovereignty and security. The cabinet reviewed recent in-

spection visits by His Highness the Crown Prince, accompanied by Prime Minister Ahmad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, to the General Fire Force, Ministry of Defense, National Guard and Emergency shelters and public services.

Furthermore, the cabinet condemned Iranian attacks targeting civilian sites, including Kuwait International Airport and the Public Institution for Social Security headquarters, which caused significant material damage.

Affirming Kuwait's inalienable right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, stressing that any aggression against GCC member states constitutes a threat to all, and urging the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to take decisive measures against Iran's violations.

The cabinet also condemned attempts by Iran to target Turkiye and Azerbaijan, emphasizing Kuwait's full solidarity with both countries in protecting their sovereignty and stability.

It reviewed reports from relevant ministries and government entities detailing measures taken to ensure maximum readiness, safeguard citizens and residents, and maintain continuity of essential services amid ongoing military and security developments in Kuwait and the region.

### Iran owes

He stated that once the war ends, the GCC countries are expected to determine the losses and damages they suffered, especially since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a violation of international laws issued by the International Law Commission.

He explained that the issue is not only about obstructing the flow of oil and gas supplies, as it reached the point of increasing shipping and insurance costs, in addition to the losses of shipping companies and the decline in the revenues of tourism, hotel and airline sectors.

### Kuwait summons

Al-Daihani reiterated Kuwait's strong condemnation and firm rejection of what he described as blatant Iranian attacks against Kuwaiti territory and airspace, particularly those targeting vital civilian facilities and infrastructure.

He stressed that targeting civilian sites and densely populated areas constitutes a criminal act under international humanitarian law, which strictly prohibits attacks against civilian facilities and endangering civilians.

He also affirmed Kuwait's inherent right to self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, noting that the country will take all necessary measures to protect its territory, citizens, and residents in a manner consistent with international law.

The ministry further emphasized that the security and stability of the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council are indivisible, stressing that any infringement on the sovereignty of any GCC state represents a direct threat to the collective security of the bloc.

It called for the immediate cessation of all hostile acts that cannot be justified under any pretext.

## INTERNATIONAL



Airline passengers wait in long lines to get through the TSA security screening at William P. Hobby Airport in Houston on March 8. (AP)

## Travelers encounter long waits at some airports as DHS shutdown affects security checkpoints

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): Travelers complained of long waits Sunday - lasting hours in some cases - at security checkpoints at airports in Houston and New Orleans, which officials blamed on a government shutdown of the US Department of Homeland Security.

The estimated wait time at the standard security checkpoint at the William P. Hobby Airport in Houston early Sunday evening was at one point three hours, according to the Houston Airports website. The Hobby airport on social media Friday said it expected more travelers than normal due to spring break.

In a series of posts Sunday, the airport on X went from urging travelers to arrive early to asking them to arrive 3 to 4 hours before their flights to eventually asking them to arrive 4 to 5 hours early to allow extra time for screening, citing the partial government shutdown.

A statement from Houston Airports, which counts Hobby and George Bush Intercontinental Airport as part of its system, said the shutdown "can impact security operations day-to-day and shift-to-shift." Wait times at checkpoints at George Bush Intercontinental Airport early Sunday evening were as brief as a few minutes.

Posts on X from Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport on Sunday said a shortage of TSA agents at the security checkpoint was leading to "longer-than-average" lines. The airport urged travelers to arrive at least three hours before their flights and said wait times could last up to two hours. It warned similar delays could continue through the coming week.

It's not immediately clear if the delays in Houston and New Orleans were happening at other airports around the country. Sunday's longer-than-usual wait times came on top of flight delays in recent days in places like Atlanta due to weather.

Agents with the U.S. Transportation Security Administration are ex-

pected to work without pay during the ongoing shutdown of the department, which began Feb. 14. Democratic lawmakers have said DHS won't get funded until new restrictions are placed on federal immigration operations following the fatal shootings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis earlier this year.

Chris Sununu, president and CEO of Airlines for America, a trade group for U.S. airlines, in a statement urged Congress and the Trump administration to act.

"We are in spring break travel season and expecting record numbers of people to take to the skies. Airlines have done their part to prepare; now Congress and the administration must act with urgency to reach a deal that reopens DHS and ends this shutdown," he said. "America's transportation security workforce is too important to be used as political leverage."

Jessica Andersen Alexie and her two children, 10 and 13, were among the travelers caught in the long lines at Hobby in Houston as they tried to return home to New Orleans. They had been in Houston for the World Baseball Classic.

Alexie said they arrived 3 hours early to find a long line and realized they would not make their flight. While in line, she checked rental cars to see if driving home might be an option but couldn't find any available. She was able to rebook for a late-night flight and felt relieved to get through the CLEAR security line after about 3 1/2 hours.

When they finally sat down to eat, she decided to take another look at available flights, on the chance that others in line had to cancel and rearrange their plans, and found three seats on a flight that got her family home Sunday afternoon. When they landed at the New Orleans airport, the line extended out to the parking garage, she said.

"It was nuts," she said. "It was crazy."

'This is an unjust war'

## Protesters in over 50 US cities demand end to war on Iran

NEW YORK, March 9, (Xinhua): People have taken to the streets in more than 50 cities across the United States over the weekend to protest against the US-Israeli war on Iran, as the deadly military strikes entered their second week.

From coast to coast, demonstrators rallied and marched in major US cities, including New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco, demanding that the Trump administration put an end to the war.

In New York City's Manhattan, a crowd of hundreds gathered at Union Square on Saturday afternoon, chanting slogans such as "Biggest Threat in the World Today: Donald Trump and the USA" and "Trump Says More War, We Say No More," and carrying signs that read "Hands off Iran," "No New US War in the Middle East," and "Money for People's Needs, Not War with Iran."

"This is an unjust war. This is another regime-change war, which usually comes from obviously corrupt reasons like land expansion -- basically colonizing other countries, taking advantage of them," Maya, one of the demonstrators in the square, told Xinhua.

"From what I saw, we're spending a billion (US) dollars a day on this war while we're in an affordability crisis. So obviously that money should be used for US citizens. It can be used for



People attend a rally against US-Israeli attacks on Iran, in Washington, DC, the United States on March 7. (Xinhua)

health care, for better child care, public transit -- anything except for this war," she added.

The United States and Israel began massive strikes against Iran a week ago, triggering Iran's retaliatory missile and drone attacks on Israel and US assets across the Middle East. The ongoing military escalation has heightened regional tensions and caused global spillover effects.

"I think that this war is terrible,"

said Maggie Morales, a New Yorker. "We know that this is something that only benefits him (President Donald Trump) personally. It does not benefit our country. It does not benefit our people. Unfortunately, it puts us more in danger."

"We already have so many stories, so much history of going to other countries and hurting other people with no benefit for the United States. And it's terrible that we can't learn from past

lessons," Morales said.

"Today I didn't come for the protest," she added. "But I saw it, and I felt that I had to come and support them."

Speakers denounced the deadly military strikes waged by the White House as violating international law and throwing the entire Middle East into chaos. They urged Congress to take action to stop the war machine immediately.

"We've already seen that our current system is incapable of stopping the continued onslaught and bloodshed. We saw how Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, were unable to pass a War Powers resolution that would have stopped this war. Shame!" Andre Easton from the Bronx, New York City, said in his speech.

"It has always been, and it will only be up to the working people of the world to join together and oppose war here and anywhere else in the world," he added.

In Los Angeles, hundreds of people rallied in front of the City Hall on Saturday afternoon, holding Iranian flags and shouting slogans such as "Bombing Iran is a crime."

Several demonstrators told Xinhua that the war launched by the United States and Israel has destroyed regional peace and brought profound suffering to the Iranian people.



Members of Parliament rise for a moment of silence in the House of Commons, on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, Ontario on Feb 24, 2026. (AP)

## Carney calls special elections for three Canadian districts

TORONTO, March 9, (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Sunday called special elections for three districts that, if his party wins, would give the Liberals a majority government.

The prime minister announced that votes will be cast on April 13 in the Toronto-area districts of Scarborough Southwest and University-Rosedale and in the Montreal-area riding of Terrebonne. The Toronto districts are considered to be safe seats for the Liberals, while Terrebonne is considered a toss up.

The Liberals currently have 169 Members of Parliament in the House of Commons, but they need 172 to secure a majority government, which would allow them to pass any bill without the support of an opposition party.

Three opposition Conservative Members of Parliament, Chris d'Entremont, Michael Ma and Matt Jeneroux, defected from their party to join the Liberals in recent months.

## Merz's party stumbles into year of state elections with narrow defeat

BERLIN, March 9, (AP): Chancellor Friedrich Merz's party has made a disappointing start to a year packed with German state elections, suffering a narrow defeat in an important industrial region after a prominent candidate powered the environmentalist Greens to a come-from-behind victory.

Merz's center-right Christian Democratic Union was long confident of winning back the governor's office in Baden-Württemberg, a region of more than 11 million people in southwestern Germany that is home to automakers Mercedes-Benz and Porsche, among many other companies. The country's first and so far only Green governor, Winfried Kretschmann, is retiring after 15 years in charge of a traditional conservative heartland.

A CDU victory long looked likely despite the unpopularity of Merz's 10-month-old federal government, which has struggled to get Germany's stagnant economy moving. But the party's poll lead shrank ahead of Sunday's election thanks to a Green campaign focused on Cem Özdemir, a longtime federal lawmaker and former German agriculture minister.

Final results Monday showed the Greens taking 30.2% of the vote, just ahead of the CDU with 29.7% - a gain



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz applauds as he attends a Christian Democratic Union party board meeting at the party's headquarters in Berlin, Germany on March 9. (AP)

compared with five years ago but not enough for victory. The far-right Alternative for Germany nearly doubled its support to 18.8%, reflecting its gains

in last year's national election. Merz's partners in the federal government, the center-left Social Democrats, lost half their support to poll an embarrassing 5.5%.

Özdemir, 60, touted his experience and leaned hard into the Greens' relatively conservative image in Baden-Württemberg - a contrast with the party's more left-wing approach nationally, where it is in opposition.

His 37-year-old CDU opponent, Manuel Hagel, was much less well-known and probably wasn't helped by a video from 2018 posted recently by a Green federal lawmaker in which Hagel talked about a visit to a school and a female student's "fawn-brown eyes."

The two parties are expected to govern Baden-Württemberg together, as they have in a coalition for the past 10 years, with Özdemir as Germany's first state governor with Turkish roots.

Sunday's was the first of five state elections this year. The next, on March 22 in neighboring Rhineland-Palatinate, pits the national governing parties against each other. It has been led since 1991 by the Social Democrats, who are in a tight race with Merz's CDU for first place.



Firefighters damp down the remains of a fire which broke out in a building adjacent to Glasgow Central railway station on Sunday, in Glasgow, Scotland on March 9. (AP)

## Glasgow building fire closes Scotland's busiest train station

A major fire in the heart of Glasgow crippled Scottish train services Monday as firefighters worked to douse the blaze that destroyed a four-story building near Scotland's busiest railway station.

Glasgow Central Station was closed and all travel to, from and through the station was expected to be disrupted, according to rail operators. There was no estimate when the station would reopen.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon in a vape shop

on Union Street, next to the station. Flames engulfed the building, filling the frames of windows and shooting from the dome-capped roof.

The building, which dates to 1851, collapsed as it burned through the night, leaving only the facade standing.

Paul Sweeney, a member of the Scottish Parliament, likened it to the remains left after the Nazi bombing of Britain in 1940-41. (AP)

## Europe rallies around Cyprus during Iran war as Macron visits to show support for island

PAPHOS, Cyprus, March 9, (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron traveled to Cyprus on Monday, days after dispatching a warship to the east Mediterranean island nation, where a Shaded drone struck a British air base on its southern coast last week during the Iran war.

Macron ordered the French frigate Languedoc to waters off Cyprus, a fellow European Union member, to bolster its anti-drone and anti-missile defenses. The French president also decided to send ground-based anti-drone and anti-missile defenses to the island, which sustained the first drone attack of the Iran war on European territory.

The French president will also go aboard the Charles de Gaulle nuclear-powered aircraft carrier that's currently sailing in the eastern Mediterranean near Cyprus. The vessel's presence "reinforces the military means already in the region to ensure the security of France, its citizens and its bases, as well as that of its allies in the region," Macron's office said.

Macron is meeting with Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis at



French President Emmanuel Macron arrives at Andreas Papandreu Air Base ahead of his meeting with Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides and Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Paphos, Cyprus, on March 9. (AP)

Cyprus' main air base on its southwestern edge, where four Greek air force F-16s have been deployed.

"Together with our European part-

ners, the aim will be to strengthen security around Cyprus and in the Eastern Mediterranean," a statement from Macron's office said.

### America

**Kansas City airport reopens:** The Kansas City International Airport terminal reopened Sunday afternoon, hours after it was evacuated while authorities looked into a potential threat, the Kansas City Aviation Department said.

Airport spokesperson Jackson Overstreet said in an email shortly after 2 p.m. that the terminal was reopened. The evacuation began after a threat that surfaced around 11:15 a.m. Flights that landed after the evacuation were held on the taxiway during the shutdown, which Overstreet said lasted about two hours. (AP)

**Earthquake hits Alaska:** An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.0 jolted 226 km ESE of Attu Station, Alaska at 22:41 GMT on Sunday, the US Geological Survey said.

The epicenter, with a depth of 1 km, was initially determined to be at 51.94 degrees north latitude and 176.17 degrees east longitude. (Xinhua)

**NTSB member fired without explanation:** A National Transportation Safety Board member who was a public face of the investigation into last year's deadly collision of an airliner and an Army helicopter near the nation's capital said Sunday that he had been fired by the Trump administration without explanation. (AP)

### Europe

**Quake damages houses, buildings in Greece:** A 5.3-magnitude earthquake struck northwestern Greece's Epirus region early Sunday, damaging houses, churches and other public buildings in Thesprotia and Ioannina, about 330-380 km northwest of Athens, local authorities said.

According to Greek national broadcaster ERT, damage was first reported in Polydrosio village in the municipality of Souli, near the epicenter. Technical teams from the municipality have been inspecting buildings, with several houses deemed uninhabitable, Souli Mayor Thanasis Danis said. (Xinhua)

**'Approve EU SAFE program':** Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk called on President Karol Nawrocki to approve the bill implementing the EU's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) program, and asked the National Bank of Poland (NBP) to provide precise information about its financial capacity and details of the proposed "SAFE 0%" plan.

In a video posted on social media platform X, Tusk said that Poland, Polish companies, workers of those companies and national security are waiting for funds from the SAFE program.

He said the money from the EU program "is on the table," and factories are preparing to produce weapons. He added that the current international political situation requires seriousness and responsibility. (Xinhua)

## INTERNATIONAL



In this photo released by the Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency (BASARNAS) on March 9, rescuers use heavy machines to search for victims of an avalanche of garbage that killed multiple people at a dump site in Bantargebang, West Java, Indonesia. (AP)

### Waste mound collapse at Indonesia's largest landfill kills 5

A massive avalanche of garbage at Indonesia's largest landfill killed at least five people and left several others missing after heavy overnight rain triggered a rubbish dump collapse, officials said Monday.

More than 300 search-and-rescue personnel, using heavy machinery and sniffer dogs, were deployed to the sprawling dump site late Sunday at the Bantargebang Integrated Waste Treatment Fa-

cility in Bekasi, a city just outside the capital of Jakarta. Rescuers worked cautiously amid unstable heaps of waste, said Desiana Kartika Bahari, who heads Jakarta's Search and Rescue Office. (AP)

## Japan prepares for deployment of 1st home-developed long-range missile

TOKYO, March 9, (AP): Japan is preparing to deploy its first batch of domestically developed long-range missiles, with their launchers arriving at an army camp Monday as the country accelerates its offensive capability in response to rising challenges in the region.

The upgraded Type-12 land-to-ship missiles will be deployed at Camp Kengun in Japan's southwestern prefecture of Kumamoto by the end of March, completing the process of deployment, Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara said without giving details.

Army vehicles carrying the launchers and other equipment arrived past midnight in a highly secretive mission criticized by residents. Dozens of people stood outside of the camp, shouting "Stop long-range missile deployment!" and holding banners carrying messages of protest.

Opponents have complained about the lack of transparency and said the deployment would instead escalate tension and make the missiles the target of attacks.

"The prefecture has never been notified," Kumamoto Gov. Takashi Kimura told reporters Monday. "It is extremely disappointing that we learned this from media reports."



A vehicle carrying the first batch of domestically developed long-range missiles, arrives at Camp Kengun in Kumamoto, southwestern Japan on March 9. (AP)

The regional defense bureau in Kyushu later Monday announced plans to invite local representatives for an equipment exhibit at the camp next week ahead of the missile deployment on March 31. Town hall meetings are not planned.

The Defense Ministry last year moved up the schedule of the missiles' deployment by one year. Japan has accelerated a military buildup in the

southwestern region, while China has escalated tension around Taiwan, the self-governing island Beijing claims as its own.

The upgraded Type-12 missile, developed and produced by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, has a range of about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) and can reach mainland China, a significant extension from the 200-kilometer (125-mile) range of the original.

### Freedom Shield may trigger irritated response from North Korea

## US begins large military drill with South Korea while waging war in Middle East

SEOUL, South Korea, March 9, (Agencies): The United States began a large military exercise with South Korea involving thousands of troops Monday while also waging an escalating war in the Middle East.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff has said about 18,000 Korean troops will take part in Freedom Shield, which runs through March 19. US Forces Korea hasn't confirmed the number of American troops participating in the training in South Korea.

The allies' combined exercise comes amid South Korean media speculation that Washington is relocating some assets from South Korea to support fighting against Iran.

US Forces Korea said last week it would not comment on specific movements of military assets for security reasons. South Korean officials also declined to comment on the reports that some US Patriot anti-missile systems and other equipment were being moved to the Middle East, but they said there would be no meaningful impact on the allies' combined defense posture.

Freedom Shield may trigger an irritated response from North Korea, which has long described the allies' joint exercises as invasion rehearsals and used them as a pretext to ramp up its own military demonstrations and weapons tests. The allies say the drills are defensive in nature.

North Korea has suspended all meaningful dialogue with Washington and Seoul following the 2019 collapse of a summit between leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump during his first term. Tensions rose in recent years as Kim used Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a window to accelerate the development of his nuclear arsenal and increase his leverage by aligning militarily with Moscow, which has received thousands of North Korean troops and large weapons shipments to help fuel its warfighting.

The allies' drills follow a major political conference in Pyongyang last month, where Kim confirmed his hard-line view of "enemy" Seoul but left the door open to talks with Washington, calling on the United States to drop its demand for North Korea's denuclearization as a precondition for dialogue.

Freedom Shield is one of two annual "command post" exercises conducted by the allies; the other is Ulchi Freedom Shield, held in August. The drills are largely



Protesters shout slogans as they hold signs to oppose the joint military exercise between the US and South Korea near the US Embassy in Seoul, South Korea on March 9. (AP)

computer-simulated and designed to test the allies' joint operational capabilities while incorporating evolving war scenarios and security challenges. As usual, the March drill will be accompanied by a field training program, called Warrior Shield, but the number of field exercises during the Freedom Shield period has declined to 22 compared to last year's 51.

