



Egypt condemns Iran attack on Kuwaiti territory: El-Sisi Page 2



Scan the QR code to access the Arab Times WhatsApp Channel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026 / RAMADAN 29, 1447 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 19156

16 PAGES

150 FILS

## TEHRAN REELS AS TOP SECURITY CHIEFS REPORTEDLY KILLED

# Regional strikes rage on as Kuwait repels Iran assaults

### Medics injured amid ongoing drone threats

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Kuwait National Guard (KNG) said it intercepted two drones within its area of responsibility on Tuesday.**

In a press statement, official spokesperson of KNG Brigadier General Dr. Jadaan Fadhel Jadaan affirmed that this interception was carried out within the operational framework aimed at ensuring national security, protecting vital sites and counteracting threats.

He highlighted the exceptional level of coordination between KNG, Kuwait Army, Ministry of Interior and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), indicating that these combined forces are fully prepared to foil attempts to undermine national security, sovereignty and stability, as well as to protect national interests and resources.

Earlier, Jadaan revealed that the KNG task force shot down seven hostile drones that breached the airspace of the country in the last 24 hours.

He stated that KNG has intercepted and downed three drones and 24 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) since the start of the Iranian attacks and the total number of downed drones reached 27.

Continued on Page 5



## Opinion

**Ahmed Al-Jarallah**

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## To Iran and its agents ... The killer will be killed, sooner or later

THERE is a well-known saying - "The killer will be killed, even if it takes time."

All those who have committed massacres against the Iranian people, the peoples of the region, and their proxies spreading corruption in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen will be killed.

The oppressor and the murderer must be punished in this life and the hereafter, but God grants respite and does not neglect.

At the same time, those whose vision has been blinded by hatred or sectarian and doctrinal extremism place no value on their homeland or concern for their families and relatives, to the point of participating in attacks targeting their own country.

This is the worst form of corruption on earth, as those who betray their homeland cannot be trusted, not even with the welfare of their own families.

Since 1979, the region has been afflicted by a regime still living in the Middle Ages, and using terrorism to impose sectarian beliefs that are neither Islamic nor humane.

These ideas reflect a repugnant form of racism. For 47 years, the Iranian regime has thrived on bloodshed, subjecting the region to wars and crises since 1980.

The words of Al-Mutanabbi resonate with Iran under the rule of the "Ayatollahs' regime" - "One of the most difficult situations in life is when a weak man is forced to befriend his enemy."

Given its geographical proximity, we must coexist with Iran, despite its regime targeting us with

numerous terrorist plots.

However, establishing a conscious and calculated friendship with Iran is not a sign of weakness, but it reflects our belief that the region, blessed with abundant natural resources and a rich heritage, has the potential to build a rich civilization.

Instead, the malevolent neighbor and its agents have sought to alter the region's character and culture by planting cells throughout the Gulf states and spreading fear in Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. These traitors resemble Abu Raghail, the embodiment of betrayal and treachery.

The discovery of terrorist cells in Kuwait comes as no surprise. The members of these cells sold their homeland for a pittance. They are not part of this nation; instead, they harbor hatred toward it and its people.

The cell recently uncovered by the Ministry of Interior is not the first. Since 1979, other cells have carried out bombings at popular cafes, some embassies, and oil facilities, in addition to attempting to assassinate the late Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him).

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com



PM Diwan photo  
His Highness Prime Minister Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

## 16 arrested in security sweep

# Kuwait foils Hezb-linked terror plot

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Security forces have arrested a terrorist cell affiliated with the Hezbollah. The cell, consisting of 14 Kuwaitis and two Lebanese, targeted national security and recruited individuals.**

Firearms, ammunition, an assassination weapon, Morse code communication devices, drones, flags of terrorist organizations, maps and photographs were found in their possession. They were referred to the relevant authorities.

Brigadier General Nasser Bousulaib, Director of the Public Relations and Security Media Department and official spokesperson of the ministry, stated that following careful and intensive security monitoring and surveillance operations, the specialized security agencies succeeded in uncovering and arresting a terrorist cell

belonging to the Hezbollah.

He said this cell sought to destabilize national security and recruit individuals to join the terrorist organization.

He revealed that investigations uncovered a well-coordinated sabotage plot carried out by members of this terrorist group, composed of 14 Kuwaiti citizens and two Lebanese nationals.

He stated that the plot aimed to undermine the sovereignty of the country, destabilize it, spread chaos, and disrupt public order.

He asserted that this is a direct threat to national security and poses danger to the citizens, expatriates and State resources. He disclosed that security forces seized several items from the group after obtaining a warrant from the Public Prosecution.

Continued on Page 5

## Kuwait's food supply steady amid tensions

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA):** Acting Director General of the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources Salem Al-Hai, announced Tuesday that fish imports through land border crossings are continuing at good levels.

Al-Hai said in a press statement that local marine fishing operations are also ongoing, though not currently at full capacity.

He explained that under current regional conditions, only large fishing vessels are permitted to operate at sea, noting coordination is underway

Continued on Page 5

## Ramadan Timings

Imsak..... Wednesday..... 04:36  
Iftar..... Wednesday..... 17:58  
Imsak..... Thursday..... 04:34

## Day by Day

I AM pleased to express my gratitude to our Ambassador in Riyadh, the ever-active and ever-smiling Sheikh Sabah Nasser Al-Sabah.

Dear Ambassador, you have fulfilled your duty towards your fellow citizens stranded in Makkah and Saudi Arabia, whose flights were suspended due to the war.

Those you cared for, Sheikh Sabah, have expressed their appreciation for your efforts in ending their hardship.

Sheikh Sabah, all the stranded citizens have now arrived safely in Kuwait. Such concern is admirable, especially when it comes from the heart.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

## Ramadan campaign raises KD 11.4 mln to support distressed debtors

# 1,114 in Kuwait face arrest over debts below KD 5,000

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Deputy Head of the Court of Cassation and Director General of the Judiciary Sentences Enforcement Department, Counselor Abdullah Al-Qasimi, revealed that 1,114 individuals have outstanding arrest warrants in execution cases where the debt does not exceed KD 5,000, with a total debt of approximately KD 3,183,000.**

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Al-Qasimi explained that among these cases are 122 alimony cases,

each not exceeding KD 5,000, totaling nearly KD 300,000. There are 992 other cases involving various judgments, some with debts of less than KD 2,000.

The funds raised through the donation campaign to settle the debts of those in financial distress will currently cover individuals with outstanding arrest warrants not exceeding KD 5,000.

He emphasized that the distribution of donations will follow clear priorities and criteria set under the directives of the Minister of Justice.

Al-Qasimi went on to explain that the ministry and the General Department for Sentences Enforcement

have been working in full coordination with several government entities over the past three days, most notably the Ministry of Information. The technical committee for receiving and disbursing aid was formed in October 2025, headed by a judge and including several other judges and directors of relevant departments.

The committee began its work immediately after the campaign's launch to establish guidelines and prioritize eligibility criteria, ensuring the highest levels of transparency and strengthening donor confidence.

Continued on Page 5

## Other Voices

# Call for ending war, strive for securing peace

By H.E. Yang Xin  
Ambassador of China to Kuwait

Although the war is still raging with airstrikes, Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Issue Zhai Jun, overcoming numerous difficulties, has been in the Middle East to carry out shuttle diplomacy. Recently, Special Envoy Zhai Jun led the first high-level diplomatic delegation to visit Kuwait since the escalation of the situation on February 28.

During his stay in Kuwait, Special Envoy Zhai Jun had an in-depth exchange of views with Foreign Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He stressed that China condemns nondiscriminatory attacks against innocent civilians or non-military targets. China believes that the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of GCC countries should be fully respected. Non-military targets such as energy and economic facilities should not be attacked, and the safety of waterways should not be disrupted. The pressing priority now is to stop fighting and end the war. The international community should urge the parties concerned to immediately stop their military operations and prevent further deterioration of the tensions.

The ongoing conflict that is now affecting the Middle Eastern countries, is a war that should not have happened - it is a war that does no one any good. The history of the Middle East tells the world time and again that force provides no solution and armed conflicts will only breed hatred and new crises. To promote a ceasefire, halt hostilities in the region, and deescalate the situation, China has carried out intensive mediation efforts. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi had phone calls with his counterparts from Russia, Oman, Iran, France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Egypt for in-depth exchanges of views on regional situation. China calls for an immediate stop to the military operations to prevent the conflict from further escalation and spreading, and a return to dialogue and negotiation as soon as possible.

China has consistently advocated resolving international and regional hot spot issues through dialogue and consultation. All parties should abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and refrain from the use or threat of force in international relations.



H.E. Yang Xin, Ambassador of China to Kuwait

Continued on Page 5

## New law marks major step in combating domestic violence

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Hawraa Al-Habib, Head of the Child Affairs Center at the Kuwait Lawyers Society (KLS), says the new draft law on protection from domestic violence, which was recently published in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Yaum", represents a significant and progressive legislative step in enhancing family protection in Kuwaiti society and reducing domestic violence crimes, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

In a press statement, Al-Habib explained that the law is among modern legislation that strengthens the legal protection system for all family members, and provides a clear framework for dealing with domestic violence cases and protecting all family members without exception. The law also helps address many legal issues related to these crimes and reduces malicious reports.

The draft law includes several features to enhance protection of victims, and provide effective mechanisms for handling cases, most notably defining domestic violence as any act, omission, or threat by a family member that results in physical, psychological, sexual, or financial harm.

Continued on Page 5



Al-Habib



Alghanim Industries launches Starlink services in Kuwait via Sama X



Action Energy Co. reports FY 2025 Financial Results

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:36	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:55	Maghrib ..	17:58
Zohr .....	11:56	Isha .....	19:15

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

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

## Weather

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

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



HH Amir Sheikh Meshal



Abdelfattah El-Sisi

## Egypt condemns Iran attack on Kuwaiti territory: El-Sisi

KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call Monday from Egyptian President Abdelfattah El-Sisi.

During the call, President El-Sisi inquired about Kuwait, its leadership, and people following the recent Iranian attack targeting Kuwaiti territory.

President El-Sisi reiterated Egypt's strong condemnation and denunciation of the attack, describing it as a blatant violation of Kuwait's sovereignty, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

He also affirmed Egypt's solidarity

with Kuwait and all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, expressing support for all measures they take to safeguard their sovereignty, security and stability.

The Egyptian president also expressed his country's readiness to mobilize all available capabilities to support Kuwait and its Gulf partners, while commending Kuwait's role and ongoing efforts aimed at de-escalation and containing the crisis.

In turn, His Highness the Amir expressed sincere appreciation to President El-Sisi for his supportive sentiments, wishing him continued good health and well-being.

## PACI introduces new step for expats' address registration

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) announced on Monday the addition of a new step to the residential address registration process for non-Kuwaitis - requirement of approval from the property owner through the Sahel app, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This measure aims to enhance data accuracy and transparency in the registration process.