While US and South Korean militaries say field exercises are often spread out throughout the year, there's speculation that the allies are seeking to tone down the spring drills to create conditions for dialogue with North Korea. Liberal South

Korean President Lee Jae Myung has expressed a desire for diplomacy, and some of his top officials have voiced hope that Trump's expected visit to China in late March or April could possibly create an opening with Pyongyang.

Outside the venue of a protest rally in front of the US Embassy in South Korea in central Seoul on Monday, activists and civic groups condemned the exercise and called for its immediate suspension. Protesters argued that the joint drills threaten peace on the Korean Peninsula and hinder prospects for inter-Korean reconciliation.

Speakers at the rally also criticized recent joint special operations training conducted by US Forces Korea and South Korean troops ahead of the exercise, claiming it simulated operations targeting enemy leadership similar to those reportedly used in the Middle East conflict. They warned that the Freedom Shield drills could involve advanced weapons systems such as unmanned attack aircraft, strategic reconnaissance assets and new missile systems deployed by US forces in South Korea.

"The United States is repeatedly violating international law and attempting to turn South Korea into a forward base serving its hegemonic strategy," a protest speaker said, accusing Washington of disregarding the safety of the South Korean people while pursuing its geopolitical ambitions.

Lee Ki-eun, a youth campaigner from Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea, said the 2026 Freedom Shield exercise features expanded "multi-domain warfare" elements, including operations in space, cyberspace and special operations forces. "Such offensive-oriented drills, particularly amid rising tensions related to U.S. actions against Iran, must be halted immediately," Lee said, adding that stopping the exercises is essential for reviving inter-Korean dialogue and maintaining peace in Northeast Asia.

Protesters also urged the South Korean government to halt joint military exercises with the United States and reconsider reliance on extended deterrence, calling instead for diplomatic engagement to reduce tensions on the peninsula.

"In the end, to bring an end to the Middle East conflict as soon as possible, the relevant nations involved should stop forming alliances and escalating conflicts. They should cease aggression and move towards dialogue promptly," Lee added.

## US military kills six men in strike on alleged drug boat in Eastern Pacific

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): The US military said it killed six men Sunday in a strike on an alleged drug-smuggling vessel in the eastern Pacific Ocean as part of the Trump administration's campaign against alleged traffickers.

Sunday's attack brought the death toll to at least 157 people since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in small vessels in early September.

As with most of the military's statements on the more than 40 known strikes in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, U.S. Southern Command said it targeted alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. The military did not provide evidence that the vessel was ferrying drugs. It posted a video on X that showed a small boat being blown up as it floated on the water.

President Donald Trump has said the US is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

In a meeting with Latin American leaders on Saturday, Trump encouraged them to join the US in taking military action against drug-trafficking cartels and transnational gangs, which he said pose an "unacceptable threat" to the region's national security.

To that end, Ecuador and the United States conducted military operations this past week against organized crime groups in the South American country.

With Saturday's gathering, Trump aimed to demonstrate that he remains committed to focusing US foreign policy on the Western Hemisphere, even while waging a war on Iran



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks during a press briefing at the Pentagon on March 4, in Washington. (AP)

that has had repercussions across the Middle East.

Critics have questioned the overall legality of the boat strikes as well as their effectiveness, in part because the fentanyl behind many fatal overdoses is typically trafficked to the U.S. over land from Mexico, where it is produced with chemicals imported from China and India.

The boat strikes also drew intense criticism following the revelation that the military killed survivors of the very first boat attack with a follow-up strike. The Trump administration and many Republican lawmakers said it was legal and necessary, while Democratic lawmakers and legal experts said the killings were murder, if not a war crime.

### Subcontinent

**4 terrorists killed in Pakistan's Punjab:** Four terrorists were killed in a shootout with the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) during an intelligence-based operation in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province, officials said Monday.

The operation was carried out in the Dera Ghazi Khan district on the reported presence of militants, according to a CTD statement.

The militants opened fire on the raiding team, triggering an exchange of gunfire in which four terrorists were killed while 11 others managed to escape.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were recovered from the site, and a search operation is underway to apprehend the fleeing suspects, the CTD said.

Pakistan's Interior Minister **Mohsin Naqvi** praised the CTD team for foiling a major terror plot, saying the militants were planning attacks on police posts and other state installations. (Xinhua)



Naqvi

**Afghanistan seeks peaceful resolution:** Afghanistan's Minister of Defense Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid has said that the country has no desire to escalate hostilities with Pakistan and prefers a peaceful resolution through negotiations.

In an interview with local media outlet TOLONews on Saturday, he noted that Afghanistan did not provoke the clashes but has been compelled to respond to incursions.

"Our message to the mediating countries is that we do not seek war and that we believe in negotiations," the minister said.

Military tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan have escalated recently, with both sides accusing each other of initiating violence. (Xinhua)

**Sri Lanka Navy seizes heroin, cocaine:** Sri Lanka Navy seized 103 kilograms of heroin and nearly 1 kilogram of cocaine from a multi-day fishing trawler intercepted in southern waters on suspicion of drug trafficking on Saturday night, the navy said on Sunday.

The haul is estimated to have a street value of about 2.8 billion rupees (about 9.3 million US dollars), Deputy Defense Minister Aruna Jayasekara said after visiting the site on Sunday morning and inspecting the seized vessel and narcotics.

Jayasekara said authorities had taken six suspects into custody and would pursue legal action against those involved. (Xinhua)

### 40 political parties dissolved

## Guinea opp'n leader warns of 'party-state'

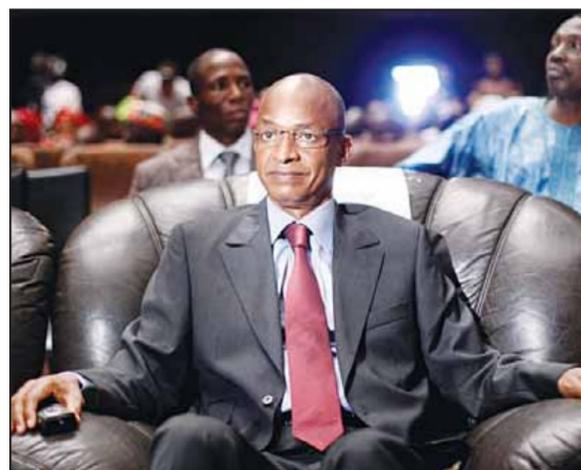
DAKAR, Senegal, March 9, (AP): Guinea's main opposition figure on Sunday accused the country's leader of trying to build a "party-state," after the government dissolved 40 political parties by decree, including the main opposition ones.

The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization on Friday announced the parties dissolution for their "failure to meet their obligations." The decree said that the dissolution strips the parties of their legal status and bans their political activity, including the use of their names, logos, emblems and other symbols.

Cellou Dalein Diallo - leader of the main opposition party Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea, one of the dissolved parties - accused President Mamadi Doumbouya of trying to sideline rivals to build a one "party-state," in a video posted on Facebook on Sunday.

"I urge the leaders, activists and supporters of the UFDG, and all Guineans who cherish liberty and justice, to rise as one and use every means to bring an end to this exceptional regime that has lasted far too long," Diallo said, adding that dialogue and legal avenues were no longer likely to deliver political change.

Doumbouya, who has been in office since a 2021 military coup, was elected in December in a vote in which all major opposition leaders were barred. During his rule, several political parties and media outlets



Cellou Dalein Diallo sits at the People's Hall in Conakry, Guinea on Sept 21, 2010. (AP)

had already been suspended, while numerous opposition leaders and civil society figures have been arrested or forced into exile.

Among the most prominent parties dissolved Friday are Diallo's party; the Rally of the Guinean People, which is the party of former President Alpha Condé; and another major opposition party, the Union of Republican Forces, led by opposition figure Sida Touré. All three leaders are living in exile.

The three parties had already been suspended in August - shortly before a referendum that allowed the leader of the country's junta to run for president - for failing to comply with the country's political parties charter.

Guinea is one of the several West African countries that have seen a coup or coup attempt since 2020. Military officers have taken on popular discontent with deteriorating security, underwhelming economies or disputed elections to seize power.

## Thousands of civilians in South Sudan flee opp'n-held town after evacuation order

JUBA, South Sudan, March 9, (AP): Thousands of civilians have fled an opposition-held town in eastern South Sudan following an evacuation order issued by the army to pave the way for a military operation, officials said Sunday.

The exodus from Akobo, near the border with Ethiopia, began on Saturday night.

"The town is now almost empty," said Nhial Lew, a local official in charge of humanitarian affairs. "Women, children and the elderly have left and crossed into Ethiopia."

While the government's deadline to evacuate was supposed to expire on Monday afternoon, fighting has been reported west of Akobo since Saturday.

"We are hearing the sound of machine guns approaching," Lew said on Sunday evening. The national army, called the South Sudan People's Defense Forces, ordered the U.N. Mission in South Sudan, or UNMISS, to close its Akobo base on Friday.

Nongovernmental organizations and civilians were also asked to evacuate "in order to avoid unnecessary collateral damage," as the government prepares a military assault targeting "Akobo and surrounding areas," ac-



United Nations peacekeepers stand near an airstrip in Akobo, South Sudan on Feb 21. (AP)

ording to a statement by military spokesperson Lul Ruai Koang.

Akobo is one of the last strongholds of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition, or SPLM-IO, led by Riek Machar, South Sudan's detained vice president.

A 2018 peace deal between Machar and President Salva Kiir has nearly

collapsed since fighting resumed between their forces last year.

Confrontations have dramatically increased in the northern part of Jonglei since December, when opposition forces captured government outposts. They were repelled by a government counteroffensive that displaced more than 280,000 people in a few weeks.

## Boursa Kuwait closes lower on Monday

KUWAIT CITY, March 9, (KUNA): The Boursa Kuwait ended Monday's trading session in negative territory, as the general market index fell by 41.10 points, or 0.48%, closing at 8,478.55 points. Trading activity totaled 128.5 million shares across 12,293 transactions,

with a total value of 42 million Kuwaiti dinars (around USD 128.5 million).

The Main Market Index slipped 20.09 points (or 0.26%) to 8,728.49 points, with 44.7 million shares changing hands through 3,616 transactions, worth 6.2 million dinars (about USD 18.9 million).

# Business

## ASMEK warns regional tensions may hit SMEs

17,000 Kuwaiti SME owners face economic risks

**KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Kuwait (ASMEK) affirmed its close monitoring of the repercussions of current regional tensions and instability, and the potential impacts on the SME sector, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

In an official statement, ASMEK explained that this sector represents a significant segment of Kuwaiti society, with over 17,000 citizens managing their own businesses in various sectors, in addition to tens of thousands of entrepreneurs employed in both the public and private sectors. The nature of these projects and their limited finan-

cial reserves make them more vulnerable to any economic slowdown, which could directly affect their ability to meet operational and financial obligations.

Based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, proactive preparedness to protect the national economy is crucial. Should the crisis persist, it is essential to consider postponing loan repayments, insurance contributions, and rescheduling government and rental obligations during the emergency period, thereby helping ensure the continuity of these projects.

The association, based on its national responsibility, stressed the importance of providing necessary support for small and medium enterprises, and expressed its full readiness to cooperate with relevant authorities to maintain the sustainability of this vital sector.

### Company halts operations

## Bapco Energies declares Force Majeure after Iranian attack

MANAMA, March 9, (KUNA): Bapco Energies, the integrated energy company leading the transformation of Bahrain's energy sector, announced Monday, a state of Force Majeure on its operations affected by the ongoing Iranian attacks on the region and the recent attack targeting one of the units at the Bapco Refining Company, a subsidiary of the group.

In a statement, carried by Bahrain News Agency, the company clarified that all the needs of the local market are fully secured according to proactive plans that ensure the continuity of supplies and the fulfillment of local demand without impact.

Bapco Energies expressed its appreciation for its strong relationships with all its stakeholders and

affirmed that it will continue to keep partners and relevant parties informed of the latest information and developments.

Earlier Monday, the National Communication Centre announced a fire following an Iranian attack on a facility in Ma'ameer, resulting in material damage but no loss of life, the relevant authorities are currently working to extinguish the fire.

G7 weighs strategic oil reserve release to calm markets

## Energy prices soar to levels not seen in years as Iran names new supreme leader & digs in

CHICAGO, March 9, (AP): Oil prices spiked near \$120 per barrel before falling back Monday as the Iran war intensified, threatening production and shipping in the Middle East and pummeling financial markets.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude, the international standard, surged to \$119.50 per barrel early in the day but later was trading near \$106 per barrel, up 14%, before the opening bell.

West Texas Intermediate, the light, sweet crude oil produced in the United States, soared above \$119.48 per barrel but fell back closer to \$103.

The war's toll on civilian targets grew as Bahrain accused Iran of striking a desalination plant vital to drinking water supplies. Bahrain's national oil company declared force majeure for its shipments after an Iranian attack set its refinery complex ablaze. The legal declaration releases the company of contractual obligations because of extraordinary circumstances.

Oil depots in Tehran smoldered following overnight strikes by Israel. Oil prices have surged as the war, now in its second week, ensnares countries and places that are critical to the production and movement of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf.

Prices moderated after the Financial Times reported that some members of the Group of Seven industrial nations were considering releases of strategic oil reserves to alleviate pressure on the markets.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that "the use of strategic reserves is an envisaged option." He said G7 leaders could meet this week to coordinate a response to climbing energy prices. France currently holds the rotating presidency of the G7 group. Separately, finance ministers from the G7 nations are meeting Monday by video conference to discuss the repercussions from the war.

On Saturday, President Donald Trump downplayed the idea of turning to America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, saying U.S. supplies were ample and prices would soon fall.

Roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil - about 20% of the world's oil - typically are shipped every day through the Strait of Hormuz, according to independent research firm Rystad Energy. The threat of Iranian missile and drone attacks has all but stopped tankers carrying oil and gas from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Iran from traveling through the strait, which is bordered in the north by Iran.

Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE have cut oil production as storage tanks

fill due to the reduced ability to export crude. Iran, Israel and the United States also have attacked oil and gas facilities since the war started, worsening supply concerns.

The surge in costs for oil and natural gas is pushing fuel prices higher, cascading through other industries and jolting Asian economies that are especially vulnerable due to the region's heavy reliance on imports from the Middle East.

Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China, which has called for an immediate end to the fighting. Beijing may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran's exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

"All parties have their responsibility to ensure stable and smooth energy supplies," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said in a briefing Monday. "China will take necessary measures to safeguard its own energy security."

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung warned Monday of strict penalties for refiners and gas stations caught hoarding or colluding on prices, saying it would be wise to find alternatives to supplies that must travel through the Strait of Hormuz.

Across Southeast Asia, the spike in prices has led to long lines outside filling stations.

"Higher oil and gas prices will affect everyone and our economy," said Le Van Tu, who was waiting outside a gas station in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi. "All activities, including those using petrol based transportation will be affected."

South Korea's Kospi tumbled 6% to 5,251.87. The last time Brent and U.S. crude futures traded near the current level was in 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Higher energy costs push inflation higher, straining household budgets and denting the consumer spending that is a main driver of many big economies. Those worries have spilled into financial markets, pulling share prices sharply lower.

In the U.S., the average price of a gallon of regular gasoline rose to \$3.48 as of early Monday, up nearly 50 cents from a week earlier, according to AAA motor club. Diesel, used heavily in shipping, sold for about \$4.66 a gallon, a weekly increase of more than 80 cents.

The price of natural gas in the U.S. also has climbed during the war, though not by as much as oil. It was selling for about \$3.34 per 1,000 cubic feet early Monday. That's up from Friday's closing price of \$3.19.

### IMF aided nations like Sudan, Zimbabwe most vulnerable

## Iran war sends shockwaves through African economies

NAIROBI, March 9, (AP): Surging oil prices triggered by the war with Iran are rippling across African economies, threatening higher fuel costs, rising inflation and renewed pressure on currencies across the continent.

Africa imports most of the petroleum products it consumes, leaving many economies highly vulnerable to supply disruptions tied to tensions in the Middle East, a region central to global oil flows.

"Africa is a net importer of oil products, meaning it is heavily exposed to shocks like these," said Nick Hedley, an energy transition research analyst at Zero Carbon Analytics.

When global oil supplies tighten, Hedley said, prices rise while African currencies often weaken as investors move funds into safe-haven assets such as the U.S. dollar.

That combination amplifies the impact of price spikes in import-dependent markets such as Kenya and Ghana.

A similar dynamic unfolded after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, when rising crude prices and a weakening currency pushed transport fuel prices in South Africa up by more than 25% within six months, Hedley said.

"The near-term risks come from mainly the rising oil prices and weakening exchange rates as investors move to safe-haven assets," said Oxford Economics senior economist Brendon Verster.

Oil markets remain particularly sensitive to the conflict because of the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow shipping corridor through which about a fifth of the world's crude passes.

The impact of higher oil prices across Africa will be uneven.

Countries like Kenya and Uganda say their supply remain stable even as they work on ensuring continuity. Nigeria and Ghana produce crude oil but import most of their refined petroleum products, limiting the benefits to them of higher global prices.

"It's difficult to say at this point whether they will see net gains," Hedley said. "Oil producers could benefit from higher crude prices, but ordinary citizens will likely face higher transport and fuel costs, and potentially higher interest rates."

Still, sustained high prices could bring a windfall for Africa's major oil exporters. Verster noted that Nigeria exports roughly 1.5 million barrels of oil



A vendor sells crayfish at a Mile 12 Market in Lagos, Nigeria, Feb. 16, 2024. (AP)

per day and has based its medium-term fiscal framework on oil prices between \$64 and \$66 per barrel through 2028.

The war pushed prices above \$100 per barrel Monday, a level that if sustained, would significantly boost revenues for exporters including Angola, Algeria and Libya.

For most African households, however, the immediate effect is likely to be higher living costs.

"This is a serious concern," Hedley said, noting that most food and goods across Africa are transported by road. "Rising fuel costs therefore feed quickly into broader inflation and reduce household purchasing power."

Peter Attard Montalto, managing director at South African advisory firm Kruthan said the crisis is also testing African economies.

"So far the impact has really been muted, for countries like South Africa," he said, noting that recent economic reforms have helped stabilize the

country's currency and bond markets.

"Still, higher oil and gas prices are expected to filter into inflation in the coming months," Montalto said.

Countries already operating under programs from the International Monetary Fund could face additional strain as energy import bills drain scarce foreign exchange reserves. Among the most vulnerable, analysts warn are Sudan, The Gambia, Central African Republic, Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Over the longer term, analysts say the crisis may reinforce calls for African nations to diversify their energy systems and reduce dependence on imported fuels.

"It makes strategic sense for African countries to ensure long-term energy security and sovereignty," said Kennedy Mbeva, a research associate at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk at the University of Cambridge.

Achieving that, Mbeva said, will require balancing short-term fiscal pressures with long-term investments in clean energy and green industrialization.