According to a press release issued by PACI, the updated service sends an immediate notification to the property owner via the Sahel app when a residential address is registered, allowing the owner to approve the request before the registration is finalized.

PACI emphasized that this step aims to streamline the registration process, ensure the reliability of the information, and protect the rights of all parties involved.

### Acquiring fees detailed

## Law on encroachment of gov't property enforced

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The law combating the monopolization of undeveloped land has entered its implementation phase, more than two years after it was ratified, with the enforcement of its executive regulations starting at the beginning of March.

Minister of Finance **Yaqoub Al-Rifai** issued Ministerial Decree No. 11/2026, approving the executive regulations for Law No. 126/2023 on combating the monopolization of undeveloped land. The regulations outline the rules for calculating fees on vacant land, the mechanisms for their collection, and the executive procedures required to implement the law.

The issuance of these regulations con-

firms what the daily reported on January 3 under the headline - "Soon... The Executive Regulations for the Vacant Land Law."

The decree states that the provisions of the regulations will take effect from March 1, 2026, with the relevant authorities responsible for implementing them within their respective jurisdictions. The decree is effective from its publication in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-youm".

The law aims to curb the monopolization of vacant land and promote its development and investment, thereby helping to revitalize the real estate market and increase the supply of land.

It imposes an annual fee of KD 10 per square meter on any undeveloped private residential plots exceeding 1,500 square meters, whether owned by individuals or legal entities, in one or more locations, within a single project or across multiple projects.

The fee increases annually by KD 30, up to a maximum of KD 100 per square meter.



Yaqoub Al-Rifai

### UN comment lacks 'clear condemnation': Al-Hayen

## Kuwait rejects report on Iranian aggression

GENEVA, March 17, (KUNA): Kuwait on Monday strongly rejected the absence of a "clear condemnation" of Iranian aggression and attacks on civilians in UN reports presented before the UN Human Rights Council.

The reports issued by the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran and the International Fact-Finding Mission described the Iranian attacks merely as "retaliatory strikes," a characterization Kuwait said could legitimize unlawful acts.

Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, voiced the country's position during a joint interactive dialogue as part of the Council's 61st session.

Ambassador Al-Hayen stressed that

framing the attacks as retaliatory lends legitimacy to Iran's unjustified aggression against Kuwait and other regional countries and called for the strongest condemnation of such acts.

He emphasized that any threat or act of aggression targeting a country in the region endangers collective security, constitutes unacceptable escalation, and violates international laws, noting that the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2817 affirming the gravity of Iran's actions.

Al-Hayen reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of Iranian aggression and extended condolences to the families of martyrs, including Kuwaiti nationals and citizens of neighboring countries, who lost their lives in the unprovoked attacks.

The UN Human Rights Council convened



Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen

Monday in a joint session with the Special Rapporteur on Iran and the Fact-Finding Mission to discuss the deteriorating human rights situation amid security crackdowns following recent protests.

# PAAET preps shelters, eyes remote education, training

### Staff efforts in maintaining routine life lauded

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam chaired an expanded meeting with the leadership of the Authority to review the progress of work in its sectors and to evaluate the remote educational and training programs under the current circumstances in the country.



Dr. Al-Fajjam

The meeting also focused on the latest developments regarding the preparation of shelters at the facilities of PAAET.

Al-Fajjam expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to Minister of Higher Education

and Scientific Research Nader Al-Jalal for his unwavering support and follow up of the efforts of PAAET during this period, as well as for his commitment to support the educational and training mission of the Authority to ensure the efficiency of its work.

He praised the tremendous efforts exerted by the PAAET staff, who are working tirelessly day and night to guarantee the safety of everyone and the continuation of operations.

Prior to the meeting, Al-Fajjam and his leadership team inspected one of the shelters at PAAET, where they assessed the available equipment and emphasized the importance of providing all the necessary basic supplies.

The meeting was held in one of the halls within the shelter, during which the efficient delivery of educational and training services to students was ensured, based on reports from the Information Systems Center regarding the performance of the educational platforms.

The meeting also included an intensive review of the preparation of shelters at the facilities and colleges of PAAET.

Attendees were briefed on the readiness of 36 shelters, which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements and specifica-

tions of Kuwait Civil Defense.

These shelters are supplied with the basic necessities, medical supplies and safety equipment, hence, enhancing preparedness and ensuring a safe environment for students, faculty and staff should the need arise.

Al-Fajjam emphasized the importance of continuing to monitor the readiness of these shelters and ensuring their full preparedness. He said this is in line with the commitment of PAAET to take all the necessary precautionary measures to guarantee the highest level of safety and security for everyone.

He also stressed the importance of monitoring the situation of scholarship students residing in student housing and provide them with comfort and safety measures to ensure their stability and create a suitable environment for them during this period.

He asserted that the employees come first, indicating that PAAET is implementing the current work mechanism in accordance with the circular issued by the Civil Service Commission, ensuring that the percentage of attendance at work sites does not exceed 30 percent and that work is completed remotely according to operational requirements.

### 5 new courses recommended to US, Canada universities

## 'Students must comply with study regulations'

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Dr. Jassim Al-Ali, Director of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, issued two decisions regarding the list of recommended higher education institutions for Kuwaiti students in the United States of America and Canada.

The newspaper obtained copies of these decisions, which include

adding various fields of specialization like Computer Science and Engineering, Applied Mathematics, Business Economics and Software Engineering, as well as Biomedical Physics in Canada.

The Bureau specified several criteria, particularly the requirement that studies should be conducted on a regular basis and in-person during the academic week and that the program is not offered remotely. The program must meet the condition on the duration for

obtaining the degree, and the institution must have graduated at least one batch from the program.

It stressed the need for students to strictly comply with the regulations governing enrollment and study at higher education institutions outside Kuwait, as per the approval of the Ministry of Higher Education. This ensures the accreditation of degrees and compliance with the requirements of the relevant authorities in the country.

It indicated that these updates

are part of the ongoing review of accredited universities and programs, in line with quality education standards, with the aim of improving opportunities for Kuwaiti students to enroll in academically distinguished institutions.

It affirmed its commitment to keep updating these lists in the best interest of the students, while improving higher education outputs and strengthening the competitiveness of nationals in the labor market.

### Other Voices

## War will be over by the end of the month!

By Ahmad alsarraf

I believe that the war in the region will end before the end of this month. I may be right, and this is what we all hope for.

Since World War II, the world has never been as complex as it is now. It used to rely on oil as heavily as it does today but had never reached this level of technological advancement.

The world has never faced such a prolonged closure of one of its most important maritime straits. Devastation, losses, and economic recession now threaten every country. If this continues, no country will remain safe for long.

The Strait of Hormuz is the most important global waterway for oil tankers, and it is currently blocked.

Ras Tanura, the largest oil refinery in the Gulf, and the world's largest gas terminal in Khor Fakkan are out of service due to direct Iranian attacks, along with assaults on giant oil tankers in the region.

Oil prices have not spiked to record levels as expected. Instead, liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices have risen by an even higher percentage.

Gas is more difficult to store than oil, whose supply currently exceeds demand. A large portion of what has been purchased so far is already stored by consuming countries.



alsarraf

Therefore, the main challenge for the Gulf oil states is that they will need to shut down their wells once their storage tanks are full. This will affect their production capacity when operations resume, at a very high cost, in addition to technical difficulties.

A country like Iraq cannot continue producing oil without selling it, as its storage facilities will be full within a week, which is something that may have already occurred. Kuwait followed suit, despite having storage capacity for 14 days of production. The same applies to the rest of the Gulf states. Only Saudi Arabia can continue production and storage for slightly more than two months.

However, there is no guarantee that oil prices will not surge again if the war continues or if production wells or storage facilities are damaged. This will impact insurance premiums, a serious and significant factor, as well as cause a rise in the prices of all commodities without exception.

The world is heading decisively toward a massive global recession. Whether history will repeat itself depends entirely on the duration of this conflict, as the loss of access to cheap oil increasingly threatens both small and large countries, including China. This situation could slow China's growth, while also affecting Ukraine negatively and benefiting Russia, as allies redeploy interceptor missiles to confront Iran.

The Netanyahu/Trump war, now in its second week, is reshaping travel patterns, energy dependence, the cost of living, trade routes, and strategic partnerships.

The war's repercussions could even delay

the crucial midterm elections in the United States, which may be in line with Trump's interests.

The war has shaken the foundations of economies once considered safe havens in a turbulent world. Gulf states have been targeted by more missiles and drones than Iran has launched at Israel.

Airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi have been attacked, and major, wealthy nations have begun efforts to evacuate their citizens stranded there. The United States has already evacuated tens of thousands of its citizens from the region.

In the U.S., according to a report in The New York Times, the war is becoming a political liability for Trump. Public support for the war, which was already low, is starting to decline. Democrats are using rising energy costs to gain votes ahead of the midterm elections, which are increasingly focused on the high cost of living.

The war has also cast a shadow over an event Trump had hoped would be a personal triumph during his presidency: the World Cup, which is scheduled to begin this summer, co-hosted by Canada and Mexico. Iran is among the participating teams, but it is unclear whether it will take part and what the consequences will be if it does not.

Europe is on edge, fearing that a collapse of the Iranian economy could trigger new waves of migrants across its border with Turkey.



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

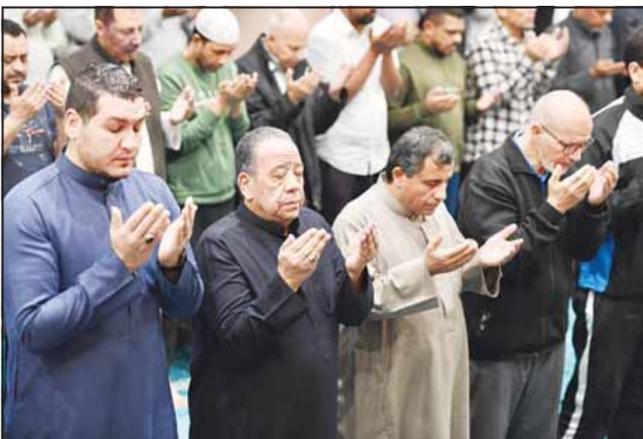


Photo by Mohammad Morsi  
Muslim worshippers in prayer while standing, pleading for Allah's forgiveness on the 27th of Ramadan in search of 'Laylat Al-Qadr' or 'Night of Power.'

## MoSA designates 20 co-ops to accumulate 'Zakat Al-Fitr'

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) has designated 20 cooperative societies, in addition to the headquarters of charitable societies and those located on State-owned land, to receive Zakat Al-Fitr (the charity given at the end of Ramadan) in various governorates, in light of the current regional circumstances that require precautionary measures.

The Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations stated in a letter addressed to the heads of charitable societies and foundations that the ministry decided to

implement a project for the collection and distribution of Zakat Al-Fitr to those in need throughout the country.

It added that charitable societies with premises on State-owned land are permitted to coordinate with other charitable organizations to receive in-kind Zakat Al-Fitr at their locations, which will help expand the scope of the service and facilitate the collection of donations.

It called on the relevant entities to adhere to the approved locations, stressing that a request to add new sites must be submitted formally, so that the necessary procedures are taken.

# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## 'Pawns in the game' ... and brothers vindicating Iran

"THIS article has two parts. The first deals with what is happening in the world, where, like a chessboard, there are pawns, queens, rooks, and other pieces. In Kuwait, we call this 'pawns in the game'. The second part addresses those among our Arab brothers who are either unaware of the reality in the Gulf or who try to cloak their positions in polished rhetoric, claiming to be Muslim and therefore obligated to stand with Muslims, even if they are aggressors," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jaralah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"In the first part, we all understand that the core of the real conflict is between the United States and Russia. The pawns in this conflict are many, including the Iranian regime, which Moscow seeks to exploit to gain leverage. Meanwhile, Israel represents an American stronghold that cannot be allowed to fall, as it is considered the first line of defense for American interests in the Middle East. In the first part, Washington attempted to work with Moscow to stop the war in Ukraine, but these efforts failed because Russia is firm in its position, which cost hugely for European security and the United States.

"In contrast, the United States moved last June to pressure Iran, Russia's ally in the Middle East. However, the war ended in a stalemate, followed by a new war launched in partnership with Israel. In this war, Iran violated all international norms and laws by attacking peaceful neighboring Gulf states. Of course, both sides view these countries as mere pawns, a historical miscalculation with its own advantages and disadvantages. However, it is clear that Iran is now out of the equation, at least temporarily, as it serves as Russia's Trojan horse. This is a complex issue that will require further discussion in the coming days.

"In the second part of this article, I address conversations I have had with colleagues from several Arab countries. Through my role as a union member and my relationships with them, I have noticed that many are influenced by a widespread notion that Iran is an Islamic state and that we must therefore stand with it. They often ask - why are you opposing this Islamic state? First, what the Iranian regime has practiced against the Gulf states since 1979 is contrary to Islam. It is, in fact, a barbaric practice. Those who are unaware of history, or who deliberately ignore it for their own interests, cannot be excused in this matter, because we are the ones who suffer from Iranian aggression.

"We are defending our own security, not anyone else's, and this must be made clear. In recent days, our safe countries have been subjected to barbaric aggression, while those who refuse to understand what is happening are siding with the enemy against us. This has a deeply negative psychological impact. At this stage, it is clear to everyone that Iran is serving Israel by weakening the Muslim world. It is misleading to claim that the Iranian regime is defending Islam, and the false narratives Tehran has spread in the minds of some Arabs must be corrected.

"Our countries were the first to reject the aggression against Gaza, to prevent the displacement of a million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and to pressure for a halt to the Zionist genocide there. They were also the first to insist that the only solution is the recognition of the State of Palestine. It is not always possible to equate slogans with reality in this matter, as doing so does great injustice to the Arabian Gulf states. The Gulf states were the first to warn against attempts to divide the Islamic world and cautioned Iran on every occasion against falling into the trap that Israel seeks to set. This is not a matter of conspiracy theories; sometimes, conflicting interests lead the reckless to advance the agendas of others. Today, the Iranian regime is effectively implementing Israel's agenda, and I hope our Arab brothers who are still swayed by slogans will begin to see reality with clarity."

Also:

"If every word has a meaning, then Kuwait means pride, dignity, security, safety, stability, and peace of mind," Kuwaiti citizen Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Kuwait is a generous nation that gives without expecting anything in return to anyone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. From the reign of Sheikh Sabah I to His Highness the

Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait has never ceased providing aid and never will. Kuwait is not stingy in its giving and is not quick to collect its debts. At times, it forgives debts, and at other times, it agrees to postpone repayment due to the circumstances of some countries.

"Kuwait is a peaceful country that does not attack anyone, even verbally, and it often mediates to reconcile between nations. More than 120 nationalities live on Kuwaiti soil in peace and security, without fear, knowing that the law is applied to everyone without discrimination between citizens and residents. Kuwait is committed to international treaties and financial obligations. The people of Kuwait follow their government's example in doing good. Kuwaitis are known for their hospitality and strong family and social bonds, boosted by their always-open diwanias, which are traditional Kuwaiti gathering places.

"The Kuwaiti people are proud of their national identity, unique in their way of life, open to the world, and deeply devoted to their country. In times of hardship, the Kuwaiti people demonstrate strong resolve. They are known for their generosity, piety, and peaceful nature. History testifies to Kuwait's readiness to provide aid to those in need. Kuwaiti citizens are renowned for their intelligence, culture, and refined taste in dress and cuisine.

"The Kuwaiti people are devoted to their rulers, and their rulers are devoted to them. Everything in this article reflects the views of Gulf citizens, residents, and ambassadors. May God protect Kuwait, its people, and its leadership from all harm."

□ □ □

"In times of hardship, the greatest truths become clear, the foremost being that the strength of nations lies in the cohesion of their people, and the stability of states rests on unity around their leadership," researcher in history and political affairs Fahad Faris Al-Jarba wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"When challenges intensify, the priority is not to raise slogans, but to reinforce fundamental principles - national unity, unwavering trust in the rulers, and the understanding that wisdom and balance are the path to safe passage.

"The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states were built not on interests alone, but on bonds of brotherhood, neighborliness, and a shared destiny. What unites the peoples of the Gulf transcends geographical boundaries. They are connected by a long history, deeply rooted values, and a shared vision for security, stability, and development. Therefore, the solidarity between the peoples of the Gulf states and their rulers is a natural extension of the awareness that the security of any Gulf state is a cornerstone of the security of all.

"Experience has shown that countries whose leadership and people remain united during crises can turn challenges into opportunities to strengthen both their unity and the resilience of their institutions. Rallying around the leadership is not a fleeting emotional response, but a national commitment based on trust, respect for state institutions, and support for their decisions during times of crisis. When a nation stands united, the doors to rumors are closed, the voice of wisdom prevails, and the home front is strengthened.

"Amid the rapid changes surrounding the region, the role of our leaders in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries becomes ever more crucial, reflecting their historical responsibility to protect their homelands, safeguard achievements, and preserve stability. They steer the ship through turbulent waters with steadfastness and vision, relying on conscious citizens who understand that unity is the key to security. Our brave heroes in the armed forces and security services across the Gulf states play a vital role in safeguarding our homelands and ensuring the safety of our people. We must support them, trust them, and take pride in them.

"The Gulf will remain, God willing, one home united by solidarity, protected by wise leadership, and strengthened by the unity of its people. In times of hardship, unity is our message, trust our guiding principle, and the nation our highest priority. May God protect Kuwait and its brothers in the Gulf states and grant them continued security and stability."

- Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Adel Al-Kharafi

## Kuwait, Saudi mull ways to counter Iran attacks

KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA): Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah and Saudi Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz discussed on Monday, over the telephone, the current developments in the region.

Both sides also focused on the security impacts of these developments, amid the brutal Iranian attacks on the Gulf countries and the region, Kuwait's Ministry of Interior said in a press statement.

The two ministers further underlined the importance of continuing coordination, collaboration and integration among the two countries in everything to boost security and stability, it added. Saudi Arabia is standing with Kuwait in



Sheikh Fahad

preserving the region's security, according to the statement.

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and

all measures it takes to maintain its security and stability, the statement noted, citing Prince Abdulaziz.

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef affirmed that common coordination between the GCC interior ministries embodies the unified Gulf stance and sisterly countries' keenness on bolstering security and stability, and

Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Saud Al-Sabah also received a phone call Tuesday from Bahrain's Interior Minister Lt. Gen. Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that the two sides discussed current security developments in the region.

They stressed the importance of continued coordination and security cooperation, particularly under current circumstances, to enhance readiness and address developments while maintaining stability in both countries.

Sheikh Fahad also underscored the strong fraternal ties between Kuwait and Bahrain and their shared commitment to strengthening joint security efforts in support of GCC security and stability.



Al-Jarida photo

People take to car parking during the drill at Ministries Complex.

## Mock evacuation drill at Ministries Complex

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The administration of the Government Ministries Complex, in coordination with the Civil Defense General Directorate, conducted a mock evacuation drill for employees and visitors to ensure preparedness for emergency procedures, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The drill began with alarms and warning announcements over the complex's loudspeakers, directing employees and visitors to proceed immediately to the designated basement and remain there until the situation was declared safe.

## PAFN shuts down 5 firms for selling unfit foodstuff

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) announced that its Capital Governorate Inspection Department closed five food establishments as part of ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of food products and protect consumer health, reports Al-Rai daily.

PAFN revealed that the violations included offering food unfit for human consumption, selling adulterated products, thawing frozen meat to sell as fresh, and failing to adhere to general hygiene standards during operations.

It affirmed that inspection and monitoring campaigns on food establishments in all governorates will continue to ensure compliance with health regulations and maintain food safety in the markets.

## MoCI staff get over KD1m in top performance bonus

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has deposited outstanding performance bonuses into the accounts of eligible employees, reports Al-Rai daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that bonuses totaling approximately KD 1.015 million have been disbursed to the accounts of around 1,500 Kuwaiti employees, with the average bonus per employee ranging between KD 600 and KD 1,500.

Regarding employees whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked, the sources stated that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has been contacted to approve their due amounts. Once approved, the bonuses for these employees, who are approximately 70 in total, are expected to be deposited into their accounts immediately.

## 2 years jail for company employees in cash fraud

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

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Criminal Court sentenced five employees to two years in prison with hard labor and fined them KD3,000 each for embezzlement and falsification.

The court suspended the implementation of the sentence for three years, starting from the date the ruling is finalized, after requiring each defendant to post bail of KD3,000 and pledge to maintain good conduct within a similar period.

Case files indicate that the defendants embezzled around KD 2,500 in salaries by manipulating and falsifying attendance records to show their presence at work without actually reporting for work.

During the investigation, the defendants returned the embezzled funds to their employer -- a factor that the court took into account in determining the sentence.

The court underscored the seriousness of misusing public funds and tampering with employment procedures.

## Belgium and Luxembourg express solidarity with GCC

BRUSSELS, March 17, (KUNA): Belgium's Foreign Minister Maxim Prevoet and Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Xavier Bettel expressed solidarity Tuesday with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states regarding Iran's attacks on the region, during a meeting with GCC ambassadors in Brussels.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium and head of its EU mission, Nawaf Al-Enzi, said the ministers condemned the violations, describing them as threats to regional and international security, and called on Iran to halt such actions.

The ministers praised GCC efforts to prevent conflict escalation and to coordinate the safe return of European citizens following attacks on civilian facilities.

The meeting also addressed securing maritime navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, emphasizing the importance of avoiding threats to international shipping, which could disrupt global trade and supply chains.