### Nikkei plunges more than 5%

## Global stocks slide as oil nears \$120 on Middle East war jitters



People walk in front of an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei index at a securities firm Monday, March 9, 2026, in Tokyo. (AP)

BANGKOK, March 9, (AP): World shares tumbled on Monday, with Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index plunging more than 5%, after oil prices spiked at nearly \$120 a barrel, casting a shadow over economies heavily dependent on imports of oil and gas from the Middle East.

The futures for the S&P 500, Nasdaq composite index and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were trading more than 1% lower after dropping more than 2% late Sunday.

A Chinese special envoy to the Middle East, Zhai Jun, called for an end to the attacks and said strikes on non-military targets and civilians should be condemned. Meanwhile, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung warned against hoarding, panic buying and collusion between refiners and gas stations.

"Please respond proactively to the growing volatility in the financial and foreign exchange markets, which are the lifeblood of our economy," Lee said. He said the government would cap fuel prices.

Oil prices rocketed higher after both sides in the war struck new targets over the weekend, including civilian ones. Bahrain accused Iran of hitting one of the desalination plants that are crucial for drinking water in Gulf countries. Its national oil company declared force majeure after the country's sole oil refinery was attacked. Israel struck oil depots in Tehran, sending up thick smoke and causing environmental alerts.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX dropped 2.6% to 22,983.67 and the CAC 40 in Paris lost 2.7% to 7,779.46. Britain's FTSE 100 lost 1.9% to 10,089.05. The only market to show gains was in oil exporter Norway, where its benchmark edged 0.1% higher.

During Asian trading, Japan's Nikkei 225 plunged more than 7% early in the day but regained some of those losses to close 5.2% lower at 52,728.72. South Korea's Kospi sank 6% to 5,251.87.

Chinese markets, which tend to be less affected by global trends, saw more moderate losses. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.4% to 25,408.46 and the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.7% to 4,096.60.

Taiwan's benchmark dived 4.4% and India's Sensex lost 2.3%. Other regional markets also swooned.

As of 0900 GMT, the price for a barrel of Brent crude was \$106.61 a

barrel. U.S. benchmark crude rose to \$103.20. Both were about 15% above their closing prices Friday.

Crude prices have spiked to their highest levels in at least 14 years as the war, now in its second week, ensnares countries and places that are critical to the production and movement of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf. They last rose above \$100 shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

"The market woke up to the sound every macro trader dreads. The oil alarm bell. And this time it was not a polite chime. It was a fire siren," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

Surging oil and gas prices, if they persist, could ripple across the globe, further complicating matters for countries still adjusting to higher tariffs on exports to the United States under President Donald Trump.

Senior officials of Southeast Asian countries were meeting this week in Manila, the Philippines, where they were expected to discuss ways to counter the shock from higher energy costs.

"Oil prices will reach a peak at some point -- maybe they already have, maybe there's more to come -- but they are likely to fluctuate at elevated levels for weeks, perhaps months," Ipek Ozkardeskaya of Swissquote said in a commentary. "Eventually -- even if the war persists -- energy prices will likely come down. But during this period, high energy prices will revive inflation globally and weigh notably on growth."

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

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

Early Monday, the U.S. dollar, which retains its status as a safe haven for investors bracing against uncertainty, gained against other major currencies. It was trading at 158.55 Japanese yen, up from 158.09 yen late Friday. The euro rose to \$1.1539, up from \$1.1556.

### Exports jump 17.5%

## GCC agriculture sector hits \$40 billion in 2024

MUSCAT, March 9, (KUNA): The Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) said on Monday that the agriculture and fisheries sector contributed about USD 40 billion to the GCC gross domestic product at current prices in 2024, marking a 5.1 percent increase compared with 2023.

In a report, the center said the sector accounted for around 1.7 percent of the GCC's GDP, reflecting its growing role in strengthening food security and supporting economic diversification despite environmental challenges such as limited arable land and scarce water resources.

Agricultural and fishery exports rose to USD 7.8 billion in 2024, up 17.5 percent, while imports reached USD 38.7 billion, increasing 10.1 percent.

The report indicated that growth was driven by higher plant, livestock and fish production, as well as improved intra-GCC and external trade. Total plant production reached about 12.7 million tons in 2024, up 3.9 percent from 12.2 million tons in 2023, while livestock numbers rose 3.6 percent to 42.5

million heads. Vegetables accounted for 45.8 percent of total plant production, while sheep represented 60.5 percent of the GCC's livestock at 25.7 million, followed by goats at 12.5 million, camels at 3.2 million and cattle at about 1.2 million.

Fish production also grew 12.2 percent to around 1.1 million tons in 2024, making it one of the fastest-growing food sectors in the region.

This reflects the growing role of these sectors in supporting food security and bolstering economic diversification efforts in the GCC, and the efforts to enhance production efficiency and strengthen the food security system.

The center noted that GCC countries have a total land area of about 2.4 million square kilometers, with only around 9,200 square kilometers used for agriculture, equivalent to 0.4 percent of the total area, highlighting environmental constraints facing agricultural expansion.

The GCC Statistical Center, based in the Sultanate of Oman, was established to be the official authorized body for data and statistics related to the GCC countries.

Rising mortgage costs hit buyers

## Young workers locked out of homeownership

LAS VEGAS, March 9, (AP): When his parents were about his age, they bought their first home. But for 27-year-old Brian Torres Suazo, that milestone feels like a distant dream, despite a secure job with union wages and down payment assistance.

Torres Suazo expects to continue sharing an apartment with roommates for the foreseeable future, kept on the sidelines of homeownership by stubbornly high costs, even in cities once known for their affordability, such as his native Las Vegas.

He's not alone. In a restless electorate frustrated by high prices, the cost of housing stands out. Democrats are pushing to channel this anger into support for their quest to chip away at Republicans' unified control of Washington, maintaining their focus on economic concerns even when war with Iran dominates the news.

Their path cuts through Nevada, a perennial swing state won by Republican Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election and now home to closely contested U.S. House races.

"I would be paying more - a lot more - in mortgage than I am for rent right now," said Torres Suazo, a food runner on the Las Vegas Strip. Sometimes he feels like politicians aren't listening to people like him. "It'd be nice if more people that knew what it's like to work for a living could be in those rooms to make decisions," he added.

In all directions from the Strip, tract homes with sharp-angled roofs and earthy paint schemes sprout from the desert by the dozen. Streets to nowhere snake through the dirt, ready for future homes. Wooden signs dot roadsides advertising homes from the \$300,000s for a townhome to over \$1 million for big houses in the most desirable suburban neighborhood.

Housing costs have long been a potent political issue in pricey metropolitan areas like New York and San Francisco, but now the issue is popping up virtually everywhere.

During the coronavirus pandemic, white-collar workers newly empowered to work remotely cashed out their equity in high-priced cities and bid up prices across Sun Belt cities like Las Vegas, Phoenix, Dallas, and Charlotte, North Carolina. At the same time, near-zero interest rates drove a wave of refinancing that gave existing homeowners mortgage payments that now seem impossibly low.

Almost 40 million people visited Las Vegas last year, and gamblers wagered \$14 billion at Clark County casinos, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. The steady flow of people and cash attracts dreamers and strivers with the promise of a good job and an affordable home.

The population of Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, grew 17% to 2.4 million between 2014 and 2024. The country as a whole grew 6% over that period.

"If you ask locals who grew up here, some of them feel that housing is out of reach for them," said Las Vegas real estate agent Tony Clifford. "You talk to somebody from out of state - Northwest, West, California - we're still so cheap compared to them."

Home prices and mortgage rates have ticked down from historic highs in much of the country, and real estate agents say Las Vegas is now considered a buyer's market. Houses are staying on the market longer, and more sellers are accepting discounted offers or offering concessions, such as covering closing costs. But monthly mortgage payments are still much higher than they were before the pandemic.

In Las Vegas, resale home prices rose 53% between December 2019 and the same month last year, according to the Case-Shiller index. The index tracks homes that have previously sold, excluding new construction, which makes up more than a quarter of the Las Vegas market.

In Las Vegas, the median home sale price rose 65% between the first quarter of 2020 and the same period last year, reaching \$393,000, according to Federal Reserve data. It ticked down to \$379,000 during the fourth quarter last year.

Nationally, 30-year mortgage rates followed a similar trend, bottoming out at 2.65% nationally in 2021 before peaking in 2023 at nearly 8%. They've settled around 6% this quarter.

Still, even with rates and prices stabilizing, they remain higher than they were before the pandemic. The median resale house at the prevailing interest rates with 20% down would cost \$2,300 per month in December 2025, double the figure from December 2019.

Large investors own about 11% of single-family home rentals in Las Vegas, according to the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution, compared with about 3% nationally.

They're increasingly becoming bipartisan targets as they buy and rent out single-family homes, though economists generally discount the benefits of constraining them. Trump and Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford, the leading Democratic candidate for governor, are both among a growing cadre of officials calling for limits on corporate homeownership.

"People live in homes, not corporations," Trump said in a social media post in January, calling for Congress to ban large institutional investors from buying houses. He's also pressured the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates and proposed extending mortgage terms to 50 years, privatizing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and allowing homebuyers to tap retirement or Education Savings Accounts for a down payment.

Ford's housing plan, released last month, also calls for banning algorithmic pricing of rents, tackling regulatory barriers that block or slow new construction and seeking to unlock federal land for homebuilding. The federal government owns 84% of the land in Nevada.

Nevada's Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo, who is one of the most vulnerable incumbent state leaders in the country, has tried to address the problem, announcing last month that his administration has approved \$64 million to boost a dozen housing development projects, mostly in the Las Vegas and Reno areas, along with assistance for homebuyers.

Democrats are making affordability the central plank of their pitch to voters in November, arguing that Trump has failed in his campaign promise to bring prices back down despite Republican control of Congress. They believe anxiety over the cost of living has been a major factor in their victories in a series of off-year elections, including the races for governor of New Jersey and Virginia as well as special elections down the ballot.

Many Americans say Trump is focusing on the wrong priorities, according to multiple surveys, including a January AP-NORC poll, and they largely think Trump is neglecting the issue of costs at home.

Trump was reelected in large part because of economic concerns, but recent polling shows that the bulk of Americans aren't seeing benefits from his policies yet, and most don't think he's paying enough attention to the issue.

A large share of registered voters see the economy as one of the top issues facing the country, and a recent New York Times poll found that about half of registered voters say Trump's policies have made life for most Americans "less affordable."

The issue will remain salient in November even as the Iran war raises interest in foreign policy, said Democratic strategist Paul Begala, one of the architects of Bill Clinton's 1992 strategy that emphasized domestic economic concerns during a time of global upheaval from the first Gulf War and the fall of the Soviet Union.

"Trump's refusal to lower the cost of living, and his willingness to raise the cost of health care, electricity, hamburger, and now gas, is a two-edged sword that will cut down a large number of congressional Republicans," Begala said.

Housing is a thorny political issue. Rooted homeowners like high prices that inflate their net worth, at least on paper, a reality that Trump has nodded to repeatedly this year, assuring homeowners he wants to keep their values high.

But those prices become handcuffs if they want to move on but are priced out of the bigger homes or better neighborhoods they're eyeing.

Michele Niemeyer feels trapped in the condo she bought for more than \$500,000 just off the Strip. The homeowners association fee just went up to \$686 a month, straining her budget, and the value of her unit has plummeted. But the neighborhoods that were in her budget when she bought the condo are now out of reach.

## AI ethics row impacts US defense tech economy

# Pentagon-Anthropic clash over AI weapons

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): A top Pentagon official said Anthropic's dispute with the government over the use of its artificial intelligence technology in fully autonomous weapons came after a debate over how AI could be used in President Donald Trump's future Golden Dome missile defense program, which aims to put U.S. weapons in space.

U.S. Defense Undersecretary Emil Michael, the Pentagon's chief technology officer, said he came to view the AI company's ethical restrictions on the use of its chatbot Claude as an irrational obstacle as the U.S. military pursues giving greater autonomy to swarms of armed drones, underwater vehicles and other machines to compete with rivals like China that could do the same.

"I need a reliable, steady partner that gives me something, that'll work with me on autonomous, because someday it'll be real and we're starting to see earlier versions of that," Michael said in a podcast aired Friday. "I need someone who's not going to wig out in the middle."

The comments came after the Pentagon formally designated San Francisco-based Anthropic a supply chain risk, cutting off its defense work using a rule designed to prevent foreign adversaries from harming national security systems.

Anthropic has vowed to sue over the designation, which affects its business partnerships with other military contractors.

Trump has also ordered federal agencies to immediately stop using Claude, though the Republican president gave the Pentagon six months to phase out a product that's deeply embedded in classified military systems, including those used in the Iran war.

Anthropic said it only sought to restrict its technology from being used for two high-level usages: mass surveillance of Americans or fully autonomous weapons.

Michael, a former Uber executive, revealed his side of months-long talks with Anthropic

CEO Dario Amodei in a lengthy conversation with Silicon Valley venture capitalists Jason Calacanis, David Friedberg and Chamath Palihapitiya, co-hosts of the "All-In" podcast.

A fourth co-host, former PayPal executive David Sacks, is now Trump's AI czar and was not present for the episode but has been a vocal critic of Anthropic, including for its hiring of former Biden administration officials shortly after Trump returned to the White House last year.

As talks hit an impasse last week, Michael lashed out at Amodei on social media, saying he "has a God-complex" and "wants nothing more than to try to personally control" the military. In the podcast, however, he positioned the dispute as part of a broader military shift toward using AI.

Michael said the military is developing procedures for enabling different levels of autonomy in warfare depending on the risk posed.

"This is part of the debate I had with Anthropic, which is we need AI for things like Golden Dome," Michael said, sharing a hypothetical scenario of the U.S. having only 90 seconds to respond to a Chinese hypersonic missile.

A human anti-missile operator "may not be able to discriminate with their own eyes what they're going after," but an autonomous counterattack would be a low risk "because it's in space and you're just trying to hit something that's trying to get you."

In another scenario, he said, "who could oppose if you have a military base, you have a bunch of soldiers sleeping, that you have a laser that can take down drones autonomously?"

In response to the podcast comments, Anthropic pointed to an earlier Amodei statement saying "Anthropic understands that the Department of War, not private companies, makes military decisions. We have never raised objections to particular military operations nor attempted to limit use of our technology in an ad hoc manner."

## Stamp price hike proposed to fix USPS finances

# US Postal Service faces cash crisis

WASHINGTON, March 9, (AP): The U.S. Postal Service will run out of cash within a year unless Congress lifts a decades-old cap and allows the agency to borrow more money, the new postmaster general warned in an interview.

If it doesn't, the Postal Service might not be able to pay its employees or vendors by February 2027, with potentially dire consequences for mail delivery, Postmaster General David Steiner told The Associated Press.

"How long are employees going to work and vendors going to show up if we're not paying them?" Steiner said in an interview on Wednesday.

The postmaster general is scheduled to testify before Congress later this month about the Postal Service's financial struggles and the need to change longstanding rules and regulations that he considers burdensome. He singled out the \$15 billion cap on borrowing that has been in place since 1990.

The Postal Service is an independent agency that is funded mostly through postage revenue and the services it provides. Steiner said it has all the burdens of a government agency, such as having to deliver mail six days a week to every address, but none of the benefits, such as an annual appropriation from the federal budget.

"We have to have a conversation with the American public," Steiner said. "If you want us to deliver everywhere, every day, we'll do it. That's not a problem. But who is going to pay for it?"

Steiner, a former CEO of the nation's largest waste management company and a former member of the FedEx board of directors, took

over the struggling Postal Service last July. He said raising the borrowing limit is the easiest thing lawmakers can do immediately to help the agency.

"That will buy us the time to make the fixes we need to make, and we can sail on down the road," he said.

He has called for expanding the service's revenue base, including extending its last-mile delivery service to more entities. Last-mile delivery refers to the final step of getting a package from a local distribution center to a customer's door, the most labor-intensive part of the delivery process.

USPS's net losses for the 2025 fiscal year totaled \$9 billion, even though total operating revenue increased by \$916 million or 1.2%, due largely to its Ground Advantage shipping service. Net losses in fiscal year 2024 were \$9.5 billion.

Ultimately, other changes are needed, as well, Steiner said, including giving the Postal Service authority to raise postage prices high enough to cover losses. He said increasing the price of a first-class stamp to 95 cents, from today's 78 cents, would be enough to "fix" the Postal Service's fiscal woes. A decade ago, a first-class stamp was 47 cents.

But he said an independent agency created by Congress to oversee the Postal Service won't allow it, he said.

"If the Postal Regulatory Commission adopted our pricing model, problem solved," he said, adding how the package delivery side of the business could then subsidize the mail side.

Steiner and other Postal Service officials also have called for reforms to its pension

Michael, the defense undersecretary for research and engineering, was sworn in last May and said he took over the military's "AI portfolio" in August. That's when he said he began scrutinizing Anthropic's contracts - some of which dated from President Joe Biden's Democratic administration. Michael said he questioned Anthropic over terms of use that he deemed too restrictive.

"I need to have the terms of service be rational relative to our mission set," he said. "So we started these negotiations. It took three months and I had to sort of give them scenarios, like this Chinese hypersonic missile example. They're like, 'OK, we'll give you an exception for that.' Well, how about this drone swarm? 'We'll give an exception for that.' And I was like, exceptions doesn't work. I can't predict for the next 20 years what (are) all the things we might use AI for."

That's when the Pentagon began insisting Anthropic and other AI companies allow for "all lawful use" of their technology, Michael said.

Anthropic resisted that change, arguing that today's leading AI systems "are simply not reliable enough to power fully autonomous weapons."

Its competitors - Google, OpenAI and Elon Musk's xAI - agreed to the Pentagon's terms, though some still have to get their infrastructure prepared for classified military work, Michael said. The other sticking point for Anthropic was not allowing any mass surveillance of Americans.

"They didn't want us to bulk-collect public information on people using their AI system," Michael said, describing the negotiations as "interminable."

Anthropic has disputed parts of Michael's version of the talks and emphasized that the protections it sought were narrow and not based on existing uses of Claude. The next stage of the dispute will likely happen in court.

and retiree health benefit obligations, including the ability to invest the money in something other than Treasury bills.

Multiple postmaster generals over the past two decades have repeatedly asked Congress or regulators to change the various rules governing the Postal Service. In 2022, Congress did pass the Postal Service Reform Act, which ended a requirement that the agency prefund its retiree health benefits, but it left other constraints intact.

Meanwhile, the Postal Service has seen annual volume plummet from about 220 billion pieces to about 110 billion today as more people pay bills and communicate online.

"Take those 110 billion and put a 78-cent stamp on them. That's \$86 billion of revenue that evaporated in 15 years," he said. "If either FedEx or UPS lost \$86 billion of revenue, they would have no revenue."

But instead of helping the Postal Service, Steiner said regulators and Congress have imposed costly mandates.

"I like to say we sort of got thrown overboard on a ship into the cold water, right? And instead of throwing us a life preserver, we get thrown an anchor," he said.

Calls on Thursday to some members of Congress who oversee the Postal Service were not immediately returned.

Steiner acknowledged he didn't realize the depth of the Postal Service's cash crunch until he took the postmaster general job last year.

"Interestingly, I'm not sure some of the people at the Postal Service realized how dramatic it was," he said.