GCC ambassadors reiterated that the council states are not parties to the conflict but affirmed their right to self-defense under UN Charter Article 51.

Both sides stressed the importance of GCC security and stability as a cornerstone of regional and global, including European, security.

# Ex-MP jailed in Amir libel suit

Appeal proves fruitless

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Saud Yousef Al-Sanea, overturned the verdict issued by the Court of First Instance, which acquitted former MP Mohammad Al-Mutair of insulting the Amir and the judiciary. The court instead sentenced him to two years in prison with hard labor, stating that insulting the Amir's position includes any act that could harm the dignity of the country, reports Al-Rai daily.

The court sentenced the second defendant to one year in prison with hard labor and imposed a fine of KD 2,000.

The prosecution had charged Al-Mutair with multiple offenses, including publicly insulting the Amir through statements made at a political seminar and later published on social media, showing disrespect to judges of the Constitutional Court and members of the judiciary in a way that casts doubt on their integrity, dedication, and commitment to upholding the law, aiding and abetting the dissemination of material criticizing the Amir, and aiding and abetting the dissemination of material that insults members of the judiciary, and undermines their integrity and impartiality.

The verdict referred to the complaint filed against Al-Mutair for "insulting the Amir, members of the judiciary, and the president and members of the Constitutional Court during a seminar titled 'Reform Between Slogan and Reality,' held at the diwan of former National Assembly member Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf in Jahra, which was attended by a number of former National Assembly members."

Regarding the legal characterization of the ruling, the verdict stated, "With respect to the first charge against the first defendant—the crime of publicly insulting the Emir—

Articles 51, 52, and 54 of the Constitution stipulate that legislative power is vested in the Amir and the National Assembly in accordance with the Constitution, and executive power is vested in the Amir, the Council of Ministers, and the Ministers, as specified in the Constitution. The Amir is the Head of State, and his person is inviolable.

It has been established in the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court that every individual has freedom of opinion and expression, and there is no punishment for thinking or forming an opinion. Punishment applies only to declaring an opinion contrary to the law and publicizing it through any of the means of public expression listed in Article 25 of Law No. 31/1970, which amends certain provisions of the Penal Code.

There is no basis for invoking the argument that freedom of opinion is guaranteed under Article 36 of the Constitution without limitation, as freedom of opinion differs from other freedoms in that it extends beyond the individual and aims to influence others. Therefore, its regulation is permissible because unrestricted exercise could lead to sedition, chaos, insecurity, and fragmentation of authority. The Constitution carefully stipulates this, along with references to the laws regulating it.

Its regulation is permissible because, if exercised without limitation, it could lead to sedition, chaos, insecurity, and the fragmentation of authority. The Constitution carefully stipulates this, along with references to the relevant laws.

The law does not require specific intent for the crime of insulting the position of the Amir, as general intent is sufficient. The presence or absence of criminal intent is a factual matter within the exclusive jurisdiction of the trial court and is not subject to appeal, provided the judgment is based on the evidence. The defendant's motive is irrelevant once the legal elements of the crime are present.

Acts that challenge the rights and powers of the Amir, insult the person of the Amir, or insult the position of the Amir are criminal offenses intended to protect the Amir from potential attacks on his rights and authority. This includes any criticism that constitutes defamation, undermines dignity, or causes emotional harm, as well as innuendo or linguistic disrespect that could weaken the authority of the head of state and violate the constitutional rights he derives from the Constitution.

# MoE expands digital content with Gulf educational library

Ministry rolls out 'Istashar' platform

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Ministry of Education has launched its digital library as part of ongoing efforts to develop digital educational content and provide knowledge resources for students, teachers, and researchers, reports Al-Seyassah daily.**

The project, which was launched in August 2025, is being carried out through collaboration between the Libraries Department, the Digital Systems and Services Development Department, and the Educational Research Department.

To date, 1,417 books and educational documents from the ministry's information resources have been digitized, with the digitization of school library contents underway to create a comprehensive digital library accessible to all users.

In this regard, Ahmed Al-Majdi, Director of the Libraries Department, confirmed that the project is part of the ministry's plan to enhance the digital learning environment under the directives of Minister of Education Jalal Al-Tabtabaie.

He noted that a specialized team from the Libraries Department handled the digitization of the ministry's information resources, convert-

ing them into a digital format to provide wider and more sustainable access.

Al-Majdi explained that the digital library will be available to students through their Microsoft Teams accounts, using both student and teacher logins. The library can also be accessed via the Ministry of Education's website, and students and parents are encouraged to utilize its diverse educational and informational resources.

Meanwhile, Adel Al-Harbi, Supervisor of Administrative Services and Equipment at the Libraries Department, said the launch of the Gulf Digital Educational Library is a major addition to the Ministry of Education's digital content.

He explained that the project was achieved through close cooperation with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States. The platform serves as a comprehensive knowledge library for various educational stakeholders, including teachers seeking professional development, researchers, and school librarians.

The library contains over 2,000 specialized educational publications, including studies, research papers, books, and visual educational

materials. Access to the library is available through the Ministry of Education's website and user accounts on Microsoft Teams, allowing users to reach its resources anytime and from anywhere.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education announced that the General Directorate of Support Services has officially launched the "Istashar" (Seek Consult/Advice) online platform for providing remote psychological and social counseling services under the supervision of qualified specialists, in line with the directives of Minister of Education, Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaie.

The ministry highlighted that the platform allows students and parents to request consultations and communicate with specialists electronically. It provides educational and psychological support and guidance to help students overcome various challenges and promote their psychological well-being and family stability.

The ministry emphasized that all consultations offered through the platform are completely confidential and private, in accordance with professional standards.

It noted that the platform has handled a wide range of psychological and social consultations in recent periods and continues to receive requests, offering support to students and their parents through approved electronic channels.



Al-Tabtabaie

## CPU Sec-Gen reviews AUM emergency plans

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Secretary General of the Council of Private Universities (CPU) and Director of the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education Dr. Jassim Al-Ali continued his inspection tour in private universities and colleges to assess their emergency plans and ensure the continuity of the educational process in line with the approved procedures under the current circumstances.**

Al-Ali visited the American University in the Middle East (AUM),

where he met with the administrative and academic staff at the university. He looked into the mechanisms for implementing the emergency plans and the procedures in place to guarantee the continuation of the educational process.

During the visit, he checked the well-being of the academic and administrative staff and evaluated the emergency plans in order to ascertain the continuation of academic and administrative operations.

He urged students to comply with the distance learning system during this period and to focus on their studies. He stressed that students are the real investment and future of the nation, and that their success and academic excellence are considered essential in the development process.

### Nepal expresses solidarity

## Kuwait FM and French counterpart discuss rising military escalation

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held a phone call Tuesday with France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noel Barrot.

According to a Foreign Ministry statement, the two sides discussed the increasing military escalation in the region following Iran's attacks on regional countries and the serious implications and repercussions on regional and international security and stability.

Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call on Monday from his Nepalese counterpart, Bala Nanda Sharma.

According to a statement from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Minister Sharma expressed Nepal's solidarity with Kuwait in light of the recent Iranian aggression targeting the country, emphasizing the importance of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### Hotlines activated for support

## MoHE ensures safety, academic continuity for students overseas

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

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Guidance Counseling and Special Scholarship Supervisor at the Ministry of Higher Education Mishari Saleh affirmed that the ministry has been closely monitoring the situation of scholarship students in various countries since the beginning of the Iran attacks, as per the directive of Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal.**

In a press statement, Saleh revealed that the ministry has taken several measures to ensure the safety of these students and the stability of their academic progress. He said these measures include immediate communication with

cultural offices in those countries to check on the students, update their information, and confirm that studies are continuing normally at their respective universities.

He added the ministry has been keen on reassuring the students and their families that all the students are safe and their studies are continuing.

He stated that direct communication channels have been provided for students who are currently in Kuwait and will soon resume their studies -- the official email address of the ministry and a hotline for receiving and responding to queries.

He also confirmed the ongoing coordination with relevant government entities in the country to ensure the continuity of institutional operations and to monitor the situation of the students. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the absence of any academic or procedural obstacles that might affect their studies abroad.

He stressed that the safety and stability of the students and their academic progress are the top priorities of the ministry.



Dr. Al-Jalal

### 108,227 applications pending

## PAHW accelerates housing projects

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) reported 108,227 outstanding housing applications as of the end of February, along with significant progress in infrastructure and road construction, with several projects exceeding their contractual completion rates, reports Al-Jarida daily.**

According to PAHW's monthly report for February 2026, the number of pending housing applications had reached approximately 108,227. PAHW has been continuing the distribution and construction work on several major housing projects.

The South Saad Al-Abdullah City project distributed plots to applicants until June 2007, with a total of 23,551 plots allocated. The total number of distributed units reached 16,643, in addition to 4,773 allocated applications, 24,508 housing units, and 957 housing products.

Regarding infrastructure and road projects, PAHW reported significant progress in several contracts. The actual completion rate for the main roads contract in South Saad Al-Abdullah reached approximately 58.21 percent, surpassing the contractual rate of 35.85 percent. The three infrastructure contracts also showed notable progress, with actual completion rates ranging from 7.9 percent to 9.02 percent.

In the South Sabah Al-Ahmad City project, the main roads contract achieved an actual completion rate of 87.21 percent, exceeding the contractual rate of 83.21 percent. The infrastructure contracts recorded

varying progress, with the second contract reaching the highest completion rate of 45.22 percent.

In the housing and public buildings sector, PAHW noted that the affordable housing project is progressing rapidly. Actual completion rates for some contracts have exceeded 40%, surpassing their contractual targets, while other contracts are still in their initial stages.

PAHW reported that 278 public buildings are currently under construction across several areas. The largest numbers are in Al-Mutlaa City with 170 buildings, and the Affordable Housing Project with 74 buildings, along with additional projects in Sabah Al-Ahmad, South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Saad Al-Abdullah, Khaitan, and Jaber Al-Ahmad.

As part of its efforts to improve infrastructure and services, PAHW announced the tendering of several construction and supervision contracts. These include the construction of water reservoirs, community centers, infrastructure works, electrical cable extensions, and water towers within the Affordable Housing Project.

PAHW also signed a consultancy contract for the planning and design of public buildings and community centers in the South Saad Al-Abdullah Project.

Regarding building permits, the report indicated that 27,795 out of 28,288 plots have been issued in Al-Mutlaa City, 3,252 out of 3,260 in South Abdullah Al-Mubarak, and 1,423 out of 1,448 in Khaitan.

### Services maintained at full capacity

## Electricity, water systems stable amid regional tensions: MEWRE

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy confirmed that the electricity and water systems were stable and operating efficiently, and that services provided to citizens and expatriates continue as normal, owing to its high level of preparedness and the round-the-clock monitoring carried out by specialized technical teams.**

In a press statement, spokesperson of the ministry Fatima Hayat presented updates in light of the Iranian aggression against the State of Kuwait. She said the ministry activated its comprehensive emergency plan on Feb 28 as an immediate response to the sensitive regional developments.

Hayat indicated that this decision proves the speed of response, readiness of the emergency plan, and the capability of national personnel to promptly implement emergency measures, thereby, ensuring the stability of the electricity and water systems in the country.

She asserted that operational procedures within the emergency plan were activated, emergency teams were deployed to their respective stations as per the plan, the level of preparedness was raised in the production, transmission and distribution sectors, and the 24/7 technical monitoring and follow up system was reinforced to ensure quick response to any emergency situation.

She added that some routine maintenance works at the water desalination plants were temporarily suspended in order to maintain production at full operational capacity and to increase the strategic reserve of fresh water.

She also affirmed the readiness of shelters and evacuation centers in several ministry facilities in accordance with the regulations

of the General Directorate of Civil Defense.

She disclosed that the ministry has coordinated with State security agencies like the Ministry of Interior and Kuwait National Guard to protect water sites and facilities as part of enhanced safety measures to safeguard vital infrastructure.

She pointed out that since the beginning of the attacks, the electrical grid has sustained damage from falling debris resulting from the interception of drones. "This damage affected 15 overhead power transmission lines and caused a minor fire in two fuel tanks at the West Doha and Subiya power and water desalination plants. The technical teams immediately started inspection, assessment and repair operations in coordination with the State security agencies. The technical teams repaired 11 lines and restored them in record time, while efforts are continuing to repair the remaining lines," she elaborated.

She added "the security, safety and emergency teams quickly dealt with a minor fire in two fuel tanks as per the procedures. No injuries were reported and the incident was limited to minor material damage. The fuel tank at the West Doha Power and Water Station has been restarted."

Furthermore, Hayat announced the restoration of three overhead power lines, indicating these lines were damaged last Thursday due to falling debris in various parts of the country.

She also confirmed that the concerned technical teams have completed repair works and restored operation of the main freshwater pipeline in Maidan Hawally, stating that this pipeline was damaged on Friday due to a sudden technical malfunction. A temporary drop in freshwater pressure was reported in Maidan Hawally and Salmiya following the break.

She affirmed that the ministry has begun gradually pumping water back into the network, and that water supplies in both areas will return to normal within a few hours.

She said the ministry expressed its appreciation to the technical teams for completing the repair work and thanked customers for their cooperation and understanding during the disruption.



Hayat



Book for One-night  
(Inclusive of breakfast)

Queen Cabana (2 persons).  
2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons).

BHD 76.230 net  
BHD 170.247 net

Book for Two nights  
(Inclusive of breakfast)

(Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)

Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night.  
2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.

BHD 65.000 net  
BHD 145.000 net

Book for Three nights  
(Inclusive of breakfast)

(Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)

Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night.  
2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.

BHD 57.173 net  
BHD 128.000 net

Lunch Buffet will be served at **Café Marisol Restaurant** with price of

**BD6.600/net** per person. Starts from 12:30 Noon to 15:30 hrs.

Terms and conditions apply

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

Continued from Page 1

## To Iran

This heinous history of the Iranian regime cannot be ignored, and Iran cannot be dealt with on the basis of "being an enemy we are forced to befriend."

After this long history of treachery, and amid a fierce war, the hostile neighbor continues to target us and activate sleeper cells in Kuwait and beyond.

First, we extend our gratitude to His Excellency the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, for his tremendous efforts in safeguarding Kuwait from danger, including neutralizing the "Abdali cell" that threatened the nation's security.

Second, it must be emphasized that the government, represented by the First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice, should review the National Unity Law, which contains loopholes that may protect those hostile to their homeland. Penalties under this law must be increased to prevent attempts to make Kuwait more like Lebanon and Iraq.

Third, Kuwait today must stand united, across all tribes, sects, and social components, to form an impenetrable barrier against the Iranian enemy and all other threats. As the saying goes, "Once bitten, twice shy."

We must learn from experience. There is no room for dissimulation in this era. Honesty is the true protector of nations. The National Unity Law, in its current form, appears to have been enacted to protect one group over another.

## Call for

China opposes launching military strikes against Iran, and in the meantime does not go along with attacks against Gulf countries. No matter the justification, the indiscriminate use of force is unacceptable. When holding a phone conversation with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, Foreign Minister Wang Yi made it clear that the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Gulf states should be fully respected. In his phone call with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Wang Yi called on Iran to take seriously the legitimate concerns of neighboring countries. China commends the GCC countries for their calm response amidst the conflict and their commitment to resolving issues through dialogue and negotiation.

The spreading and escalating conflict in the Middle East, now affecting Kuwait, is not what China wishes to see. Multiple civilian facilities, including Kuwait International Airport, have sustained damage, and a number of military personnel and civilians have suffered casualties. China feels deeply for the hardship and pain currently being experienced by Kuwait, expresses deep condolences for the lives lost, and extends heartfelt sympathies to the leadership and people of Kuwait. Under the leadership of H.H. the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait has taken robust measures to safeguard national sovereignty and protect the safety of its people, and remains committed to resolving the current crisis through peace and dialogue. The Kuwaiti government has strived to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and institutions in Kuwait and facilitate the return of those stranded in Kuwait to China. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership of Kuwait and relevant departments of the government.

As a sincere friend of Kuwait and other Middle Eastern countries, China will stay committed to urging peace and defending justice and fairness. China stands ready to work with Kuwait and other countries to implement the Global Security Initiative, continue to play a constructive role for de-escalation and restoration of peace, and restore order to the Middle East, restore tranquility to the people, and restore peace to the world!

## Regional strikes

He confirmed as well that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit at the Engineering Battalion handled 31 reports about missile

remnants and shrapnel in various locations.

He reassured the public that the radiation levels in the airspace and territorial waters of the country remain normal. He said the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Chemical Defense and Radiation Monitoring at KNG operates round the clock to monitor radiation levels, provide continuous readings, detect hazards and issue early warnings to the relevant authorities through the 24/7 hotline.

He added that as part of the role of KNG in terms of supporting the ministries of Defense and Interior in protecting vital facilities, its task force deployed personnel to protect 46 vital sites, while continuing its mission to safeguard strategic locations.

Moreover, it was reported that the Kuwait Armed Forces detected four hostile drones, which breached the airspace of the country over the past 24 hours.

Ministry of Defense spokesperson Colonel Saud Al-Atwan announced in a media briefing that two drones crashed in the northern part of the country without causing material damage or casualties.

He added that the KNG unit downed two drones within its area of responsibility, proving the high level of coordination among the military agencies.

He also disclosed that the EOD Unit at the Land Forces Engineering Corps responded to six reports in the last 24 hours.

He affirmed that the nation trusts the defenders of the homeland in the Armed Forces, emphasizing that the trust of the wise leadership in their capabilities is limitless. "They continue to stand firm in their duty, safeguarding the land, airspace and territorial waters of the country," he concluded.

On the other hand, Brigadier General Nasser Boulaib, Director of the Public Relations and Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior and its official spokesperson, confirmed that the EOD teams responded to five reports about falling debris from defensive interceptions and the total number of such reports has reached 397.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Health spokesperson Abdullah Al-Sanad announced that two members of the emergency medical team were injured when shrapnel fell into an ambulance center while they were performing their duties.

In a press statement, Al-Sanad disclosed that the emergency teams responded immediately and administered first aid to the injured before transferring them to a nearby hospital.

He confirmed that their condition is stable, indicating that the relevant authorities have started to investigate the circumstances and then they will take the necessary measures as part of the ongoing monitoring of developments in the area.

He added that the ministry is closely following up the incident in coordination with various entities within a comprehensive national framework, ensuring the safety of medical personnel and the continuous provision of high-quality healthcare services.

In a latest development, Israel said Tuesday it killed two senior Iranian security officials in overnight strikes in a major blow to the country's leadership. Tehran defiantly fired new salvos of missiles and drones at its Gulf Arab neighbors and Israel in a war that showed no signs of abating.

Ali Larjani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and Gen. Gholam Reza Soleimani, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force, were "eliminated last night," Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said. Following the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in an airstrike on the first day of the war, Larjani was considered one of the most powerful figures in the country.

Both men were key to Iran's violent crackdown on protests in January that challenged the theocracy's 47-year rule. Iranian state media did not immediately confirm either death. The killings would strip Iran of important leaders as the Islamic Republic faces its greatest test in recent decades in its war with the United States and Israel.

With concerns growing about a global energy crisis, Iran fired new attacks at several of its Gulf Arab neighbors and oil infrastructure throughout the region. Dubai, a major transit hub for international

travel, briefly shut its airspace, the second disruption to flights in the city in as many days. An Iranian official defiantly said Tehran had no intention of relinquishing its tight grip on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for oil.

Iran kept up the pressure on the energy infrastructure around the region, hitting an oil facility in Fujairah, an emirate in the United Arab Emirates that has been repeatedly targeted. State-run WAM news reported that no one had been injured in the blast from the drone strike.

Also Tuesday, a tanker anchored off the coast of Fujairah sustained minor damage when it was hit by debris from an interception, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center, run by the British military, reported. Nobody was injured.

A man was killed by the debris of a missile intercepted over Abu Dhabi, the eighth person to die in the UAE since the start of the war, authorities said.

Iran's attacks on Gulf nations and its grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is transported, have given rise to increasing concerns of a global energy crisis and are unnerving the world economy.

A handful of ships have crossed through the strait, and Iran has said the vital waterway technically remains open - just not for the United States, Israel and their allies. About 20 vessels have been struck since the war began.

"They are flying, launching missiles, should we just sit back and do nothing in response?" Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, asked in an interview on state television.

With oil prices rising, U.S. President Donald Trump said he had demanded that roughly a half-dozen countries send warships to ensure ships can pass through the Strait of Hormuz. But his appeals brought no immediate commitments, with many saying they are hesitant to get involved in a war with no defined exit plan and skeptical that they could do more than the U.S. Navy.

The UAE shut down its airspace early Tuesday as its military reported it was "responding to missile and drone threats from Iran." The closure was soon lifted, and not long after the sounds of explosions could be heard as the military worked to intercept incoming fire.

The episode showed the balancing act Emirati authorities face in trying to keep their long-haul carriers, Emirates and Etihad, flying as Iranian attacks continue to target the country. The UAE said its air defenses responded to 10 ballistic missiles and 45 drones Iran fired Tuesday at the country.

Countries around the region also came under fire: Saudi Arabia said it intercepted drones, while air defenses could be heard targeting incoming fire over Doha, the capital of Qatar. Attacks from Iran-linked proxy forces continued in Iraq, where the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad was hit with shrapnel from intercepted drones.

## 1,114 in

Al-Qasimi emphasized that the campaign aims to assist as many debtors as possible and resolve as many cases as possible related to the enforcement of court judgments.