## Beijing prioritizes domestic market in 2026 plan

# China balances tech push and consumer growth

BEIJING, March 9, (AP): Two major economic plans unveiled at the annual meeting of China's legislature outline top priorities that have different ramifications for the global economy.

In the government plan for 2026, the No. 1 task is "building a robust domestic market." Then comes accelerating technological progress. But longer-term, a plan for the next five years gives more prominence to achieving advances in tech.

The subtle difference highlights the government's balancing act. Its overarching goal is to transform from a low-cost manufacturing to a tech-driven economy.

But a more immediate concern is dealing with a prolonged period of sluggishness that has depressed consumer and business confidence. China is such a large exporter that the choices it makes affect countries and jobs around the world.

The plans, presented at the recent opening of the National People's Congress, offer a window into the government's thinking. They are set to be formally endorsed by the rubber-stamp legislature at the end of the eight-day session on Thursday.

Analysts believe technological prowess remains the far more important goal for Chinese leader Xi Jinping and his vision to build the nation into a major power that can contend with the United States on issues ranging from trade to Taiwan tensions.

Speaking to a provincial delegation at the National People's Congress, Xi called for new breakthroughs, original innovation and "seizing the strategic high ground of science and technology," according to a state media report.

China's rapid growth into the world's second-largest economy has lifted it to the level of a middle-income nation. To keep advancing, Xi has promoted policies that move the economy

into higher-value industries.

A government-backed push into electric vehicles, for example, has transformed China into an emerging player in the global auto industry, while dovetailing with national climate goals.

The five-year plan vows to "target the frontiers of science and technology," speeding up development in areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology, biotechnology and new energy.

The push has expanded and morphed as technology has evolved into an area of competition with the U.S. with national security implications.

The U.S. has restricted the access of Chinese companies to the most advanced technologies, including semiconductors that drive AI. The justification is that these parts can wind up in weapons at a time when the two countries are military rivals as well.

China's government has responded by pouring resources into trying to develop these components itself as well as engineer ways to remain competitive with less advanced parts.

China must "fight the battle for key core technologies," the five-year plan said. Specific goals, apart from AI, electric vehicles and robotics, include making advancements in semiconductors, batteries, biomedicine and 6G mobile networks.

The plan also pledged to expand production of China's homegrown passenger jet, the C919, and make breakthroughs in developing its own commercial jet engine. The U.S. temporarily cut off the supply of Western-supplied engines for the C919 last year during an escalation in the trade war with China.

Rare earths - where China is the global leader - was highlighted as an area where it should maintain its competitive edge as the U.S. and other countries seek to develop their own sup-

plies of the critical elements for many advanced tech and military products.

Even as China's economy has cooled at home, rising exports have kept it growing overall. But tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump have exposed the risk of relying too heavily on overseas markets.

China was able to shift exports to other markets, but that is facing challenges as its record trade surplus of almost \$1.2 trillion raises alarm about the threat to factory jobs and the broader economies in other countries.

That has added impetus to China's push to pump up consumer spending, so the economy is less dependent on outside forces.

"Facing a complex and challenging international environment, we must remain committed to the strategy of expanding domestic demand," the annual economic plan said.

But for all the strong words, analysts say the effort appears aimed at keeping the economy afloat rather than boosting it. The annual plan sets a growth target of 4.5% to 5% for 2026, leaving room for a drop from last year's 5% rise.

Meanwhile, the government is primed to offer huge subsidies for high-tech advances in manufacturing, analysts said.

"Technological development and self-sufficiency remain central priorities, and industrial policy will continue to be deployed as an essential tool to achieve them," economists at Capital Economics wrote in a research note.

Similar subsidies to the wind and solar industries led to manufacturing oversupply that was exported at rock-bottom prices, undercutting overseas competitors. The end result could be an even larger imbalance between China's immense manufacturing capacity and its weaker domestic demand, further driving up its exports.

# What's On

## SPOTLIGHT

Got a birthday or event?



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



North Korean Ambassador Ju Myong Chol offering his congratulations.



A number of well-wishers.



Exchange of greetings.



Well-wishers.

### Al-Qattan family hosts Ramadan Diwaniya

Dr. Nael Abdulhameed Al-Qattan and his brothers, Luay, Ashraf, Qusay, Ali, and Ahmed, received well-wishers at the late Abdulhameed Al-Qattan's diwaniya to offer their congratulations on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. The diwaniya witnessed a notable turnout of officials, ambassadors, and members of diplomatic missions, in

addition to a gathering of citizens and residents.

Such gatherings highlight the importance of Kuwaiti diwanis as spaces for social interaction and for strengthening bonds among different segments of society.

'Together for Kuwait, Together for Humanity'

## Pak Donors organizes its 32nd Emergency Blood Donation Drive

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: In response to the urgent need for blood and to support the Central Blood Bank during the current circumstances, Pak Donors (Pakistani Blood Donors Association) organized its 32nd Emergency Blood Donation Drive at the Central Blood Bank, Jabriya – Kuwait.

The campaign received an encouraging response from donors belonging to different nationalities who came forward to donate blood and support the humanitarian cause. The drive reflected the strong spirit of solidarity and compassion among the community during challenging times.

PakDonors has been actively working to promote blood donation awareness since its establishment in 2011, organizing regular blood donation drives in cooperation with the Kuwait Ministry of Health and the Central Blood Bank. Through these efforts, the organization continues to contribute to maintaining an adequate supply of blood for patients in need.

The organizers emphasized that blood donation is a noble act that saves precious lives and strengthens the spirit of humanity beyond nationality. They encouraged all eligible individuals to donate blood regularly and support such humanitarian initiatives.



Photos during the event.

PakDonors expressed sincere gratitude to all donors, volunteers, and the management of the Central Blood Bank for their cooperation and support in making the emergency blood donation drive successful.

### Director Sherly Dennis shares new year wishes

## ISEK celebrates 'Harmony – New Beginning with Thanksgiving'

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Indian School of Excellence, Kuwait (ISEK) conducted series of vibrant and meaningful assemblies on the theme "Harmony – New Beginning with Thanksgiving." The assemblies were presented by the students, inspiring everyone to welcome the New Year with positivity and gratitude.

The assembly began with a prayer and inspiring reflections on new beginnings, gratitude, and harmony, followed by graceful performances that highlighted unity and togetherness. The celebration concluded with vibrant dance perfor-

mances, leaving the audience uplifted with joy, hope, and harmony.

Dr. Mrs. Sherly Dennis, Director of Indian School of Excellence, addressed the gathering, appreciating the students' efforts and encouraging them to embrace the New Year with confidence and positive values. She extended her New Year wishes, spreading warmth among the students.

The assemblies concluded with inspiring notes, leaving everyone with a message of hope, happiness, love, respect, and togetherness—reminding all that a new year is best celebrated in harmony.



Group photo during the event.

### Philippine Ambassador Cabrera praises solidarity

## Kuwait Trade Union Federation launches Blood Donation Drive

KUWAIT CITY, March 9: The Kuwait Trade Union Federation launched a blood donation campaign titled "Kuwait Workers ... Giving Never Stops" in cooperation with several labor associations and community groups, as part of its social responsibility and support for national efforts during the current circumstances facing Kuwait.

The humanitarian initiative was held on Saturday evening at the Kuwait Central Blood Bank from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., drawing workers, volunteers and members of the Filipino community to take part in the campaign and contribute to supporting the country's healthcare sector.

The event was attended by H.E. Jose Cabrera III, Ambassador of the Philippines to Kuwait, who commended the initiative and the active participation of the Filipino community in humanitarian activities that promote solidarity and public service.

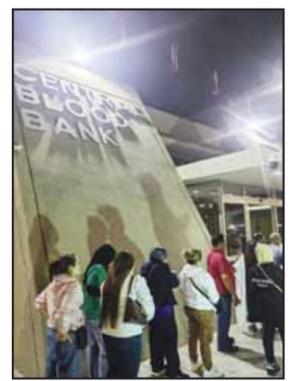
In a statement, the federation emphasized that the campaign reflects its belief in the importance of solidarity, unity and collective responsibility, particularly during challenging times. It noted that workers in Kuwait continue to demonstrate a strong spirit of generosity and dedication to serving the nation.

The federation also called on workers and members of the community to actively participate in humanitarian initiatives, stressing that blood donation plays a vital role in supporting hospitals and strengthening national efforts aimed at safeguarding public health.

Several Filipino and community organizations participated in the campaign, including Global Ilocano in Kuwait, Kuwait Golden Kaanib Region, Golden Kaanib Eagles Club, Golden Kaanib Lady Eagles Club, Grand Kaanib Eagles Club, UMCAP, AKOOFW Farwaniya Chap-

ter, Manlalakbay, Kuwait Sandiwa Eagles Club, Kuwait Sandiwa Lady Eagles Group, ASFOK, PANIK, Body Builders Group and Maisug.

The federation noted that the campaign highlighted the strong spirit of cooperation among workers, community groups and the Filipino community in Kuwait, underscoring their commitment to humanitarian work and their continued support for initiatives that benefit society.



Photos during the event.

'Scream 7' lands second place with \$17.3M weekend

## 'Hoppers' bounds to No. 1 as 'The Bride!' is on life support

LOS ANGELES, March 9, (AP) — Disney and Pixar's environmental adventure "Hoppers" topped the North American box office this weekend with \$46 million in domestic ticket sales in its opening weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

After adding another \$42 million from international showings, the film celebrated an \$88 million global launch in total, the biggest for an original animated film since "Coco" came out in 2017.

But it wasn't all good news for big studio fare at the multiplex: Maggie Gyllenhaal's R-rated reimagining of the Bride of Frankenstein story is flailing. A Warner Bros. release, "The Bride!" starring Jessie Buckley and Christian Bale, debuted to an estimated \$7.3 million from 3,304 domestic locations. It cost around \$80 million to produce, not including marketing and promotion expenses.

The two movies were hardly competing with one another for viewers - one being a PG-rated family pic, the other an audacious, R-rated, genre-blending ride. "Hoppers" arrived to a slew of good reviews, while critical responses to "The Bride!" were mixed to negative and its audience scores weren't much better.

"Hoppers" win was much needed for Disney and Pixar following last year's "Elio," which was Pixar's worst opening ever. The studio's only major successes lately have been sequels and franchises, while "Hoppers" is a win for original fare. It also opened higher than 2023's "Elemental," which eventually went on to become a sleeper hit ("Elio" did not).

"Hoppers" had a reported \$150 million production budget and opened in 4,000 locations. Directed by Daniel Chong, the movie is about a 19-year-old environmentalist who infiltrates the animal world in the body of a beaver. It features the voices of Piper Curda, Bobby Moynihan, Jon Hamm and Kathy Najimy.

"Hoppers" got a 94% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, 75% "definitely recommend" from PostTrak polling and an A CinemaScore, suggesting it should have a long and profitable run in theaters.

"This is a fantastic original film from the incredible team at Pixar, and it's wonderful to see audiences coming out with their friends and families to enjoy it together," said Alan Bergman, co-chairman of Disney Entertainment, in a statement.



This image released by Disney shows Mabel Beaver, voiced by Piper Curda (right), and King George, voiced by Bobby Moynihan, in a scene from the animated film 'Hoppers.' (AP)

He also congratulated the filmmaking team on "a tremendous launch."

"The Bride!" had a bit of a bumpy path to theaters, with edits being made after reportedly poor test screenings. Its release date was pushed back from September, possibly to give it some space versus Guillermo del Toro's "Frankenstein," which played in theaters last fall before hitting Netflix.

Men made up a slight majority of the audience for "The Bride!" at 53%. The movie currently carries a "rotten" 59% on Rotten Tomatoes and a lackluster C+ CinemaScore. Only 43% of that audience said they would "definitely recommend."

And it doesn't seem like international audiences will be much help: It made only \$6.3 million outside of the US and Canada, bringing its global debut to \$13.6 million.

"Unfortunately, we came in light," said Jeffrey Goldstein, who oversees domestic distribution for Warner Bros., in a text message. "We have a tailored approach to our slate, investing strategically in talent, IP and original storytelling. It spans genres and budget levels and allows us to back bold, distinctive filmmakers ... and sometimes things just don't work out."

Warner Bros.' other recent release, "Wuthering Heights," meanwhile, has surpassed \$213 million globally. And next week, the studio, which is starting down new ownership under Paramount, is expected to sweep the Oscars between "One Battle After Another" and "Sinners."

"We're coming off an incredible run of nine No. 1 openings in a row, and in an increasingly 'risk-averse' business like ours, we believe the business is better served with studios taking bold swings on originals like this one," Goldstein said. "Even the 1927 Yankees had 44 losses that season."

Paramount's "Scream 7" landed in second place in its second weekend with \$17.3 million, down a whopping 73% and bringing its domestic total to \$93.4 million and its global total to \$149.5 million. Sony's "GOAT" came in fourth place with \$6.6 million while "Wuthering Heights" rounded out the top five with \$3.8 million.

"When there's this many holdovers in the top 10, it says we haven't had enough horsepower in the newcomers to really get things moving," said Paul Dergarabedian, Comscore's head of marketplace trends.

But he anticipates that will change when the Ryan Gosling-led sci-fi adventure "Project Hail Mary" hits theaters on March 20.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Hoppers," \$46 million; 2. "Scream 7," \$17.3 million; 3. "The Bride!" \$7.3 million;
4. "GOAT," \$6.6 million; 5. "Wuthering Heights," \$3.8 million; 6. "Crime 101," \$2.1 million; 7. "Send Help," \$1.6 million; 8. "I Can Only Imagine 2," \$1.5 million; 9. "EpiC: Elvis Presley in Concert," \$1.5 million; 10. "Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba Infinity Castle," \$1.3 million.

### People

#### 'EB campaign'

### Vedder turns raw emotion into plea

LOS ANGELES, March 9, (AP) — The first time Eddie Vedder toured without Pearl Jam, he made some glaring mistakes on-stage and felt discouraged. A few shows later, he ran into Bruce Springsteen, who told him that performing solo is terrifying but that vulnerability can be a force to harness.

Vedder described Springsteen's advice as a North Star that stuck with him. Nearly two decades later, he leaned into it when he took the stage for two sold-out solo shows in October 2023 at Seattle's Benaroya Hall.

"I remember kind of swimming through it and almost having a psychedelic experience," he said. "I was so emotional, but I had to keep it together just to play properly."

The emotional performances were part of a fundraiser to find a cure for epidermolysis bullosa, a rare and debilitating genetic skin disorder. A new Netflix documentary "Matter of Time" weaves the performances with personal stories of those on the front lines with EB.

Recently, Vedder and his wife, Jill, spoke to The Associated Press about the documentary and the EB Research Partnership that they started in 2010 to bring awareness and financial support to finding a cure.

#### Damage

The rare genetic disorder makes the skin so fragile that even minor friction can cause painful blisters and open wounds. In severe cases, ongoing damage can lead to serious complications, including skin cancer. There is no cure, but groups such as the EB Research Partnership fund research and work to develop effective treatments and awareness.

"The kids are feeling seen and understood," Vedder said. "They realize they're not something to fear, and that they're not contagious. The only thing contagious about these kids is their hope."

During the shows, Vedder primarily accompanying himself on acoustic guitar, but he also shifted at times to electric guitar and piano, adding texture and range to the set.

While he performed many Pearl Jam favorites, including "Better Man," "Porch" and "Wishlist," it was "Just Breathe" that seemed to expose his vulnerability as it carried the deepest emotional resonance of the set.

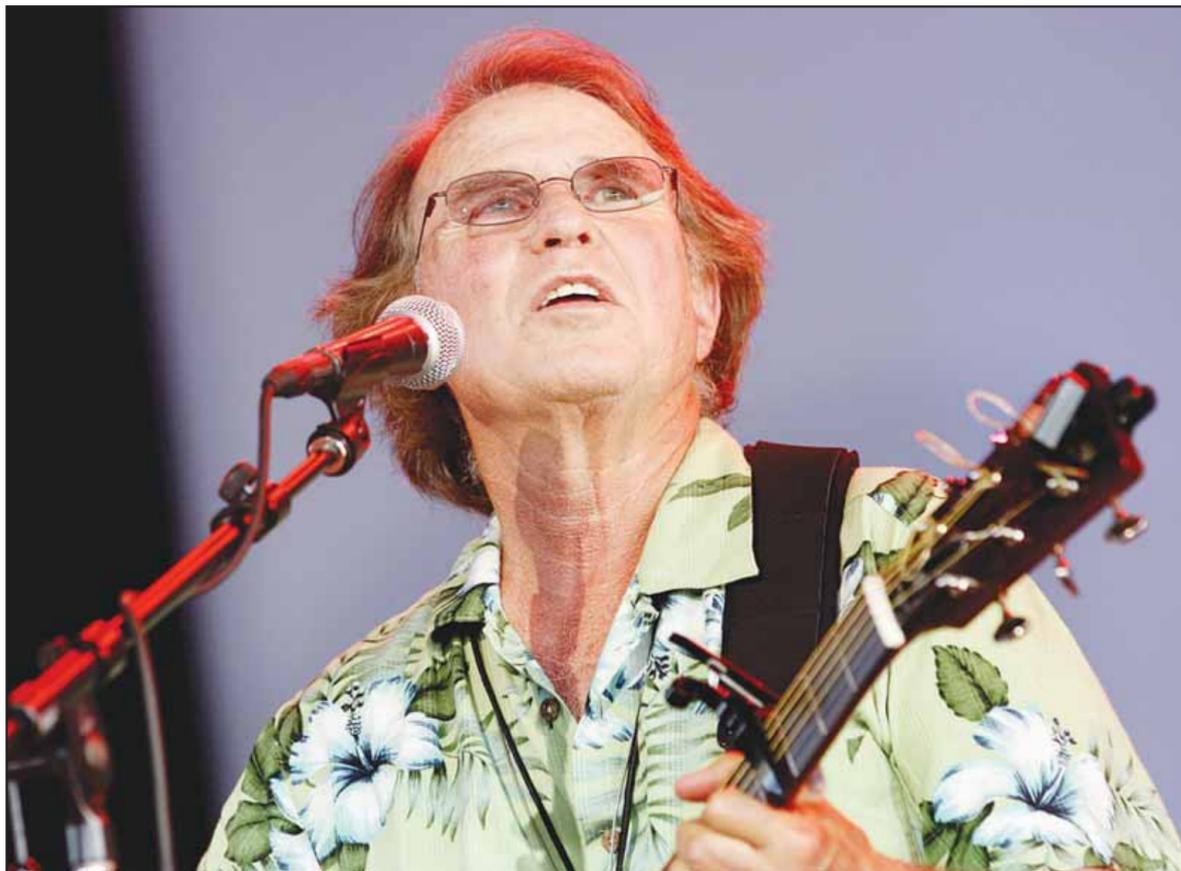
For Jill Vedder, chairwoman of the EB Research Partnership, the mission is not just professional but deeply personal. She has attended funerals for children lost to the disorder and holds space for both grief and hope.

"Every time I spend time with these families, I end up in tears because it's hard to keep it together," she said.