He indicated that the eligibility criteria for the donation campaign require that the debtor must not have previously benefited from a donation campaign for the same case, and that donations can be used to settle the entire debt or a portion of it.

Al-Qasimi stressed that the maximum benefit is KD 10,000 per debtor, whether for one or multiple cases, clarifying that this limit does not exclude those whose debts exceed this amount; rather, KD 10,000 will be applied toward their debt.

He emphasized that the selection of cases will be done automatically according to approved criteria by a committee composed of judges and directors from the General Department for Sentences Enforcement, along with representatives from the Financial Control Bureau.

Al-Qasimi revealed that Kuwait TV would cover the campaign to keep the public informed about its progress and results.

Meanwhile, donations to the Justice Ministry's campaign to settle

debts of distressed citizens reached KD 11.492 million (about USD 37.5 million) by 10 a.m. on the second day.

The campaign, launched Monday at 10 a.m., supports financially distressed citizens during Ramadan and has been extended until midnight Tuesday to allow wider participation.

The ministry urged individuals, institutions, companies and banks to contribute, noting payments are processed directly through the General Administration of Execution under approved regulations.

It added donations can be made via an online link, QR code, the "Sahel" government app, or by submitting cheques at the administration's headquarters.

Earlier, several entities announced contributions, including Kuwait Zakat House and Awqaf Secretariat with KD 500,000 each, Kuwait Red Crescent Society with KD 200,000, and charities with varying amounts.

The ministry said eligibility requires an active enforcement file as of March 12 and limits donations per debtor to KD 10,000, ensuring fair and transparent distribution.

## Kuwait foils

He said these items included firearms and ammunition, an assassination weapon, encrypted communication devices (Morse code), drones, flags and images of terrorist organizations, maps, narcotics, cash and training weapons.

He indicated that investigations are ongoing to complete the required procedures against the suspects and refer them to the prosecution, which has jurisdiction over the case.

He affirmed that security authorities continue to exert tremendous efforts to pursue anyone proven to be linked to such terrorist groups.

He stressed that Kuwait's security and sovereignty are a red line that cannot be crossed, and that any attempt to cooperate with, support, sympathize with or finance terrorist entities at the expense of national security will be met with firm and decisive action.

He warned that no leniency will be shown toward any party proven to be involved in acts that threaten national security and stability.

The arrest of the Hezbollah-affiliated terrorist cell received widespread public praise for the role of the ministry, which dominated social media discussions.

This major security achievement reflects the efficiency and vigilance of the security authorities.

Citizens on social media expressed their pride in the security personnel, affirming that this accomplishment shows a high level of professionalism and readiness in addressing threats and confirms that Kuwait's security is protected through the dedicated efforts of its loyal personnel in the ministry.

They asserted that the speed of monitoring and the precision of the follow up that led to foiling the dangerous plot proved the high level of security expertise and its effectiveness in confronting criminals.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Bahrain on Tuesday expressed its vehement condemnation of a terrorist plot aimed at undermining the sovereignty and internal stability of the sisterly State of Kuwait.

In an official statement, the Bahraini Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserted that the thwarted plot was designed to compromise Kuwait's security, incite civil disorder, and disrupt public interest, thereby endangering the safety of citizens and residents as well as the nation's resources.

The Ministry reaffirmed the Kingdom's steadfast solidarity with the State of Kuwait, pledging full support for all measures undertaken by Kuwaiti authorities to safeguard the state's territorial integrity and national security.

This position, the statement noted, is rooted in the deep-seated historical and fraternal ties binding the leaderships and peoples of the two nations.

Furthermore, the Ministry underscored the principle of collective security, emphasizing that the stability of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states remains indivisible.

The statement lauded the heightened vigilance and operational efficiency of the Kuwaiti security and intelligence apparatus in successfully identifying and dismantling a terrorist cell affiliated with the terrorist Hezbollah organization, effectively thwarting its hostile objectives.

The Ministry reaffirmed its wishes for the continued security, stability, and prosperity of the State of Kuwait and its people.

Elsewhere, Lebanon's Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned on Tuesday the "terrorist plot that targeted the sovereignty and security of Kuwait," denouncing the involvement of Lebanon's

(Hezbollah) in the scheme.

In a statement, the ministry referred to the Lebanese government's decision issued on March 2 banning (Hezbollah)'s military and security activities.

Furthermore, it affirmed Lebanon's full solidarity with the State of Kuwait which has long "stood by it in times of hardship and adversity."

The ministry also congratulated Kuwaiti security authorities on their vigilance, expressing the Lebanese authorities' full readiness to cooperate in the investigations to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

## New law

The draft law also mandates the establishment of a national committee for protection from domestic violence, comprising representatives from several relevant government agencies. This committee will be responsible for developing general policies to combat domestic violence, coordinating among concerned parties, and preparing the necessary awareness and training programs.

Al-Habib praised the law's provisions for creating shelters for victims of domestic violence, providing social, psychological, and health care, and establishing a fund to support victims through assistance, treatment, and rehabilitation.

She explained that the law grants victims the right to file a report with the police, the relevant department, or the investigative authority. It also allows for the issuance of a judicial protection order prohibiting the perpetrator from contacting, approaching, or otherwise harassing the victim.

Al-Habib emphasized that the new law represents a qualitative leap in legislation related to family protection in Kuwait, as it offers legal guarantees and mechanisms that strengthen family stability and promote a culture of protection and respect within society.

## Kuwait's food

to soon allow smaller boats to resume fishing to boost production.

On the livestock sector, Al-Hai affirmed that field inspections on cattle and poultry farms are ongoing, with operations running normally and production levels of broiler chicken and table eggs remaining stable.

# EID SAVERS

# 50% OFF

GREAT SAVINGS • GREAT OFFERS

From 17 March To 19 March 2026

 <p><b>4.750</b> <b>2.790</b></p> <p><b>Daawat</b> Traditional Indian Basmati Rice 5kg</p>	 <p><b>2.360</b> <b>1.990</b></p> <p><b>Indomie</b> Assorted Noodles 72gm / 77gm / 82gm 20's</p>	 <p><b>1.950</b> <b>1.495</b></p> <p><b>London Dairy</b> Ice Cream Assorted 1 Ltr /pc</p>
 <p><b>2.490</b> <b>1.870</b></p> <p><b>Seara</b> Frozen Whole Chicken Griller 1.1kg 2's</p>	 <p><b>19.900</b> <b>9.900</b></p> <p><b>Nutricook</b> Air Fryer NCAFE150 4.5Ltr</p>	 <p><b>409.900</b> <b>364.900</b></p> <p><b>iPhone 17 Pro</b> 256GB (Cosmic Orange)</p>

Offer Valid Under Stock Last | No Wholesale Purchase | We Have the right to Restrict the Quantity | In Case of Printing Errors or Mistakes we do Apologize




LuluHypermarketKW | luluhyperkw | luluhyperkw | luluhypermarket.com

## Temporary Debt List Palm Palace Restaurant Co. W.L.L.

Bankruptcy Application No. 44 / 2023 – Dated 29 October 2024

Based on the decision issued by the Bankruptcy Judge on 29 October 2024 in Application No. 44 / 2023, declaring the bankruptcy of Palm Palace Restaurant Co. W.L.L. and appointing Mrs. Rabea Saad Al-Muhanna as the bankruptcy trustee, the trustee initiated the process of inviting creditors to submit their claims. Following the completion of the verification of all submitted debts, the trustee has prepared the Temporary Debt List, which outlines the amounts recommended for acceptance or exclusion for each creditor's claim.

To access the Temporary Debt List, please scan the QR code provided below.



Legal Notice: In accordance with Article (111) of Law No. 71 of 2020 issuing the Bankruptcy Law

"The debtor and any creditor, even if not listed in the debt schedule, may file an objection with the Bankruptcy Department against the debts included in the list within ten days from the date of publication of the list. The Bankruptcy Court shall have jurisdiction to decide on this objection."

## MoSA delays charity polls

By Fares Ghaleb  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: The Ministry of Social Affairs postponed the general assembly meetings and elections of charitable societies and foundations.

The Charitable Societies and Foundations Department at the ministry communicated this decision to the heads of the boards of directors of the abovementioned entities, clarifying that it is part of precautionary measures being taken due to the current situation in the region.

## INTERNATIONAL



Travelers check in for flights and wait in line to check luggage in Terminal 1 at Minneapolis-St Paul Airport after a snowstorm on March 16, in Minneapolis. (AP)

## Winds, blizzards and triple-digit heat put over half of US in path of extreme weather

WASHINGTON, March 17, (AP): From a surprising heatwave in California to blizzards burying parts of the Midwest and storms rolling into the East Coast, chaotic weather on Monday put more than half the nation's population in the path of extreme conditions.

Airport delays and cancellations piled up in some of the nation's largest airports, with more than 4,700 canceled across the U.S., and many schools closed early in the mid-Atlantic states, where high winds were in the forecast.

Torrential rains flooded homes and washed out roads in Hawaii while dry and windy conditions were charging the largest wildfire in Nebraska's history.

In Washington, the House and Senate postponed votes, and federal agencies told workers to go home early. But by late afternoon, the expected rough weather had failed to develop and a tornado watch expired.

The private weather service AccuWeather calculated that more than 200 million people were under threat Monday of some kind of dangerous weather.

Those range from extreme heat and wildfire advisories to flood and freeze watches from the National Weather Service.

The storm system that dropped snow by the foot in the Midwest, causing whiteout conditions in some areas, barreled toward the East Coast, dropping heavy rain, threatening high winds and prompting multiple tornado warnings.

The biggest threat for severe weather stretched from New Jersey to Virginia.

In New York City, officials warned of the potential for swift wind gusts overnight that could knock down tree limbs.

Four people, including a child, died Monday afternoon in New York City after a fire in a three-story apartment

building spread during heavy winds.

The National Weather Service confirmed four tornadoes in Missouri on Sunday that caused roof and tree damage. No injuries were reported.

Blizzard conditions continued in the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes on Monday after the storm walloped parts of Wisconsin and Michigan with several feet of snow.

Since Saturday, nearly 3 feet (61 centimeters) had fallen in the northern Wisconsin town of Mountain.

Another round of snow and gusts on Monday could bring another foot of snow across Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

A heat dome over the Southwest will push temperatures well into the triple digits in Arizona most of the week, much earlier than normal.

California is starting to feel like summer too. The San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento will see temperatures pushing toward 90 F (32 C) by midweek.

### Non-citizens already prohibited from voting in federal elections

## Biggest change to voting in GOP election bill could become burden for US voters

COLUMBUS, Ohio, March 17, (AP): Joshua Bogdan was born and raised in the United States. The only time the New Hampshire resident has left the country was for a day and a half in seventh grade, when he went to Canada to see Niagara Falls.

Even so, that did not mean proving his US citizenship in last fall's local elections was easy.

The 31-year-old arrived at his voting place in Portsmouth and handed the poll worker his driver's license, just as he had done in other towns when arriving to vote. She said that would no longer do.

The poll worker said that under the state's new proof-of-citizenship law, which took effect for the first time during town elections in 2025, Bogdan would need a passport or his birth certificate because he had moved and needed to re-register at his new address. A scramble ensued, turning the voting process that he had always found fun and invigorating into a nerve-wracking game of beat the clock.

"I didn't know that anything had officially changed walking in there," he said. "And then being told that I had to provide a passport that I've never had or a birth certificate that's usually tucked away somewhere safe just to cast my vote - which I've done before - it was frustrating."

Bogdan's experience in New Hampshire is a glimpse into the future for potentially millions of voters across the country. That is if Republican voting legislation being pushed aggressively by President Donald Trump passes Congress and a "show your papers" law is put in place in time for the November elections.

The Safeguard American Voter

Eligibility, or SAVE America Act, cleared the US House last month on a mostly party-line basis. Republicans say it would improve election integrity. Trump has called its safeguards common sense. The bill is scheduled to come up in the US Senate next week for voting and debate.

Republican messaging has mostly highlighted a less divisive provision in the bill that would require voters to show a photo ID, but the mandate for people to provide documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections is likely to have the most wide-ranging consequences. Non-citizens already are prohibited from voting in federal elections, and it is not allowed by any state. Cases where it occurs are rare.

Obtaining the necessary documents under the SAVE Act is not as easy as it might sound. A similar effort was tried in Kansas a decade ago and turned into a debacle that eventually was blocked by the courts after more than 30,000 eligible citizens were prevented from registering.

Rebekah Caruthers, president and CEO at the Fair Elections Center, said the legislation's strict documentation requirements could move the US "in the opposite direction" of representative democracy.

"If this bill passes, it would deny millions of eligible Americans their fundamental freedom to vote," she said in an email. "This includes millions of people who make up your communities, including married women, people of color and voters who live in rural areas."

The list of qualifying documents in the SAVE Act for proving citizenship appears long, but many of them come



Customers stand in line to get birth and death certificates at the Columbus Public Health Department in Columbus, Ohio, on March 10. (AP)

with qualifiers.

Under the bill, a REAL ID -compliant driver's license would have to indicate that "the applicant is a citizen," but not all do. Only five states - Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Vermont and Washington - offer the type of enhanced REAL IDs that explicitly indicate US citizenship.

Standard driver's licenses, generally available to both citizens and non-citizens, often do not include a citizenship indicator. Some states, including Ohio, have recently added them.

The stipulations continue, buried in the fine print.

While military ID cards are listed as qualifying documents under the act, they will not suffice on their own. The bill says a military ID must be accompanied by a military "record of service" that indicates the person's

birthplace was in the US. A DD214, the current standard-issue certificate of release or discharge for all military service branches, does not currently fulfill that requirement. According to the Pentagon, that document only lists where someone lived at points of entry and discharge and a person's current home of record. It does not list where someone was born.

For most provisions, the SAVE Act contains no phase-in period that would give voters and local election offices time to adjust. If passed by Congress and signed by Trump, its documentary proof-of-citizenship mandate would apply immediately, meaning it would be in place for this year's midterm elections.

That could lead to a rush to obtain documents by those who want to regis-

ter or need to re-register. A 2025 University of Maryland study estimates that 21.3 million Americans who are eligible to vote do not have or have easy access to documents to prove their citizenship, including nearly 10% of Democrats, 7% of Republicans and 14% of people unaffiliated with either major party.

A passport would most effectively meet the requirement, but only about half of American adults have one, according to the State Department, and the SAVE Act requires the passport to be current. An expired one does not count.

Obtaining a passport in time for a looming voter registration deadline is another potential hurdle.

Workers who process passports had layoffs at the State Department reversed, but just last month the department forbid passport processing at certain public libraries that had long helped relieve pressure at the department. Government libraries, post offices, county clerks and others still provide the service.

It takes four weeks to six weeks to get a passport, according to the department's website, excluding mailing time. A new passport costs \$165 for adults while renewals cost \$130, and the photo costs \$10 or \$20 more. The turnaround time can be sped up to two weeks or three weeks for an additional \$60 - and for even faster processing, add \$22 more. The fully expedited process for a new passport would cost at least \$257.

A birth certificate may be a quicker and cheaper choice for most people, but there are twists.

The SAVE Act requires a certified birth certificate issued by a state, lo-

cal government or tribal government. What does not appear to qualify is the certificate signed by the doctor that many new parents are given in the hospital when their child is born. It provides information similar to a certified birth certificate, but would not meet the letter of the federal legislation.

Like passports, birth certificates can sometimes take weeks to obtain. Those who live near their birthplaces can visit the local vital statistics office, but staffing shortages and escalating demand for REAL IDs have caused significant backlogs in some states. In New York, the waiting period for certified copies is four months, the state said. Average processing times for on-line certificate requests vary widely by state, from as few as three days to 12 weeks or longer.

People whose birth certificates don't match their current IDs - mostly women who changed their names when they married - would likely need additional documentation to register to vote under the bill. A 2023 Pew Research Center survey found about 80% of women in opposite-sex marriages in the US take their husband's last name.

Notably, the SAVE Act does not provide any money to help states and local governments implement the changes or promote them to voters.

For Bogdan, that was part of the problem when New Hampshire's proof-of-citizenship law took effect. People who have voted elsewhere in the state are not required to show proof of citizenship in their new towns if poll workers confirm their registration history, but Bogdan said workers at his polling place did not seem to know that or try to look up the information.



This picture, released by SOS Humanity on March 16, 2026, and taken on Feb 3, 2026, shows rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea, one of the deadliest migration routes in the world. (AP)

### Authorities withholding information

## Hundreds of migrants vanish in Mediterranean

ROME, March 17, (AP): Bodies washing ashore day after day. Phone calls from relatives going unanswered. Migrants' tents abandoned overnight.

Migrants trying to reach Europe are vanishing in droves in what are known as "invisible shipwrecks" but governments responsible for search and rescue are withholding information about what they know.

The beginning of 2026 ranks as the deadliest start to any year for people trying to cross the Mediterranean - an unprecedented 682 confirmed missing as of March 16 - according to the United Nations' International Organization for Migration. But the real death toll is almost certainly much higher.

Human rights groups are increasingly struggling to verify tolls as Italy, Tunisia and Malta have quietly restricted information on migrant rescues and shipwrecks along the deadliest migration route in the world. The news barely makes headlines, in part because the lack of transparency prevents journalists from confirming reports.

"It's a strategy of silence," said Matteo Villa, a researcher focusing on migration and data at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies think tank.

The organization Refugees in Libya and other human rights groups have been sounding the alarm since late January, reporting more than 1,000 people missing after Cyclone Harry hit the region. But authorities have not confirmed, denied or corrected those reports.

In the weeks that followed the cyclone, more than 20 decomposing bodies washed ashore in Italy and Libya while other human remains were spotted floating in the middle of the sea.

For the families of missing migrants, not knowing their fate is excruciating.

"Europe should know that these people who got drowned in the sea have family members, have dreams, have passions," Josephus Thomas, a migrant from Sierra Leone and community leader in Tunisia's coastal town of El Amra, told AP.

Even the UN's migration agency is increasingly unable to verify cases of migrants who die in what is known as "invisible shipwrecks" because of the growing lack of information.

Last year, at least 1,500 people were reported missing whose fates IOM could not confirm, said Julia Black, who leads the organization's Missing Migrants Project. The issue persists in

2026.

"We started a new secondary data set of what we are calling unverifiable cases because it's just become so many," Black said. For this year, they already have more than 400 missing they could not verify.

Many humanitarian organizations that previously filled some of the information gaps are no longer able to do so because of the global wave of funding cuts and government-imposed restrictions across the region.

"We've seen the restriction of access for humanitarian actors, which is not right. And now we're seeing even the restriction of information," Black said.

The Associated Press repeatedly asked authorities in Tunisia, Italy and Malta why they aren't sharing information related to migrant rescues at sea and what their policies are. Not one responded.

Over the years, authorities in the Mediterranean have gradually reduced information related to migrants. But their silence was even more pronounced in late January after Cyclone Harry unleashed heavy rainfall, winds of 100 kph (62 mph), and 9-meter-tall (30 feet) waves.

## Europeans seek clarity about Trump's Iran war aims before agreeing to warship demands

BRUSSELS, March 17, (AP): European countries on Monday sought more details about US President Donald Trump's plans for the war on Iran and warned that NATO must not become involved in it, as they weighed whether to agree to his call to send warships to help shore up security in the Arabian Gulf.

The cool response to Trump's demand reflects wide caution about the US-Israeli war among allies kept in the dark before, and largely since, it was launched on Feb 28.

Trump has asked partners - including France, China, Japan, South Korea and Britain - to help secure the Strait of Hormuz for global shipping. He said the United States was talking to "about seven" countries, but he wouldn't say which ones and gave no indication of when such a coalition might be formed.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer insisted Britain "will not be drawn into the wider war," and said British troops should only be sent into action that is legal and has "a proper thought-through plan." But his country is considering other forms of help in conjunction with allies.

In an interview with the Financial Times, Trump also warned that "if there's no response or if it's a negative response, I think it will be very bad for



Germany's Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl speaks with the media as he arrives for a meeting of EU foreign ministers at the European Council building in Brussels, on March 16. (AP)

the future of NATO."

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said that "NATO is a defensive alliance, not an interventionist one. And that is precisely why NATO has no business being involved here." He said he hopes that NATO allies "will treat one another with the necessary respect

within the alliance."

Merz agreed that "this Iranian regime must come to an end," but he said that "based on all the experience we have gained in previous years and decades, bombing it into submission is, in all likelihood, not the right approach."

## Zelensky to discuss Russia-Ukraine war with British leader, NATO chief

LONDON, March 17, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was due in London on Tuesday for talks with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the British government said, as European countries look to keep international attention on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while the unfolding Iran war engages world leaders.

Starmer's office said that NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte will also join the meeting at 10 Downing St. to discuss peacemaking efforts in Ukraine and "the need to maintain sanctions pressure on Russia."

The meeting comes days after the US temporarily waived some Russian oil sanctions in a bid to ease pressure on global supplies triggered by the war in the Middle East, which was sparked by the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran starting on Feb 28.



Sappers examine the site of a Russian missile strike which hit a post office storehouse in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine on March 17. (AP)

to keep up its attacks on Ukraine.

US President Donald Trump says he wants to secure a peace deal that ends Europe's biggest conflict since World War

II and has rattled the continent's leaders, who reckon that Russia could pose a credible security threat to the European Union by the end of the decade.