Eddie Vedder and his wife Jill Vedder in New York last year. (AP)

### Obituary



Country singer Joe McDonald plays during the Heros of Woodstock concert at Bethel Woods Center for the Arts in Bethel, N.Y., Saturday, Aug. 15, 2009, marking the 40th anniversary of the original 1969 Woodstock concert. (AP)

Proud protest counterculture icon

## Joe McDonald, '60s rock star, dies at 84

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP) — "Country" Joe McDonald, a hippie rock star of the 1960s whose "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" was a four-lettered rebuke to the Vietnam War that became an anthem for protesters and a highlight of the Woodstock music festival, died Sunday. He was 84.

McDonald, who performed with his band, Country Joe and the Fish, died in Berkeley, California. His death from complications of Parkinson's disease was reported by Kathy McDonald, his wife of 43 years, in a statement issued by his publicist.

McDonald was a longtime presence in the Bay Area music scene, where peers included the Grateful Dead, the Jefferson Airplane and his onetime girlfriend, Janis Joplin. He wrote or co-wrote hundreds of songs, from psychedelic jams to soul-influenced rockers, and released dozens of albums. But he was known best for a talking blues he completed in less than an hour in 1965 - the year President Lyndon Johnson began sending ground forces to Vietnam - and recorded in the Berkeley home of Arhoolie Records founder Chris Strachwitz.

In the deadpan style of McDonald's hero, Woody Guthrie, "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" was a mock celebration of war and early, senseless death, with a chorus concertgoers and others would learn by heart:

And its 1, 2, 3 what are we fighting for? Don't ask me I don't give a damn, Next stop is Vietnam, And its 5, 6, 7 open up the pearly gates, Well there ain't no time to wonder why, Whoopee we're all gonna die

At the time he wrote "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag," McDonald was co-leader of the newly formed Country Joe and the Fish and he added a special "F-I-S-H" chant before the song: "Give me an F, give me an I, give me an S, give me an H." By the time his group appeared at Woodstock in 1969, the Fish were on the verge of breaking up, the chant was a different four-letter word beginning in "F" and McDonald was performing before hundreds of thousands. Many would stand and sing alone, a moment captured in the Woodstock documentary released the following year. (For the film, the song's lyrics appeared as subtitles, a bouncing ball on top).

"Some people alluded to peace and stuff (at Woodstock), but I was talking about Vietnam," McDonald told The Associated Press in 2019. He called the opening chant "an expression of our anger and frustration over the Vietnam War, which was killing us, literally killing us."

The song helped make him famous, but brought legal and professional consequences. In 1968, Ed Sullivan canceled a planned appearance by Country

Joe and the Fish on his variety show when he learned of the new opening cheer. Soon after Woodstock, McDonald was arrested and fined for using the cheer at a show in Worcester, Massachusetts, an ordeal which helped hasten the band's demise.

McDonald even performed the song in court. His friendships with such political radicals as Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin led to his being called in as a witness in the "Chicago Eight (or Seven)" trial against organizers of anti-war protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. On the stand, he explained how he had met with Hoffman and others and told them about "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag." When he began performing it, the judge interrupted and told him "No singing is permitted in the courtroom."

McDonald recited the words instead. In 2001, the daughter of the late jazz musician Edward "Kid" Ory sued McDonald, alleging that his song's melody closely resembled Ory's 1920s jazz instrumental "Muskrat Blues." A US district judge in California ruled in McDonald's favor, citing in part the "unreasonable" delay between the song's release and the suit being filed.

#### Defined

McDonald continued touring and recording for decades after Woodstock, but remained defined by the late 1960s, a time period he openly longed for in the late 1970s rocker "Bring Back the Sixties, Man." His albums included "Country," "Carry On," "Time Flies By" and "50," and he would continue writing protest songs, notably the 1975 release "Save the Whales."

Although defined by his anti-war activism, McDonald would acknowledge conflicted feelings about Vietnam. He had served in the Navy, in Japan, in the late 1950s, and found himself identifying with both the protesters and those serving overseas. In the 1990s, he helped organize the construction of a Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Berkeley, formally unveiled in 1995.

"Many remembered the ugly confrontations that had happened during the war years in the city," McDonald later wrote of the ceremony. "Yet the atmosphere proved to be one of reconciliation, not confrontation."

McDonald was married four times, most recently to Kathy McDonald, and had five children and four grandchildren. He was involved off and on with Joplin over the second half of the 1960s, two young hippies whose careers and temperaments drove them apart. When McDonald told her he thought they should break up, she asked him to write a song,

which became the ballad "Janis":

Even though I know that you and I  
Could never find the kind of love we wanted  
Together, alone, I find myself  
Missing you and I  
You and I

Country Joe McDonald did not come from the "country." He was born on Jan. 1, 1942 in Washington, D.C., and grew up in El Monte, California. He was the son of onetime Communists who named him for Josef Stalin and otherwise encouraged him to love music and identify with the working class. He was still in his teens when he began writing songs, playing trombone well enough to lead his high school marching band and teaching himself folk, country and blues songs on guitar.

After returning from the Navy, in the early 1960s, he attended Los Angeles State College, but soon moved to Berkeley and became immersed in folk music and political activism. He founded an underground magazine, Rag Baby, for which "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" was written to help promote, and helped start such local groups as the Instant Action Jug Band and the Berkeley String Quartet.

In 1965, he formed Country Joe and the Fish with fellow singer-guitarist Barry "The Fish" Melton, later adding Bruce Barthol on bass, organ player David Bennett Cohen and Gary "Chicken" Hirsh on drums. The name was suggested by magazine publisher Eugene "ED" Denson, who cited a quote from Mao Zedong that revolutionaries are "the fish who swim in the sea of the people." McDonald was dubbed "Country Joe" because Denson had heard that Stalin was known as "Country Joe" during World War II.

Like the Jefferson Airplane, the Byrds and other bands, the Fish evolved from folk to folk-rock to acid rock. "Electric Music for the Mind and Body," their debut album, was released in May 1967 and featured a minor hit, "Not So Sweet Martha Lorraine," along with numerous long jams. A month after the album came out, they appeared at the Monterey Pop Festival, the first major rock gathering and a highlight of the so-called Summer of Love.

"I think the 'Summer of Love' thing was manufactured by the media or something, because I don't remember us thinking, 'Wow, this is the 'Summer of Love,'" he told aquariandrunkard.com in 2018. "(But) I was just thrilled to be a part of this new counterculture and new tribe because I had never really felt comfortable in the other tribes that I was a part of growing up and in the Navy. My parents were actually Jewish Communists. I never felt a part of it, but I was really thrilled and happy to be a hippie."

### Variety

NEW YORK: Family, friends and fans were to gather Monday morning in New York to pay tribute to Willie Colón, the Grammy-nominated architect of urban salsa music and social activist who died last month at 75.

A public funeral Mass was planned to be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral in midtown Manhattan, following a weekend of private and public visitations. His burial will be private.

The trombonist, composer, arranger and singer died on Feb. 21. The cause was not publicly announced. His family said on social media that he passed away peacefully surrounded by relatives at a hospital in Westchester County, just north of New York City.



"While we grieve his absence, we also rejoice in the timeless gift of his music and the cherished memories that will live on forever," his family said in a statement.

Born in New York City's Bronx borough, Colón produced more than 40 albums that sold more than 30 million copies worldwide and collaborated with a wide variety of artists, including the Fania All Stars, David Byrne and Celia Cruz.

He was nominated for 10 Grammys and one Latin Grammy and was known for songs including "El gran varón," "Sin poderte hablar," "Casanova," "Amor verdad" and "Oh, qué será."

His manager, Pietro Carlos, wrote on social media that Colón not only changed salsa, but also "expanded it, politicized it, clothed it in urban chronicles, and took it to stages where it hadn't been heard before." (AP)

ANTANANARIVO: Madagascar launched the 2026 China Film Festival on Sunday in the capital of Antananarivo, with nearly 100 guests attending the opening ceremony.

At the ceremony, Secretary-General of Madagascar's Ministry of Communication and Culture Miry Rasolofoarijaona expressed his deep gratitude for the organization of "this unprecedented festival," held as part of activities celebrating the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

"The China Film Festival is a concrete illustration of the willingness to bring our hearts and minds closer together through the power of images and shared stories," he said, adding that the festival will enable Malagasy audiences to discover the richness, modernity and depth of Chinese culture.

Chinese Ambassador to Madagascar Ji Ping said the continuous deepening of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Africa carries paradigmatic significance that transcends the bilateral framework, especially in the current global context marked by divisions caused by geopolitical conflicts. (Xinhua)

VIGO, Spain: Madonna has answered the call of a Spanish soccer club that was seeking a long-lost jersey worn by the pop icon more than three decades ago.

Madonna replied Saturday to a plea for information regarding the whereabouts of the shirt from Spanish soccer club Celta Vigo with a post on X saying that she still possessed the garment.

Celta had published an open letter to Madonna this week asking if she still had the baby-blue-and-white Celta jersey she wore during a 1990 concert at its Balaidos stadium.

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

## 'Music is like vitamins'

## Singing circle in Amsterdam brings hope for people with dementia

AMSTERDAM, March 9, (AP) — Megan Worthy still recalls singing in a choir in the Australian capital, Canberra, as she was growing up.

Now, as a rare form of early-onset dementia chips away at her vision and other brain functions, the 58-year-old is transported back to her musical youth as she and her daughter, Bronte, sing together with other people with neurological conditions in an Amsterdam concert hall, the Concertgebouw.

"It's pretty brutal," Worthy said of her rare neurological condition. "I'm starting to lose everything, you know, and this is really rewarding and seeing all these people, yeah, it did make me have a lot of memories."

She was taking part in a so-called "singing circle" run by opera singer Maartje de Lint at the landmark concert venue for seniors with what she calls "vulnerable brains," many of whom have a form of dementia or Parkinson's disease.

Millions of people have some form of dementia, a progressive loss of memory, reasoning, language skills and other cognitive functions. People can experience changes in personality, emotional control, even visual perception. Alzheimer's is the most widely recognized type, but there are many others, with their own symptoms and underlying biology. Small strokes, for example, can impair blood flow to the brain and trigger what's called vascular dementia.

The singers in Amsterdam, who each pay 20 euros (\$23.50) to attend, are arranged with their carers in a circle of chairs under a ceiling hung with 14 crystal chandeliers in the venue's ornate Mirror Hall.

"We always say, music is like vitamins," said Selien Kneppers, 78, who once managed a Dutch boogie woogie and blues band and now regularly attends the singing circle.

Roving around the middle, often dropping to one knee and reaching out her



People, many of them seniors with a form of dementia, join in the 'singing circle' run by opera singer Maartje de Lint, at the Concertgebouw's ornate Mirror Hall in Amsterdam on Feb. 24, 2026. (AP)

hands to connect with a singer, is De Lint. She and other singers in her organization crisscross the Netherlands and Europe, leading singing workshops. Singing, De Lint says, is a way of keeping the brain active and bringing

family members and their loved ones closer together.

"So we give people perspective," she says before one of her singing sessions in Amsterdam. "It's like actually a training for the brain, for the body, to get more resilient and understand the perspective that you still have."

The hour-long session clearly has an emotional effect on the singers and their carers. Helpers regularly hand out paper tissues for people to dab away tears. One man tenderly reached out a hand to touch the face of the woman next to him as they sang songs ranging from Elvis Presley's "Love Me Tender" to Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon" and "Amazing Grace."

Neurobiologist Brankele Frank, who is not connected to De Lint's project, agrees that singing can be beneficial to people with dementia or Alzheimer's or other kinds of neurodegenerative diseases.

Music "speaks to brain areas that haven't really been degenerated yet," she told The Associated Press. "So, for example, their verbal skills often are compromised, but music speaks to parts of the brain that don't necessarily need verbal skills. And so it taps into their emotion, their sense of self, their identity."

Scientists are studying the potential benefits of music for people with dementia, traumatic brain injuries, Parkinson's disease and stroke. Music lights up multiple regions of the brain, strengthening neural connections between areas that govern language, memories, emotions and movement.

Megan's daughter, Bronte Henfling, said that even getting her mother to a new environment that was not a medical appointment to discuss her posterior cortical atrophy felt good.

"Just hearing everyone come together and sing ... it reminds us that we're all human and there's a humanity out there which is really pleasing and nice to be a part of," she said.

## Stage



This image released by the Metropolitan Opera shows Soprano Lise Davidsen as Isolde in a Feb. 27, 2026, rehearsal of a new production of 'Tristan und Isolde' opening March 9 at the Metropolitan Opera. (AP)

## 'Wagner's masterpiece hardest opera to stage'

## Sharon debuts at Met with epic new 'Tristan'

NEW YORK, March 9, (AP) — In his book on re-inventing opera, director Yuval Sharon describes "Tristan und Isolde" as "the single hardest work in the traditional repertoire to stage."

Yet here he is, about to make his Metropolitan Opera debut at the helm of a new production of Richard Wagner's epic love story.

"It's something I wrote before I got the job, and it's part of why I took the job," said Sharon, author of 2024's "A New Philosophy of Opera." "Because I knew it was the hardest, and I love impossible challenges."

Peter Gelb, the Met's general manager, said he has admired Sharon's work "since he was an infant terrible" known for innovative productions in Los Angeles and Detroit.

"I think it was inevitable ... that he would end up eventually at the Met," Gelb said. "It was just a matter of finding the right project. It's finally landed in this production."

Anticipation among opera lovers has run so high - in part because the great Norwegian soprano Lise Davidsen is cast as Isolde - that most of the seven scheduled performances sold out the 3,800-seat house even before the March 9 opening. In a rare move, the Met announced Friday it was adding an eighth performance at the end of the run.

And such is Gelb's confidence that he's also entrusted Sharon with a new production of Wagner's four-part "Ring" cycle, set to launch in two years.

What makes "Tristan" so daunting to stage, according to Sharon, is the philosophical underpinning that Wagner gives to a tale of passion, betrayal and death.

The composer, who wrote his own librettos, uses the story as a framework for his characters to ruminate at length about what Sharon calls "images of polarity: day and night, male and female, body and spirit, life and death." The opera is "an encounter with the unknown and the inexpressible. It's both oceanic in scope and completely intimate in its perception," he says.

Or as Gelb put it: "It's a story that is short on plot and very big on the mythological and meta-physical aspects of the relationship between Tristan and Isolde. This isn't 'La Bohème.'"

Sharon's production opens with the two lead singers in contemporary dress seated at a table near the front of the stage.

"We first see them as the singers who will be singing their roles," said Es Devlin, the set designer. "And they're a bridge between you and me and the work."

During the orchestral prelude, the singers find themselves drawn into the story of the doomed lovers. They eventually leave the table and reappear costumed as Tristan and Isolde inside an oval-shaped opening in a wooden wall that spans the Met proscenium.

"They're almost like shamanic figures who are about to take us into another world," Sharon said. Shamans "go to a very risky place. They touch this other world but they stay in our world and they help communicate between them."

By the third act, when Tristan has been mortally wounded, the opening deepens into a tunnel with a light at the end.

For Sharon, that tunnel evokes the way some people have described near-death experiences. It also suggests the act of a child entering the world from the womb, a process Tristan describes in the text.

And the tunnel provides a benefit for the singers: The set serves as a kind of megaphone that helps carry their voices out into the hall.

"It's a really practical consideration which comes back to this opera being barely performable," Devlin said. "You are designing a musical instrument to support those voices."

As the two singers disappear into the drama, two actors wearing costumes similar to theirs replace them at the table, and the two pairs switch places intermittently throughout the story.

Ordinary objects on the table also become "portals into another dimension," Sharon said, like a water jug that is magnified by projections

until it turns into the Celtic Sea that Isolde crosses on her voyage to Cornwall.

If the staging concept is ambitious, the set itself may be even more so.

"This is physically the first production in the history of the Met that actually fills the proscenium not only from side to side but top to bottom," Gelb said.

John Sellars, assistant general manager for production, said that when the set was delivered by Hudson Scenic Studios in Yonkers, New York, it filled 42 large shipping containers. The Met's second biggest production, Puccini's "Il Trittico," requires 27 containers, he said.

For the singers charged with negotiating this enormous set and bringing Sharon's concept to dramatic life, there are extraordinary musical challenges as well.

The title roles here are among the most difficult in all of opera because they require the vocal power to penetrate Wagner's huge orchestra, and the stamina to survive four hours of singing. The Met's cast will be headed by soprano Lise Davidsen, fresh off a triumph in her role debut in Barcelona, and tenor Michael Spyres, who is taking on the complete opera for the first time.

The title roles here are among the most difficult in all of opera because they require the vocal power to penetrate Wagner's huge orchestra, and the stamina to survive four hours of singing. Joining Davidsen is tenor Michael Spyres, who is taking on the complete role of Tristan for the first time.

Mezzo-soprano Ekaterina Gubanova and bass-baritone Tomasz Konieczny portray Brangäne and Kurwenal, the lovers' faithful servants, while bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green is the cuckolded King Marke. For that added performance on April 4 Stuart Skelton will sing Tristan and Stephen Milling will be King Marke. Yannick Nezet-Seguin, the Met's music director, conducts the entire run.

The March 21 matinee will be televised live in HD to movie theaters around the world.

## TV chef thrives in mid-50s with food, projects

## Ray is harder to find but hardly slowing down

MIAMI, March 9, (AP) — Rachael Ray isn't sick. Her marriage is healthy, too. And yes, she's still on TV.

Rumors have swirled around the woman who gave us 30-minute meals since she stepped away from her daily show. But that hasn't diminished her thrill at rolling through her mid-50s still cooking on television and still pulling crowds for beachside parties.

Welcome to Ray's third act, the recipe for which is equal parts serendipity and returning to her hands-in-pans roots.

Three years ago, the woman who turned culinary effervescence, EVOO and garbage bowls into a media empire stepped away from the Food Network and her syndicated daytime talk show. Today, she acknowledges, "It can be hard to find me."

Ray sat down with the AP recently during a break from events at the South Beach Wine & Food Festival to talk about what's next, what keeps her going and why she doesn't care about her legacy.

"I'll be dead, so who cares?" She said that a lot, actually. About her critics. About the gossip. About whether people today get her and her decisions.

Except, clearly she does care. Particularly about the thread common to it all - giving people kitchen confidence. She once described her cooking as the food equivalent of a pop song. Which sounds flip. But when your entire career is built around breaking barriers to food, the easy digestibility of pop is an apt analogy.

"That was the message I wanted to bring to people. Don't be scared of this," she said. "If it doesn't come out all right, who cares? It's just dinner."

The story of Ray's rise is well-trod. Young woman from upstate New York gets noticed while doing food demos at an upscale grocery store, lands a gig on the Food Network demystifying cooking with a focus on fast and affordable, parleys that into a daytime show backed by Oprah Winfrey, and in short order she and her rat-a-tat Yum-o!-punctuated vernacular - not to mention her knives, books, pans, magazine, pet food and all manner of other products - were ubiquitous.

Then, in 2023 - after 17 seasons on daytime TV - she jarred fans by walking away from much of it, a decision she'd been quietly considering for years. Network television brought with it armies of executives and lawyers.

"I just didn't want to do that anymore. I didn't want to live by committee," she said. "I wanted to focus more on food the way I want to teach it, talking to people I want to talk to, and being just me."

To many, she seemed to slow down or even disappear. After fire destroyed her home in upstate New York and flooding ruined her city apartment,



Rachael Ray smiles while cooking at a private dinner during the South Beach Wine and Food Festival Friday, Feb. 20, 2026, in Miami. (AP)

she moved much of her life to Italy. A podcast was started, then quietly shuttered. All amid rumors of failing health and marriage.

Moved under the radar might be more accurate than slowed down. But let's start with the gossip.

"We're very volatile people. We're loud, and then we're lovey dovey, and I think we confuse a lot of folks because of that," she said of her marriage to musician and lawyer John Cusimano. "I have a great marriage. My health is fine. I lift weights every morning, 4 o'clock, you know. I'm doing just fine."

As for slowing down?

After ending her daytime show -- the only thing she misses is the energy of the live audience -- she created her own production company, Free Food Studios, an effort to control her content (sans layers of lawyers) and launch new talent. A&E soon acquired a 50% stake in it and ordered hundreds of episodes, including several new series starring Ray.

"People tell me on the plane or at the airport or at the grocery store, 'Oh, I miss your show so much!' And I'm like, I have many! You know, look on YouTube or look at A&E or look at Disney or Hulu," she said. "It rotates through all these

different platforms now, so it's harder for people to find."

In fact, her "Meals in Minutes" recently was renewed for more than 100 new episodes, and she's producing two additional shows with other stars. Meanwhile, she's planning an eighth humanitarian trip to Ukraine - she's been collaborating on them with José Andrés since early in the war - recently launched her own gin, and still sells plenty of pots and pans and pet foods, the latter of which helps fund The Rachael Ray Foundation, which has donated \$140 million to animal welfare and nutritional advocacy groups.

Today, culinary pedigrees among food celebrities are few and far between, making the early critiques of Ray -- She's not a serious cook! She's not a chef! -- seem quaint, sexist, maybe both. She's thankful social media has lowered the bar for entry to her world, saying fresh faces no longer need money, connections, a culinary degree or blind luck to get noticed.

What hasn't changed is the way aging women are judged, particularly when they have the audacity to do so as a public figure. Her appearance has been a hot topic in recent years, but Ray said she refuses to join the beauty bandwagon.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة  
Ministry of Commerce & Industry  
دولة الكويت | State of Kuwait



## RECALL INFORMATION



Toyota LC300 (VJA300)  
Model Year 2025 & 2026

VIN: JTMABBBJ454176965 JTMAB7BJ0T4219776

## RECALL REASON

Due to a software error in the Transmission Control Module (TCM) the communication between the TCM and the Engine ECU may not communicate properly. This may result in loss of motive power while driving at higher speed.

## REMEDY

Owners of affected vehicles will be contacted by Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. and are asked to make an appointment to reprogram the Transmission ECU without any charge to the customer.

## CONTACT

MOHAMED NASER AL-SAYER & SONS EST. CO. W.L.L.  
HOTLINE: 1803803  
WWW.TOYOTA.COM.KW  
Please book an appointment to serve you better

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

## Shield blood test offers convenient screening for adults 45+

## Dempsey shares his experience to promote colon cancer screening

PALO ALTO, Calif., March 9, (AP): Guardant Health, Inc., a leading precision oncology company, has announced its partnership with actor and cancer advocate Patrick Dempsey to increase awareness about colorectal cancer (CRC) screening and the Shield blood test. Approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2024 and recommended in national guidelines, Shield offers an easier way to screen for colorectal cancer (CRC) with just a blood draw for eligible individuals 45 and over at average risk for the disease.

Throughout his 30-plus-year acting career, Dempsey has captured audiences' hearts and defined his legacy in film and television playing unforgettable characters from Grey's Anatomy to most recently, Memory of a Killer, among others. Beyond his professional achievements, Dempsey has become an avid cancer advocate following his mother's cancer diagnosis, an experience that shaped his commitment to the cause including founding The Dempsey Center with a focus on providing supportive cancer care services.

Last year, he was named as one of the 100 Most Influential People in Oncology, a list which also includes



Patrick Dempsey, actor and cancer advocate, shares his experience getting screened for colorectal cancer with Shield by Guardant Health, the first and only FDA-approved blood test for primary colorectal cancer screening. (AP)

Guardant co-founders AmirAli Talasaz and Helmy Eltoukhy, recognizing his significant contributions in elevating cancer awareness, survivorship, and community-based support.

Now, Dempsey is teaming up with Guardant Health during CRC Awareness Month in March to help spread awareness on the importance of early detection, including sharing his experience

getting screened with Shield to show how innovative tools like Shield are making colorectal cancer screening easier and more convenient.

Shield is proven to increase screening rates in the real world, with 93% of patients completing the test in the first 100,000 Shield tests ordered - a significant improvement in screening adherence rates over other types of tests. Recently, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network included the Shield blood test in its updated CRC screening guidelines, paving the way for improved patient access and additional major clinical guideline inclusions.

"Too many families know the pain of losing someone they love to cancer and I've lived that reality. Seeing my mother's ongoing fight with cancer showed me firsthand how critical an early, regular screening is to have the best chance at beating cancer. That's why I chose to screen with Guardant's Shield blood test and use my voice to prevent other families from facing the same heartbreak," said Dempsey. "The risks are too high for colorectal cancer and too many Americans continue to delay their lifesaving screenings. I'm excited by Guardant's Shield blood

test and its game-changing ability to make a real difference in the fight against colorectal cancer by providing colorectal cancer screening with just a blood draw, from one of the most trusted leaders in the space."

"If you're 45 and over and at average risk for CRC, talk to your doctor about screening options including innovative solutions like Shield that are making screening easier and more convenient to complete," Dempsey concluded.

The burden of colorectal cancer in the US is staggering and growing. According to data from the American Cancer Society (ACS), more than 50,000 Americans are expected to die from the disease each year, as the second most deadly cancer across men and women combined and recently identified as the leading cause of cancer deaths for those under 50.

ACS also finds that the five-year survival rate for late-stage CRC is a mere 13 percent, but soars to above 90 percent when caught in its earliest stages - underscoring why early detection is so critical. Still, more than 54 million Americans aged 45 and over avoid recommended screening due to the unpleasant and inconvenient nature

of traditional methods, according to a JAMA Network study.

"We're honored to work with Patrick to raise awareness about colorectal cancer screening, particularly given his longstanding advocacy and dedication to cancer prevention and care," said AmirAli Talasaz, Guardant Health co-CEO. "At Guardant, we believe early detection should be within reach for everyone eligible. The Shield blood test represents a major breakthrough in making that possible by removing the barriers that keep too many from getting screened. With Patrick's partnership, we can expand awareness of the latest innovation in CRC screening and save lives by empowering more Americans to stay up-to-date with their recommended screening."

Built off Guardant's proprietary technology pioneered more than a decade ago, Shield is the first and only blood test approved by the FDA as a primary screening option for CRC. It is intended for adults aged 45 and older at average risk for the disease and can be ordered by any prescribing healthcare provider. With Shield, individuals can complete screening with a routine blood draw, with results typically available within two weeks.

## Study shows low infection rates across all surgeons

## Surgeon volume does not influence infection rates after TKA, study finds

NEW ORLEANS, March 9, (AP): A retrospective study by Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) investigators found that infection rates at a high-volume academic orthopedic center following total knee arthroplasty (TKA) are uniformly low regardless of individual surgeon volume. These findings challenge the long-held belief that a surgeon's experience, not the institution's, drives safety outcomes. The research team shared their study results in a presentation at the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS) 2026 Annual Meeting.

TKA, also known as total knee replacement, is one of the most common elective surgeries in the United States, with over 700,000 cases performed each year. In spite of advances in surgical techniques and antibiotic regimens, infection following TKA remains a devastating complication that has led to a greater focus on controllable risk factors.

"Historically, it's been said that the higher a surgeon's volume, the lower the rate of infection, and the corollary is that low-volume surgeons are considered to have a higher risk of infection," says senior author Geoffrey H. Westrich, MD, hip and knee surgeon at HSS. "We wanted to take a closer look at this historic paradigm to determine if surgeon volume independently affects infection outcomes at a high-volume orthopedic center that places great importance on infection prevention."

"At HSS, we perform thousands of joint replacements each year and we have an incredibly robust infection prevention program that has resulted in infection rates that are among the lowest in the nation," Dr. Westrich continues. "However, the biggest problem with infection research is

that because our rates are so low, it's hard to isolate the impact of individual surgeon volume from the many institutional factors that influence outcomes."

The researchers conducted a retrospective review of prospectively collected data at HSS that included all TKA procedures (33,747) performed between January 1, 2018, and December 30, 2024. A total of 52 surgeons were stratified by annual TKA case volume into three categories: low (250 cases/year). Infection outcomes, including superficial surgical site infections (SSI) and deep periprosthetic joint infections (PJI), were monitored for 90 days postoperatively using a dedicated surveillance program in accordance with National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) criteria.

The study found the low-volume group had an average operative time of 112.2 minutes, a PJI rate of 0.3%, and an SSI rate of 0.2%. The high-volume group had an average operative time of 96.5 minutes, a PJI rate of 0.3%, and an SSI rate of 0.1%. The ultra-high-volume group had an average operative time of 90.5 minutes, a PJI rate of 0.2%, and SSI rate of 0.1%. Despite differences in operative time, there were no statistically significant differences in infection rates across the three surgeon volume groups with respect to both SSI and PJI.

Dr. Westrich notes that infection rates for TKA across the surgeon volume groups are extremely low compared to other hospitals in New York State. "Our HSS infection rates, which range from 0.1% to 0.3%, are among the lowest in the New York State and in our country," he says. "At other New York State hospitals, infection rates can be as high as 2.0% or ten times higher than our institution."

## Gulf's desalination plants key to survival

## Conflict and climate stress put Gulf's water systems in danger

DUBAI, March 9, (AP): As missiles and drones curtail energy production across the Arabian Gulf, analysts warn that water, not oil, may be the resource most at risk in the energy-rich but arid region.

On Sunday, Bahrain accused Iran of damaging one of its desalination plants. Earlier, Iran said a US airstrike had damaged an Iranian plant.

Hundreds of desalination plants sit along the Arabian Gulf coast, putting individual systems that supply water to millions within range of Iranian missile or drone strikes. Without them, major cities could not sustain their current populations.

In Kuwait, about 90% of drinking water comes from desalination, along with roughly 86% in Oman and about 70% in Saudi Arabia. The technology removes salt from seawater - most commonly by pushing it through ultrafine membranes in a process known as reverse osmosis - to produce the freshwater that sustains cities, hotels, industry and some agriculture across one of the world's driest regions.

For people living outside the Middle East, the main concern of the Iran war has been the impact on energy prices. The Gulf produces about a third of the world's crude exports and energy revenues underpin national economies. Fighting has already halted tanker traffic through key shipping routes and disrupted port activity, forcing some producers to curb exports as storage tanks fill.

But the infrastructure that keeps Gulf cities supplied with drinking water may be equally vulnerable.

"Everyone thinks of Saudi Arabia and their neighbors as petrostates. But I call them saltwater kingdoms. They're human-made fossil-fueled water superpowers," said Michael Christopher Low, director of the Middle East Center at the University of Utah. "It's both a monumental achievement of the 20th century and a certain kind of vulnerability."

The war that began Feb. 28 with US and Israeli attacks on Iran has already brought fighting close to key desalination infrastructure. On March 2, Iranian strikes on Dubai's Jebel Ali port landed some 12 miles from one of the world's largest desalination plants, which produces much of the city's drinking water.

Damage also was reported at the Fujairah F1 power and water complex in the United Arab Emirates, and at Kuwait's Doha West desalination plant. The damage at the two facilities appeared to have resulted from nearby



Fire and a plume of smoke is visible after, according to authorities, debris of an Iranian intercepted drone hit the Fujairah oil facility, in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, March 3. (AP)

port attacks or debris from intercepted drones.

On Sunday, Bahrain accused Iran of indiscriminately attacking civilian targets and damaging one of its desalination plants, though it didn't say supplies have gone offline. The island nation, home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, has been among the countries targeted by Iranian drones and missiles.

Earlier, Iran said a US airstrike damaged an Iranian desalination plant. Abbas Aragchi, 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 US set this precedent, not Iran."

Many Gulf desalination plants are physically integrated with power stations as co-generation facilities, meaning attacks on electrical infrastructure could also hinder water production. Even where plants are connected to national grids with backup supply routes, disruptions can cascade across interconnected systems, said David Michel, senior fellow for water security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"It's an asymmetrical tactic," he said. "Iran doesn't have the same capacity to strike back at the United States and Israel. But it does have this possibility to impose costs on the Gulf countries to push them to intervene or call for a cessation of hostilities."

Desalination plants have multiple stages - intake systems, treatment fa-

ilities, energy supplies - and damage to any part of that chain can interrupt production, according to Ed Cullinane, Middle East editor at Global Water Intelligence, a publisher serving the water industry.

"None of these assets are any more protected than any of the municipal areas that are currently being hit by ballistic missiles or drones," Cullinane said.

Gulf governments and US officials have long recognized the risks these systems pose for regional stability: if major desalination plants were knocked offline, some cities could lose most of their drinking water within days. A 2010 CIA analysis warned attacks on desalination facilities could trigger national crises in several Gulf states, and prolonged outages could last months if critical equipment were destroyed.

More than 90% of the Gulf's desalinated water comes from just 56 plants, the report stated, and "each of these critical plants is extremely vulnerable to sabotage or military action."

A leaked 2008 US diplomatic cable warned the Saudi capital of Riyadh "would have to evacuate within a week" if either the Jubail desalination plant on the Gulf coast or its pipelines or associated power infrastructure were seriously damaged.

Saudi Arabia has since invested in pipeline networks, storage reservoirs and other redundancies designed to cushion short-term disruptions, as has the UAE.

## Safety drive

## Afghan destroys unsafe medicines

KABUL, March 9, (Xinhua): Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health has destroyed around 1,290 tons of expired, substandard, and illegal medicines, food items, and health products over the past year, according to a ministry spokesman on Monday.

The expired, substandard, and illegal medicines, food items, and health products were collected from pharmacies, drugstores, supermarkets, and shops across various parts of Kabul and other provinces, according to a post by Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesman for the ministry, on his X account.

The recent crackdown is part of a comprehensive strategy by the Afghan government to bolster regulatory oversight in the health and food sectors, addressing persistent challenges such as supply chain disruptions, smuggling, and illicit trade.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has supported the treatment of 2,002 children suffering from congenital heart disease since last year, the official media Bakhtar news agency reported Saturday.

According to the report, many children with heart defects have received medical care through programs aimed at assisting families who lack the financial means to access specialized treatment. The ARCS said that during the current year alone, 859 children were treated inside Afghanistan as part of these efforts.

## Also:

**GABORONE:** The 17th batch of the Chinese medical team in Botswana on Friday held a free medical outreach event at the University of Botswana (UB) to promote health education and provide basic medical consultations for students.

The event was co-organized by the medical team, the Confucius Institute at the UB and the Chinese Enterprises Association in Botswana.

Luo Jinying, head of the Gaborone branch of the Chinese medical team, said at the event that the outreach aimed not only to provide medical services but also to raise health awareness among the public.

Participants received consultations from Chinese medical team specialists in internal medicine, surgery, pediatrics, acupuncture, radiology and nursing, while the team also provided basic health checks, including blood pressure and blood glucose tests.

Noting that 2026 marks the 45th anniversary of China sending medical teams to Botswana, and it has also been designated the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges, she said the event helps promote cultural exchange and friendship between the two countries.



This screen image captured at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on Dec. 9, 2025 shows Shenzhou-21 astronauts Zhang Lu and Wu Fei (right) performing extravehicular activities outside China's orbiting space station. (Xinhua)

## China readies rocket

## Shenzhou-21 crew carries out medical, brain study in space

BEIJING, March 9, (Xinhua): The Shenzhou-21 crew members aboard China's Tiangong space station have made significant strides in terms of space medical experiments and physical science research over the past week, while also maintaining the station's habitable environment, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

In the field of space medicine, the crew consisting of Zhang Lu, Wu Fei and Zhang Hongzhang focused on understanding the psychological and physiological effects of long-duration spaceflight. They used laptops to complete tests on "trust and coordination mechanisms" and "human-machine trust," which are crucial for designing future spacecraft interfaces and ensuring efficient teamwork between astronauts and automated systems, China Media Group reported on Sunday night.

A key advancement involved the use of the space Raman spectrometer, a device that identifies molecular compositions by shining a laser on a sample. The astronauts used this tool to analyze metabolic components in urine samples. The data collected will be used to refine medical standards for monitoring astronaut health in orbit.

To explore how the brain perceives the physical world without gravity, they also conducted "microgravity intuitive physics behavior" experiments.

Leveraging electroencephalogram (EEG) equipment, which records electrical activity along the scalp, the crew gathered data for "meta-cognitive monitoring" and "group brain cognitive-emotion analysis" studies, helping scientists on Earth understand how the absence of gravity alters brain function and group dynamics, the report noted.

In the microgravity physical science domain, the team maintained experiment racks, replacing sampling covers in the combustion science rack and swapping samples in the fluid physics rack.

To safeguard their own health, the astronauts underwent medical checks including intraocular pressure tests, fundus exams and cardiopulmonary assessments.

Notably, they also utilized a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) four-diagnosis device, an instrument that mimics the traditional TCM methods of inspection, listening, inquiry and pulse-taking, seeking to provide a comprehensive health assessment in microgravity, the video report revealed.

The Shenzhou-21 manned spacecraft was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China on Oct. 31, 2025. The Shenzhou-21 crew completed their mission's first series of extravehicular activities on Dec. 9.

Meanwhile, the Long March-8A Y8 carrier rocket, developed by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, has been successfully transported to its launch pad in south China's Hainan Province.

The rocket was vertically transported to the Hainan commercial spacecraft launch site on Saturday. It is now positioned at Launch Pad No. 1 and is scheduled for launch in the coming days, China Media Group reported on Sunday.

## Targeted pediatric care

## Cutting-edge imaging tech boosts brain treatment options for children

MINNEAPOLIS, March 9, (AP): Children's Minnesota is pleased to announce a \$2.5 million, state-of-the-art biplane neuroangiography suite - the region's only facility dedicated to pediatric neurointerventional procedures. This advanced imaging technology brings new treatment options for children with a variety of cerebrovascular diseases, further expanding Children's Minnesota's neurosurgical capabilities.

"With this advanced biplane neuroangiography suite, we are raising the bar for children in our region impacted by a stroke or other cerebrovascular conditions," said Maysam Kebriaei, MD, medical director of neurosurgery at Children's Minnesota. "By becoming the regional referral program for complex pediatric cerebrovascular and stroke cases, we are ensuring no child has to travel farther than they should to get world-class care, and we're building a future where our kids

not only survive but thrive."

The suite delivers exceptionally detailed, three-dimensional images of blood vessels in and around the brain. This allows neurointerventional surgeons to diagnose and treat pediatric stroke, aneurysms, arteriovenous malformations, as well as brain tumors and other intracranial pathologies. This advanced imaging capability enables Children's Minnesota's multidisciplinary team of kid experts to identify and characterize vascular blockages and other abnormalities with unmatched precision. Using these high-resolution images, neurointerventional surgeons can develop targeted treatment plans and perform minimally invasive interventions for complex conditions to minimize risk and improve outcomes.

"This defines a new chapter in pediatric neurovascular care in the upper midwest. We are very fortunate to have assembled one of the most experienced neurointerventional teams in the country right here in the Twin Cities. Our goal is to become one of the leading practices nationally and contribute our experience to the expanding field of pediatric neurointervention internationally through academic and service missions," said Collin Torok, MD, medical director of neurointerventional surgery at Children's Minnesota, and co-director of the cerebrovascular program with Dr. Kebriaei.

This added technology strengthens Children's Minnesota's cerebrovascular and stroke program, making it one of only a few dedicated pediatric programs of its kind in the country with depth of experience, high-quality multidisciplinary treatments, long-term management and strong clinical outcomes for patients. The cerebrovascular and stroke program at Children's Minnesota brings together a team of pediatric experts to provide the most advanced level of care for kids and young adults.



Advanced biplane neuroangiography suite for children. (AP)

Castillo claims historic title at Puerto Rico Open

# Bhatia wins Arnold Palmer Invitational in playoff; Rahm ends drought

ORLANDO, Fla., March 9, (AP): Arnold Palmer was famous for saying, "You must play boldly to win," and Akshay Bhatia followed that script to a stunning comeback and playoff victory in the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

Bhatia started his back-nine charge with four straight birdies. He nearly holed his 6-iron that went right at the flag on the par-5 16th to set up eagle. And he outlasted Daniel Berger with a par on the first extra hole to win at Bay Hill.

"You just never know what can happen in this game," Bhatia said after he closed with a 3-under 69 and won his third PGA Tour title, all of them in playoffs.

This was the biggest, a \$20 million signature event that moves the 24-year-old into the top 20 in the world at the start of a big stretch in golf that concludes with the Masters next month.

Berger looked like he had this won, walking confidently after shots in building a four-shot lead at the turn. He lost the lead by missing a 7-foot par putt on the 17th hole and showed plenty of moxie just to get into the playoff with an up-and-down from 70 yards for par on the final

hole for a 70.

They finished at 15-under 273, the first playoff at Bay Hill since 1999.

Jon Rahm of Spain closed with a 6-under 64 to win LIV Golf Hong Kong for his first individual title since 2024.

Rahm finished at 23-under 257, three shots ahead of Thomas Detry. The Spaniard hadn't won a title since LIV Golf Chicago in 2024, though he won the season points title each of the last two years on the Saudi-funded league.

Rahm pulled away with four straight birdies on the back nine and Detry couldn't keep up. Rahm had a five-shot lead going to the 18th and made bogey while Detry made birdie.

Dustin Johnson's 4Aces GC took the team prize.

Mi Hyang Lee threw away her lead with two double bogeys on the front nine, and then delivered a winner on the final hole Sunday with a lob wedge that hit the pin and set up a tap-in birdie to win the Blue Bay LPGA by one shot.

Lee closed with a 1-over 73 for a one-shot victory over Zhang Weiwei, who shot 69 at Jian Lake Blue Bay but lost the lead with a bogey on the 17th.



Akshay Bhatia holds the championship trophy after winning the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill golf tournament in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

It was Lee's third LPGA title, and her first in more than eight years.

The South Korean finished at 11-under 277 for her first win since the 2017 Women's Scottish Open.

Auston Kim (71) stayed in contention for a LPGA title for the second consecutive week and made three bird-

ies over the last five holes to tie for third with Aditi Ashok (72) of India.

Ricky Castillo made back-to-back birdies right after 18-year-old Blades Brown came undone with one bad hole, closing with a 5-under 67 to win the Puerto Rico Open for his first PGA Tour title.

Brown, trying to become the youngest PGA Tour winner in 95 years, had a one-shot lead with six holes to play when he went from bunker to water and made triple bogey on the 13th.

Castillo, playing in the final group behind Brown, holed a 12-foot birdie putt on the 13th, and then hit a beautiful pitch over the mounds to 5 feet for birdie on the par-4 14th.

Castillo narrowly missed out - by 11 points in the FedEx Cup standings - on getting into the \$20 million signature event at Bay Hill this week. The victory in Puerto Rico gets him into the PGA Championship. He already was eligible for The Players Championship next week.

Dan Bradbury of England hit a beautiful chip from behind the 18th green to save par Sunday for a 5-under 65 and a one-shot victory in the Joburg Open, his second time winning the tournament and third European tour title.

His clutch par denied Casey Jarvis of South Africa a chance to join Nick Faldo and Seve Ballesteros as the only players in European tour history to win three consecutive tournaments. Jarvis narrowly missed a birdie putt that could have forced a playoff. He shot 66.

Brandon Robinson Thompson was tied for the lead, playing one group ahead of Bradbury, when he three-putted the 18th green from about 45 feet for a bogey that gave him a 66.

Hennie Du Plessis, the 54-hole leader, shot 31 on the front nine but had a pair of bogeys and a double bogey on the back for a 70 to finish fourth.

Two-time major champion Zach Johnson turned 50 on Feb. 24 and quickly cashed in Sunday in his PGA Tour Champions debut, closing with a 3-under 69 for a four-shot victory in the James Hardie Pro Football Hall of Fame Invitational.

Johnson made an early bogey and that was his only blemish on the scorecard, adding four birdies to pull away on the Old Course at Broken Sound. He became the 22nd player to win his debut on the 50-and-older circuit. Stewart Cink (70) and George McNeill (72) finished second.

Johnson finished at 11-under 205 and earned \$330,000 to move to No. 3 in the Charles Schwab Cup. Cink remains atop the standings.

Doc Redman won the Astara Chile Classic on Sunday for his first Korn Ferry Tour title, closing with a 4-under 67 for a five-stroke victory.

### SA joins Fiji atop men's standings

## SAfrica & New Zealand rule Vancouver Sevens

VANCOUVER, March 9, (AP): South Africa has joined Fiji atop the World Rugby Sevens Series men's standings after beating Spain 38-12 in the final of the Vancouver Sevens.

Player of the Tournament Tristan Leyds provided a series of try assists in the first half which allowed South Africa to take control of the final before halftime. It went on to win its 47th World Series tournament title while Spain remains without a title after three finals appearances.

Jorja Miller inspired New Zealand to a 24-17 win over Australia in the women's final, it's fifth-straight win in Vancouver and it's third win in five tournaments this season.

Australia rallied from 17-5 down just after halftime to level the match at 17-17 but New Zealand secured possession at the restart and Alena Saili scored the match-winning try.

New Zealand leads Australia by six points in the season standings with one tournament remaining in New York before the season finals. Australia and New Zealand have met in all five women's finals this season with New Zealand winning three and Australia two.

Spain reached its first men's final of the season after an outstanding tournament in which it beat New Zealand in pool play and two-time Olympic champion Fiji in the semifinals.

But it struggled against South Africa's physical style in the final. Leyds played a key role with assists which led to tries by Sebastian Jobb and Shilton van Wyk as South Africa led 17-0 by halftime. Ryan Oothuizen opened the scoring for South Africa.

Van Wyk's second try put South Africa in control at 24-0 and after tries for Spain by Jeremy Treivithick and Anton Legorburu Impi, Visser closed out the match for the South Africans.

"It's an amazing feeling," Visser said. "It's such a privilege to play in finals and pull the jersey over our heads."

"Sometimes we take it for granted but it's really an amazing feeling and we're just really grateful for it. We have to keep on this momentum next week in New York."

Miller was hugely influential in the women's final, winning turnovers as New Zealand pressured Australia on defense.

### Martin wins LA Marathon

## Ugandans celebrate Kiplimo for breaking half marathon record

KAMPALA, March 9, (Agencies): Ugandans celebrated top distance runner Jacob Kiplimo's success in breaking the men's half-marathon world record.

Kiplimo set the new mark at the Lisbon Half Marathon in Portugal, clocking 57:20 in the World Athletics Elite Label road race.

The previous record was held by Yomif Kejelcha, who set it in 2024. Kiplimo improved the mark by 10 seconds. The Ugandan had also held an earlier world record of 57:31, which he achieved in Lisbon in 2021.

Kenya's Nicholas Kipkorir finished second in 58:08.

"I am very happy that after hard work and determination, I have managed to break yet another world record," Kiplimo told Xinhua by phone from Lisbon.

Dr. Patrick Ogwel, General Secretary of the National Council of Sports (NCS), Uganda's sports governing body, praised Kiplimo for the outstanding performance. "We thank Kiplimo for doing well and carrying the national flag high," added Dr. Ogwel.

Athletics fan Maria Natasha Matovu was also full of praise. "He has shown the world that he is a class apart because he also holds the world record of the Cross Country," added Matovu.

"He is the best half-marathon athlete in the world currently, and we are happy he is doing well for himself and the country. He has disappointed all the sceptics and Uganda Athletics is very proud of him," said Uganda Athletics President Dominic Otuchet.

Uganda's State Minister for Sports Peter Ogwang also commended Kiplimo for his achievement. "As government, we are very proud of Kiplimo and we shall continue to support him and all other athletes so that they continue to perform well at the world stage," added Ogwang.

Kiplimo, a three-time world cross-country champion and Olympic medalist, will now turn his focus to the upcoming London Marathon scheduled for next month.

Meanwhile, Nathan Martin won



Jacob Kiplimo

the 41st Los Angeles Marathon in the final stride on Sunday, becoming the second straight American men's winner in the race's closest finish ever.

Martin, of Jackson, Michigan, completed the 26.2-mile course in 2 hours, 11 minutes, 18 seconds, overtaking Michael Kamau of Kenya, who was second in the same time.

Kamau didn't take any fluids during the race and fell at the finish. He was taken away on a stretcher.

Martin, 36, is a substitute teacher and a track and cross country coach at Jackson High School. His personal best is 2:10:45 at the 2023 Grandma's Marathon, where he set a record as the fastest U.S.-born Black marathoner.

Last year, Matt Richtman became the first American to win the men's race since 1994. He won in 2:07:56. Enyew Nigat of Kenya was third on Sunday in 2:14:23.

In the women's race, Priscah Cheron of Kenya won in 2:25:20. The 45-year-old mother of three lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She was 10th in the 5,000 meters at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Kellyn Taylor of Flagstaff, Arizona, finished second in 2:27:37. Antonina Kwambai of Kenya was third in 2:28:50.

Race organizers had announced that because of the weather medals would be given out to runners who completed just 18 miles of the course that began at Dodger Stadium and ended in the Century City section of Los Angeles. Temperatures were expected to rise into the 80s by midday.

# Adebayo hits milestone as Miami hands Pistons 4th straight defeat

Wembanyama and Fox fuel dominant performance, Spurs rout Rockets

MIAMI, March 9, (AP): Tyler Herro scored 25 points, Bam Adebayo had 24 to go over the 10,000-point mark for his career, and the Miami Heat beat Detroit 121-110 to extend the Pistons' season-worst losing streak to four games.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 19 points and seven assists for Miami (36-29), which has won five straight and matched a season best by moving seven games over .500. The Heat are still without Norman Powell (groin) and Nikola Jovic (back), and Andrew Wiggins (toe) was also sidelined.

Adebayo - who added nine rebounds and six assists - entered the night 23 points away from the scoring milestone. He and Dwyane Wade are the only players with 10,000 points in a Heat uniform.

Cade Cunningham finished with 26 points and 10 assists and Jalen Duren scored 24 for the Pistons, whose lead in the Eastern Conference is down to 2 1/2 games over Boston.

**Spurs 145, Rockets 120**

In San Antonio, Victor Wembanyama had 29 points, De'Aaron Fox had 20 points and 10 assists and the San Antonio Spurs won their fourth straight, rolling to a victory over the Houston Rockets.

Stephon Castle added 23 points for San Antonio, which has won 15 of 16.

Kevin Durant and Amen Thompson had 23 points each for Houston, which allowed a season high in points.

The Spurs (47-17) won the season series against the Rockets 3-1 and strengthened their hold on the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference.

Houston (39-24) dropped into fourth in the West, a half-game behind Minnesota (40-24) and seven games behind San Antonio in the loss column.

The Rockets, who have alternated wins and losses over their past six games, allowed a season-most 56 points in the paint.

**Magic to easy 130, Bucks 91**

In Milwaukee, Paolo Banchero scored 33 points and the Orlando Magic cruised past the Milwaukee Bucks, who rested Giannis Antetokounmpo in the second game of a back-to-back.

Jalen Suggs added 20 points and Desmond Bane had 18 for the Magic, who won their fourth straight to remain sixth in the Eastern Conference, one game behind fifth-place Toronto and percentage points ahead of Miami.

Orlando never trailed and led 67-55 at halftime. Early in the fourth quarter, Suggs hit a 3-pointer to start a 12-0 run that extended the Magic's lead to

26 points. Banchero headed to the bench for good late in the third with Orlando ahead by 31.

Bobby Portis had 18 points and 10 rebounds and Cam Thomas scored 17 for the Bucks, who beat Utah on Saturday night but have lost five of six.

**Lakers 110, Knicks 97**

In Los Angeles, Luka Donic had 35 points and eight rebounds, Austin Reaves added 25 points and the Los Angeles Lakers overcame LeBron James' injury absence to grind out a victory over the New York Knicks.

Rui Hachimura scored 13 points for the Lakers, who never trailed the surging Knicks in their fourth consecutive victory even while James missed his second straight game with a bruised left elbow and a left foot injury.

The Lakers slumped in the fourth quarter, managing just one basket in a 6 1/2-minute span down the stretch while New York cut its 23-point deficit to 10. But the Knicks couldn't hit enough shots to capitalize and committed eight turnovers in the fourth.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 25 points and 16 rebounds for the Knicks, who lost for just the second time in six games.

**Suns 111, Hornets 99**

In Phoenix, Devin Booker had 30 points and 10 assists as the Phoenix Suns stopped the Charlotte Hornets' road winning streak at 10 games with a victory.

Booker was 1 for 6 from 3-point range but made all 15 of his free throws.

Collin Gillespie and Jalen Green each scored 24 points for the Suns, who have won four of five. Rasheer Fleming added 16 off the bench, including four 3-pointers.

LaMelo Ball led the Hornets with 22 points. Their road winning streak was the NBA's longest



San Antonio Spurs forward Victor Wembanyama (1) reaches for a rebound against Houston Rockets forward Jabari Smith Jr. (10) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio. (AP)

since the Los Angeles Lakers won 11 straight away from home in 2019-20. Charlotte hadn't lost on the road since Jan. 17 at Golden State.

**Raptors 122, Mavericks 92**

In Toronto, RJ Barrett scored a season-high 31 points, Scottie Barnes added 17 and the Toronto Raptors beat the struggling Dallas Mavericks.

Jakob Poeltl had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Sandro Mamukelashvili scored 13 points as the Raptors snapped a four-game losing streak against Dallas.

Barrett passed 8,000 career points, becoming the eighth Canadian player to reach the milestone. Barrett, 25, is the youngest of that group, which includes active players Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Dillon Brooks, plus former two-time NBA MVP Steve Nash.

**Kings 126, Bulls 110**

In Sacramento, Russell Westbrook had 23 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds for his NBA-record 208th career triple-double, and the Sacramento Kings beat the Chicago Bulls.

Westbrook shot 7 of 17 with three 3-pointers in 35 minutes. It's the fourth triple-double of the season for the 37-year-old, who moved within one assist of passing Mark Jackson for sixth on the NBA's all-time list.

Westbrook's triple-doubles are an ongoing record for the nine-time All-Star and came six days after he ripped into the Sacramento media for the narrative around the Kings this season.

**Trail Blazers 131, Pacers 111**

In Portland, Scoot Henderson scored a season-high 28 points on 10-of-15 shooting and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the skidding Indiana Pacers.

Jerami Grant and Jrue Holiday added 21 points apiece for the Blazers, who handed Indiana its ninth straight defeat. Henderson also had six assists with no turnovers.

Deni Avdija, who leads Portland in scoring (24.4 points per game) and assists (6.6), returned from a six-game absence caused by a lower back injury. He finished with 18 points and eight assists.

**Pelicans 138, Wizards 118**

In New Orleans, Trey Murphy III scored 24 points, Saddiq Bey added 23 against his former team and the New Orleans Pelicans defeated the reeling Wizards to extend Washington's losing streak to eight games.

Zion Williamson had 20 points and Dejounte Murray provided 19 for the Pelicans, who outscored Washington 72-44 in the paint.

Trae Young, playing his second game for the Wizards since being traded by Atlanta, had 17 points and eight assists in 18 minutes on the court. It was his 12th game all season.

Roque strike seals Palmeiras Paulista crown

## Flamengo secures 3rd straight Carioca title

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 9, (Xinhua): Goalkeeper Agustin Rossi saved two spot kicks as Flamengo won the Carioca championship by beating Fluminense 5-4 on penalties.

Rossi kept out attempts from Guga and Otavio in the shootout after a goalless draw in the allotted 90 minutes at the Maracana Stadium.

It marked Flamengo's 40th Carioca title and third in succession.

Leonardo Jardim, who was making his debut as Flamengo manager after being appointed on Wednesday, praised the work of his predecessor Filipe Luis.

"It's great to win a title in Brazil, something I'd not achieved before," the former Monaco and Sporting Lisbon boss said.

"I want to thank the staff and the players, and also Filipe Luis because he built this team." Flamengo and Fluminense will now turn their attention to the Copa Libertadores and Brazil's Serie A.

Former Barcelona striker Vitor Roque struck in the second half as Palmeiras secured its 27th Paulista title with a 2-1 win at Novorizontino on Sunday.

Matheus Bianqui cancelled out Murilo Cerqueira's early strike before Roque capitalized on an error from goalkeeper Jordi Almeida to fire in the winner just after the hour.

The result gave Palmeiras a 3-1 victory on aggregate

after a 1-0 home win in last week's first leg of the final.

"Today, being able to contribute, play minutes and score a goal makes me very happy and proud," the 21-year-old Brazil international said.

"It was my first title wearing the Palmeiras shirt and now I want to win more. This is a very close-knit group with no individual egos and players who are prepared to make sacrifices for the good of the team. Everyone in this squad deserves this title." Palmeiras will now turn its attention to Brazil's Serie A, while Novorizontino will focus on the Serie B.

In Mexico City, Toluca scored three second-half goals to secure a 3-1 home win over Juarez in Mexico's Liga MX Clausura tournament.

Helinho gave the hosts the lead by converting a 54th-minute penalty and Antonio Brisen made it 2-0 by heading in from Sebastian Cordova's set piece in the 70th minute.

The visitors pulled a goal back through Guilherme Castilho's 72nd-minute strike before Paulinho put the result beyond doubt in stoppage time by lifting a first-time effort over goalkeeper Sebastian Jurado.

The result leaves Toluca second in the 18-team standings with 24 points, 14 ahead of 13th-placed Juarez.

In other Liga MX fixture, Santos Laguna edged to a 2-1 win at Club Tijuana.



Players of Flamengo celebrate with the Carioca Championship trophy after beating Fluminense in the final soccer match in Rio de Janeiro. (AP)

# Milan keeps title hopes alive with derby victory over Inter



Inter Milan's Yann Bisseck, left, AC Milan's Pervis Estupinan, center, and Adrien Rabiot jump for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Inter Milan, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

## Roma slips again

MILAN, March 9, (AP): AC Milan isn't ready to yield to city rival Inter Milan in the Serie A title race.

Pervis Estupinan scored the winner as Milan beat Inter 1-0 again in the Derby della Madonnina.

The Rossoneri cut their city rival's lead to seven points with 10 rounds of the season remaining, setting off joyous celebrations in the San Siro while Inter's players questioned the referee for ruling out what would have been a very late equalizer.

Inter had the ball in the net in stoppage time after a quickly taken corner, but it was too quick for the referee, who hadn't given the go-ahead for it to be taken, and blew his whistle before the ball crossed the line.

Inter had won its last eight Serie A games since a 2-2 draw with Napoli on Jan. 11, and was 15 games unbeaten in the league since the last derby, also won 1-0 by Milan, in November.

Youssouf Fofana played Estupinan through on the left, and the Ecuador left back let fly with a



Genoa's Patrizio Masini, right, fights for the ball with Roma's Devyne Rensch during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Genoa and Roma in Genoa, Italy. (AP)

powerful shot to the back of the net for what proved to be the winner in the 35th minute, just after Henrikh Mkhitaryan missed a great chance for Inter at the other end.

Mkhitaryan was one of three Inter players against two Milan defenders, but he was unable to beat Mike Maignan in the Milan goal.

Inter defender Alessandro Bas-

toni earned the game's first yellow card for a clear foul on Adrien Rabiot. Both players needed treatment, and Bastoni was to rue the challenge as he was unable to continue.

The tireless Luka Modric was booked for Milan late on.

Inter was without Hakan Calhanoglu and Lautaro Martinez, who watched from the substitutes' bench.

Inter stayed on 67 points, and second-place Milan moved to 60. Defending champion Napoli is third with 56 points.

Portuguese forward Vitor Roque scored for Daniele De Rossi's Genoa in a 2-1 upset win over Roma, dealing the visitors another blow in their quest for Champions League qualification.

Roma's loss comes after last week's 3-3 draw with Juventus, which is just a point behind in the fight for fourth place.

Roma and Como are level on 51 points, and though Como has the better goal difference, Roma won their encounter earlier in the season, and head-to-head will be the determining factor if they finish level. Roma visits Como next weekend. The top four qualify for Europe's premier club competition.

Junior Messias fired Genoa ahead from the penalty spot early in the second half.

Evan Ndicka quickly responded for Roma before Vitor Roque scored in the 80th, five minutes after going on as a substitute, to give the team coached by former Roma great De Rossi its second straight win at home.

## Bell and Larson complete the podium

Blaney ends Reddick's streak to give Team Penske Phoenix weekend sweep

AVONDALE, Ariz., March 9, (AP): Ryan Blaney completed a Team Penske sweep at Phoenix Raceway by winning the Cup Series race - a victory that denied Tyler Reddick a fourth consecutive win to start the NASCAR season.

Blaney was the race favorite after winning last November's season-finale on the mile oval but he had to overcome at least three tire problems that cost him track position. He chased down Ty Gibbs - the 49th car he passed Sunday - to take the lead with 10 laps remaining and seal his 18th career victory.

"Just perseverance," Blaney said. "We had a couple mistakes that we learned from, got better, had to come from the back a couple times. It's cool to win, especially after a day like that. Can't say enough about the (team) for keeping their head down and doing what they do."

As he celebrated on the frontstretch, his parked Ford began to roll away and Blaney had to chase after it to ensure it was in park.

The victory came during a weekend celebration of Team Penske's 60th season of competition and during a "desert doubleheader" that bundled IndyCar and NASCAR together at Phoenix. David Malukas won the IndyCar pole for Roger Penske and then Josef Newgarden won Saturday's race; Joey Logano won the pole for the Cup race and then Blaney completed the sweep.

"Really proud of everybody at Team Penske," Blaney said. "We swept the weekend, Newgarden winning yesterday, us winning today. Can't wait to see Roger."

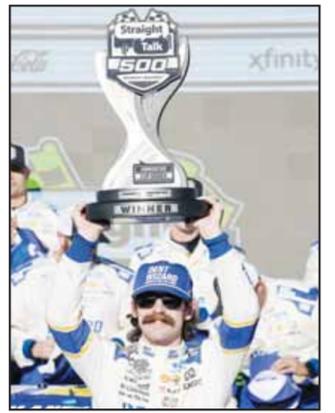
The win was the first this season for Ford as Reddick in a Michael Jordan-owned Toyota for 23XI Racing set a NASCAR record by winning the first three races of the season.

Christopher Bell finished second in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing, reigning Cup champion Kyle Larson was third in a Chevrolet for Hendrick Motorsports and Gibbs dropped to fourth.

Denny Hamlin, who lost the championship last November at this track, was fifth as JGR drivers took three of the top five positions. Bell dominated the race the same way Hamlin did in November and, just like Hamlin, lost because of the wrong pit strategy.

Hamlin in November took four tires on the final stop and was beat for the championship by Larson, who took two tires. On Sunday, Blaney took two tires while Bell and Hamlin each took four.

"You win some, you lose some," said Bell, who led 176 of the 312 laps. "This one stings, but on the positive side, I'm



Ryan Blaney hoists the trophy in Victory Lane after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Phoenix Raceway in Avondale, Ariz. (AP)

really proud of our entire team. It's something to build on. It was a day that we needed."

Bubba Wallace was sixth for 23XI, William Byron was seventh for Hendrick, and Reddick was eighth. Toyota drivers took six of the top 10 spots.

"It would have been nice to make it four," Reddick said. "Scored the fourth most amount of points on the day... solid day. If we're not going to win, these are the kind of days we need to have."

The race was slowed by a record-tying 12 cautions, most caused by a rash of tire failures.

Contact between Joey Logano and Ross Chastain caused a multi-car crash with under 100 laps remaining that ruined Anthony Alfredo's season debut.

Alfredo got the call this week from Hendrick Motorsports to drive the No. 48 Chevrolet after Alex Bowman was ruled out with vertigo. Alfredo has spent hundreds of hours over the past four years inside a racing simulator doing test work for Hendrick and Sunday's start was the best opportunity of his career.

Phoenix marked Alfredo's first Cup start of the season - he qualified for the Daytona 500 driving for tiny Beard Motorsports, but his car was disqualified and kicked out of the field. Alfredo has 43 career Cup starts for smaller teams. The crash caused him to finish 33rd in his first race with NASCAR's winningest team.

The Cup Series races at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday. Josh Berry is the defending race winner and Denny Hamlin won last fall.

## China's Wang ends An's streak to win All England title

LONDON, March 9, (Xinhua): China's Wang Zhiyi defeated South Korea's An Se-young to win the women's singles title at the All England Open Badminton Championships in Birmingham.

Wang claimed her first All England crown and ended a 10-match losing streak against the world No. 1 in their 23rd career meeting.

Wang stayed patient in extended rallies and kept her errors to a minimum, securing a 21-15, 21-19 victory in 59 minutes. The win gave Wang her first women's singles title of the season and snapped An's 36-match winning streak.

"The key to today's victory was my mindset against my opponent," Wang said. "In previous matches, I couldn't sustain rallies for that long, but today I managed to do it and my opponent made some mistakes." In the men's singles final,



Wang Zhiyi poses during the awarding ceremony for the women's singles final between Wang Zhiyi of China and An Se Young of South Korea at the All England Open Badminton Championships 2026 in Birmingham, Britain. (Xinhua)

Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-yi beat India's Lakshya Sen 21-15, 22-20 to claim his first BWF World Tour Super 1000 title and extend his winning streak against Sen to five matches.

Top seeds captured both the men's and women's doubles titles. China's Liu Shengshu and Tan Ning defeated South Korea's Baek Ha-na and Lee So-hee 21-18, 21-12 to take the women's doubles title, completing a career sweep of all Super 1000 tournaments.

South Korea's Kim Won-ho and Seo Seung-jae defended their men's doubles crown with an 18-21, 21-12, 21-19 win over Malaysia's Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik.

Chinese Taipei's Ye Hong-wei and Nicole Gonzales Chan won the mixed doubles title, beating France's Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue 21-19, 21-18.

**ARAB TIMES**  
Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

**For Subscriptions and Complaints**

Please Call

**51508991**  
**51526559**





India's Shivam Dube hits a six during the T20 World Cup cricket final match between India and New Zealand in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

# Sports

## India's golden era continues with 3rd T20 World Cup



India's players, coaches and support staff celebrate with the trophy after winning the T20 World Cup final match against New Zealand in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

### Bumrah destroys New Zealand

**AHMEDABAD, India, March 9, (AP):** India won the T20 World Cup for a record third time with a crushing 96-run victory over New Zealand on Sunday to the delight of more than 86,000 cricket fans at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium. Defending champion India scored an imposing 255-5 in the final after losing the toss and batting first. Opener Sanju Samson hit a brilliant 46-ball 89, in his third straight 50. New Zealand never posed a genuine threat in its chase and was all out for 159 in 19 overs. India pacer Jasprit Bumrah took 4-15 in four overs, and Axar Patel picked up 3-27 in three overs. New Zealand opener Tim Seifert scored a 26-ball 52 with five sixes.

India, which won the T20 World Cup in 2007 and 2024, became the first country to successfully defend its title. India won the 2024 final against South Africa by seven runs, but dominated Sunday from the start. New

Zealand was aiming for its first T20 World Cup triumph.

It also finished as runner-up in the 2021 final, losing to Australia in Dubai. Abhishek Sharma roared into form as he hit three sixes and six fours in his 21-ball 52, reaching his half-century in only 18 balls. Samson took to the skies as well, hitting eight sixes in all, as the duo reached 50 off only 24 deliveries.

India's 92-0 was the joint highest power play score in any T20 World Cup match, equaling West Indies' 92-1 against Afghanistan in the 2024 edition. It proved a superb base for building a formidable total, and India never really relinquished control of the game. Sharma was out caught behind in the eighth over, but Ishan Kishan and Samson added another 105 off 48 balls for the second wicket. Samson reached 50 off 33 balls - after 97 not out and 89 against West Indies and England, respectively - while Kishan powered to a third half-century in the tournament, coming off 23 balls. Samson's 89 was the highest individual score in a men's T20 World Cup final, and he was named player of the tournament for his 321 runs at an average of 80.25. "It feels like a dream, actually."

I am very happy and grateful, out of emotions and words," Samson said. India was past 200 in the 15th over, when it briefly stumbled. James Neesham picked up three wickets in the 16th over - Samson and Kishan were caught at long on, and then Suryakumar Yadav was out caught in the deep on the leg side for a first-ball duck. Shivam Dube's 26 not out off eight balls with two sixes helped India cross

250 yet again.

Finn Allen was out caught off Patel for just nine, while Kishan took a spectacular catch to send back Rachin Ravindra (1) off Bumrah. Patel bowled Glenn Phillips (5) and Hardik Pandya cleaned up Mark Chapman (3) as New Zealand was down to 70-4 in 7.4 overs. Seifert's innings included five sixes before he was Varun Chakravarthy's sole wicket of the day, with Kishan claiming another fine catch. Kishan was in action again as Patel sent Daryl Mitchell (17), while Bumrah returned to polish off the lower order. He was on a hat trick in the 16th over and took his tally to 40 wickets in T20 World Cups - the most for a pacer in tournament history.

Bumrah was named the player of the match. "It feels extremely special because I have played one final at my home venue, but couldn't win that one, but this one feels really special," Bumrah said. "I was really motivated and really clear about what I wanted to do. Today, all execution went as per our plans."

It was a memorable night for fans at the Narendra Modi Stadium, where India lost to Australia in the Cricket World Cup final in 2023. India became the first country to successfully defend its title and also the first team to claim the trophy on home soil. India and Sri Lanka co-hosted this 2026 edition. Yadav joined the likes of MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma as Indian captains to lift the T20 World Cup on another big day for Indian cricket.

### Former President flags General Assembly dispute

## Al-Jahra board endorsed by Court of Appeals

**KUWAIT CITY, March 9:** The Board of Directors of Jahra Sports Club announced on its 'X' account that the Court of Appeals ruled on the validity of the General Assembly, which endorsed the board in February 2024, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This ruling confirms the legality of procedures and the endorsement of the current board, headed by Yousef Karim Al-Enezi, after concluding all cases filed in the sports and administrative courts.

The club stated that the board appreciates the efforts of Jasser Al-Jada'i Law Firm and Attorney Mohammad Abdullah Al-Bader in defending the club in the cases, all of which ended with the affirmation of the endorsement of the board.

President of the club Yousef Karim said the cases in Kuwaiti courts are now closed, indicating the administration of the club is now waiting for authorization from the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) to sign the relevant documents in order to manage the affairs of the club and its employees - including the technical and administrative personnel, and players - and restore the situation to its previous state.



In this file photo, fans and officials gather outside Al-Jahra Sports Club ahead of a major announcement regarding the club's board and General Assembly ruling.

He thanked everyone who supported the current club administration until the truth was revealed.

He added that the club works for the benefit of the people in the area, even if it means starting from scratch.

He pointed out that the Court of

Arbitration for Sport (CAS) closed the case internationally after rejecting the appeal against the president of the club and others.

This followed an arbitration ruling by the National Sports Arbitration Authority confirming the validity of the General Assembly held in November

2023, which formed a temporary committee that called for elections.

These elections resulted in the endorsement of the board, headed by Yousef Karim Al-Enezi, in February 2024.

On the other hand, former President of the club Attorney Khaled Al-Jarallah stated that the statement published on the 'X' account of the club did not mention the forgery of the minutes of the General Assembly.

He said the court acquitted the defendant of forging the General Assembly minutes, clarifying that the court did not rule on the validity of the assembly, which was the subject of the dispute.

He added "when interpreting the ruling, accuracy must be ensured and the public should not be misled. The statement ignored the alleged forgery of the General Assembly held in the Legend Hall. The public was made to believe that the court ruled on the validity of assembly, which is completely untrue."

He is hoping that everyone ensures the information is accurate and true prior to publication in order to avoid misleading the sports community.

### Players unable to fully gather

## Arnold calls on FIFA to delay Iraq crucial World Cup playoff

**BAGHDAD, March 9, (AP):** Iraq head coach Graham Arnold has issued an urgent plea to soccer's international governing body to delay his team's intercontinental qualifier for the World Cup because of disruptions caused by the escalating Iran war.

The Iraq squad faces major logistical issues ahead of a winner-takes-all playoff against either Suriname or Bolivia, scheduled for March 31 in Monterrey, Mexico.

With Iraqi airspace closed until April 1 due to the escalating conflict, Arnold's squad - containing predominantly players from the domestic league - is unable to fully gather.

Players haven't secured visas for the playoff tournament in Mexico due to foreign embassy closures, and Arnold is stranded in the United Arab Emirates due to the conflict.

"Please help us with this game because right now we are struggling to get our players out of the country of Iraq," Arnold, a former coach of Australia's national team, told the Australian Associated Press.

The turmoil has already forced the postponement of a planned training



In this file photo, Iraqi's head coach Graham Arnold sits on the bench at the start of the 2026 World Cup play off first leg soccer match between UAE and Iraq in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. (AP)

camp in Houston. Arnold said fielding a team comprised only of overseas-based players is not a viable option.

"It wouldn't be our best team and we need our best team available for the country's biggest game in 40 years," he said.

Arnold has proposed a strategic delay to the playoffs schedule, suggesting FIFA allow Suriname and Bolivia to play their preliminary match this month but postponing the final playoff until a week before the World Cup begins.

### China edges North Korea to take Group B top spot

**SYDNEY, March 9, (AP):** Defending champion China edged North Korea 2-1 in a physical, high-energy game Monday to take top spot in Group B in the Women's Asian Cup.

The result sent North Korea into a quarterfinal Friday against Australia in Perth, where the hosts and 2023 World Cup semifinalists opened the tournament with a win over Philippines.

China and North Korea were already assured of quarterfinal spots with two wins apiece ahead of their showdown at Western Sydney Stadium. Uzbekistan finished third in the group with a 4-0 win over Bangladesh in Perth, also securing a spot in the knockout stage.

Playing in its first Women's Asian Cup tournament since losing the 2010 final to Australia, North Korea only needed a draw against China to top the group. And they took the lead when Kim Kyong Yong finished off a counter-attacking goal in the 32nd minute, the first shot on goal in the game.

The lead was short-lived, though,



Players of China pose after winning the Group B match of Women's Asian Cup between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in Sydney, Australia. (Xinhua)

with China equalizing two minutes later when Chen Qiaozhu's stunning strike through traffic from the edge of the area.

China went ahead in a tense finish to the first half, when Wang Shuang's goal was awarded after a VAR review deep in stoppage time.

The VAR decision to overturn the assistant referee's offside call upset the North Korean players and led to coach Ri Song Ho being yellow carded by

referee Thi Ly Le as his team protested on the sideline. The North Korean players didn't return to the pitch before halftime was called.

Both teams had chances in the second half, with North Korea goalkeeper Yu Son Gum making a full-length diving save to Wang's powerful left-foot shot in the 78th, and then 19-year-old Choe Il Son appearing to equalize two minutes later before being ruled offside after a VAR review.

## Port Vale, Saints stun Premier League sides to reach FA Cup quarterfinals

**LONDON, March 9, (AP):** This season's FA Cup just keeps on delivering shocks.

Third-tier Port Vale pulled off a massive upset by beating Premier League Sunderland 1-0 to advance to the quarterfinals of the historic competition. That was after Championship side Southampton knocked out another top-flight team with a 1-0 win against Fulham.

Port Vale is bottom of League One and 57 places below Sunderland. But the West Midlands team booked its place alongside giants Liverpool, Arsenal, Manchester City and Chelsea in the last eight courtesy of Ben Waime's looping first half header.

It was the latest giant-killing in a season that already saw sixth-tier Macclesfield eliminate titleholder Crystal Palace in what was officially the biggest upset in FA Cup history.

Port Vale - the lowest ranked team left in the competition - is situated less than 20 miles from Macclesfield and proved every bit as inhospitable for Premier League opposition.

"It probably hasn't sunk in really. I'm in a little bit of shock about that result today," Port Vale manager Jon Brady told TNT Sports. "Not that I didn't believe we could do it,

but you need a lot of things going your way."

Brady and his players only secured their place in the fifth round by beating Championship side Bristol City five days earlier, with Waime scoring the winner in that match as well.

"I know it wasn't pretty to watch, probably not the best game to watch, but we dug in so hard and I think we deserved it," said Waime, who headed in from close range in the 28th minute. "We stuck to the game plan - as simple as that."

Ross Stewart's 91st-minute penalty sealed victory for Southampton at Craven Cottage.

The game was heading to extra time when Joachim Andersen brought down Finn Azzaz in the box late on. Stewart stepped up and blasted past Fulham goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte.

Fulham coach Marco Silva paid the price for making nine changes to his starting lineup and leaving out star players like Raul Jimenez, Antonee Robinson and Alex Iwobi.

Victory continues Southampton's impressive surge under coach Tonda Eckert, who has transformed the club's fortunes since taking charge in November.