## Rescue crews dig bodies

## Pakistan airstrike hits hospital in Kabul, killing at least 400: Afghan officials

KABUL, Afghanistan, March 17, (AP): Rescue crews were still digging bodies out of the rubble of a drug rehabilitation hospital in the Afghan capital on Tuesday morning, after officials there said that an overnight Pakistani airstrike killed at least 400 people in a dramatic escalation of a conflict between the two neighbors that is now in its third week.

Pakistan has denied Afghanistan's accusation that it targeted a hospital, insisting that its strikes, which were also conducted in eastern Afghanistan on Monday, were aimed at military facilities. It dismissed Afghanistan's claims of hundreds of casualties from a strike on a hospital as being propaganda.

The casualties were taken to several hospitals in the area. It wasn't immediately possible to independently confirm the death toll.

The conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan began in late February, and has seen repeated cross-border clashes as well as airstrikes inside Afghanistan. International calls for

a ceasefire have gone unheeded. The strike came hours after Afghan officials said that the two sides exchanged fire along their common border, killing four people in Afghanistan.

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of providing safe haven for militants who frequently carry out attacks inside Pakistan, especially to the Pakistani Taliban, a group separate but closely allied with the Afghan Taliban who took over Afghanistan in 2021 in the wake of the chaotic withdrawal of US-led troops. The group, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States. Kabul denies the charge.

In a late-night post on X, Afghanistan's deputy government spokesperson Hamdullah Fitrat said the airstrike had hit the Omid Addiction Treatment Hospital, a 2,000-bed facility in Kabul, at about 9 p.m. local time.

He said that large sections of the facility had been destroyed, and that the death toll had "so far" reached 400 people, while about 250 people had been reported wounded. There was no



Residents and volunteers inspect the site of a late-Monday airstrike at a drug rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan on March 17. (AP)

updated official death toll early Tuesday morning.

Local television stations posted footage on X showing security forces

The Omid hospital was renamed and expanded in size roughly a year ago from the Ibn Sina Drug Addiction Treatment Hospital. The site is located near a former NATO military base, Camp Phoenix, where US forces used to train the Afghan National Army. After the Taliban seized control of the country in 2021, the base was taken over by Afghanistan's new authorities. It wasn't immediately clear what was now housed on the site of the former base.

Pakistan's Information Ministry said in an X post that the Pakistani military had "precisely targeted" the Camp Phoenix site, which it said was now a "military terrorist ammunition and equipment storage site." It said in its post that Omid hospital was "multiple kilometers" away from the former camp and accused Afghan officials of lying.

"Another important question also lingers, as to why would an alleged drug rehabilitation facility be collocated with lethal ammunition storage site in a military camp? This also remains unanswered," the Information Minis-

try wrote.

Afghan government spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid condemned the strike on X, accusing Pakistan of "targeting hospitals and civilian sites to perpetrate horrors." He said those killed were "innocent civilians and addicts."

"We strongly condemn this crime and consider such an act to be against all accepted principles and a crime against humanity," he said in a separate post on X.

A member of the rescue team working at the site on Tuesday morning, Allah Mohammad Farooq, said that hundreds had been killed.

"When we arrived here, everyone was buried under the rubble," he said. "We then used a crane to pull them out. Most of the people were dead, and many are still trapped under the debris."

A man sitting outside the site broke down in tears as he recounted hearing about the bombing. Haji Najibullah said that his son and other relatives were being treated in the hospital.

## Asia

**Thai King visits Laos:** Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochayuhua and Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalakshana paid a state visit to Laos from Monday to Wednesday.

The state visit is being made at the invitation of Lao President Thongloun Sisolouth. It aims to further strengthen the long-standing friendship, good-neighborly relations, and strategic partnership for sustainable growth and development between Laos and Thailand, Lao Economic Daily reported on Tuesday.

An official welcoming ceremony was held on Tuesday morning. Following the ceremony, the two sides held an official bilateral meeting. (Xinhua)



Sisolouth

**Laos strengthens disaster response:** Laos' Central Disaster Management Committee met to review past disaster management efforts and set strategic directions for 2026-2030, aiming to boost preparedness, improve monitoring and emergency response, and accelerate recovery for affected communities.

The meeting, held on Monday in Lao capital Vientiane, was chaired by Lao Deputy Prime Minister Chansamone Chanyalath, Lao News Agency reported on Tuesday. Authorities reported that natural disasters, including storms, floods, landslides and flash floods, have become increasingly severe, largely driven by climate change and human activities.

Laos experienced 376 natural disasters between 2021 and 2025, affecting more than 1 million people and causing extensive damage to society, agriculture, and infrastructure.

Several northern provinces, including Huaphan, Luang Namtha, Xayaboury and Luang Prabang, which previously experienced limited flooding, reported significant flood damage in 2024 and 2025, highlighting growing climate risks. (Xinhua)

**3 fishermen found dead off Australia coast:** Three men who went missing while fishing off the coast of South Australia (SA) have been found dead, police said on Monday.

A police statement said that the alarm was raised and a search commenced by sea and air around 2:30 p.m. local time on Sunday when the three men failed to return to shore at Beachport, 310 km southeast of the SA capital of Adelaide.

All three men, aged 65, 67 and 74, from the east coast state of New South Wales were found deceased and their bodies were recovered.

The SA police force said that a report on their deaths would be prepared for the state coroner and asked members of the public not to collect any debris from the group's boat before it can be collected by officers. (Xinhua)

**Cambodia suspends prison chief, officers:** Cambodia has suspended a provincial prison chief and three other prison officers after a recently leaked video clip purportedly showed a crowd of prisoners using smartphones.

Interior Minister Sar Sokha signed an order to suspend them from their jobs on Tuesday and a copy of the order was publicized.

The suspension came after a video clip went viral on social media last month, showing a group of prisoners using smartphones in a crowded cell.

Inmates are strictly prohibited from using personal phones in the Southeast Asian country.

The kingdom's prisons are home to approximately 57,000 inmates, according to the Ministry of Interior. (Xinhua)

## Suspected suicide bombers target Nigeria's Maiduguri, killing 23 and injuring over 100

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria, March 17, (AP): At least 23 people were killed and more than 100 wounded in suspected suicide bombings Monday night that targeted Maiduguri city in northeastern Nigeria, police said Tuesday. It was one of the deadliest attacks in the conflict-battered city in recent history.

Residents and emergency services earlier told The Associated Press that three explosions were reported in crowded places in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, including in a major market and at the entrance of the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital.

"Regrettably, a total of 23 persons lost their lives, while 108 others sustained varying degrees of injuries," Borno police spokesperson Nahum Kenneth Daso said in a statement that blamed the attacks on suspected suicide bombers.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but suspicion quickly fell on the Boko Haram jihadi group, which in 2009 launched an insurgency in northeastern Nigeria to enforce their radical interpretation of Shariah.

Boko Haram has since become stronger, with thousands of fighters and different factions, including the Islamic State West Africa Province, which is backed by the Islamic State group.

Maiduguri city has been at the heart



A soldier inspects the aftermath of Monday's bomb blast at a market in Maiduguri, Nigeria on March 17. (AP)

of the deadly violence but has in recent years experienced relative peace even as the countryside is often battered by extremists.

The attack took place less than 24 hours after the Nigerian military repelled attacks by militants on the outskirts of Maiduguri, in what some residents say could have been planned as a distraction.

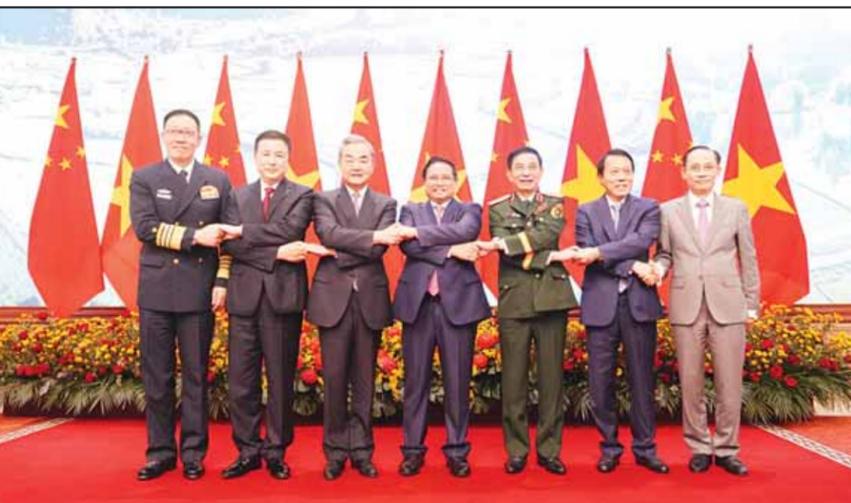
By Tuesday morning, there was heavy security deployment in the affected locations and along major roads in the city, but many public places remained closed amid heightened fear.

"Investigations are ongoing to fur-

ther ascertain the circumstances surrounding the incidents and to bring perpetrators to justice," the Borno police command said.

The first explosion was recorded at about 7:30 p.m. at the entrance of the teaching hospital, while the second and third followed few minutes later at the popular Monday Market and nearby Post Office business hub, both located about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the hospital.

Witnesses recounted the chaos that followed at the scenes and at hospitals as security forces and the emergency services quickly intervened.



Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong and Minister of National Defense Dong Jun in Hanoi, Vietnam on March 16. (Xinhua)

## Vietnamese PM meets with senior Chinese officials

Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong and Minister of National Defense Dong Jun in Hanoi on Monday.

The three senior Chinese officials were in Vietnam to attend the first ministerial meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue on diplomacy, defense and public security.

Chinh noted that China is the only country that aligns with all of Vietnam's foreign policy priorities, and that consolidating and developing relations with China is the top priority and a strategic choice of the Vietnamese party and government.

Chinh said that Vietnam firmly adheres to the one-China policy, supports the series of global initiatives proposed by China, and is

willing to work with China to implement the important consensus reached by the top leaders of the two parties, prepare for the next stage of high-level exchanges, jointly enhance political mutual trust, promote pragmatic cooperation, properly handle differences, and continuously deepen the Vietnam-China comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. (Xinhua)

## Islandwide blackout hits Cuba as it struggles with deepening energy crisis

HAVANA, March 17, (AP): Officials in Cuba reported an islandwide blackout Monday in the country of some 11 million people as its energy and economic crises deepen and its power grid continues to crumble.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines on X noted a "complete disconnection" of the country's electrical system and said it was investigating, noting there were no failures in the units that were operating when the grid collapsed.

Lázaro Guerra, the ministry's electricity director, told state media late Monday that crews were trying to restart several thermoelectric plants, which are key to restoring power.

"It must be done gradually to avoid setbacks," he said. "Because systems, when very weak, are more susceptible to failure."

As night fell, candles began to burn in some homes while the sounds of children playing and singing with their mother filled one dark house in Havana.

"We have to prepare a mattress for the girls here so that they can sleep here because we have no choice," said Yuneici Cecilia Riviaux, as she motioned to an open door. "I don't have a rechargeable fan or a generator."

It was the third major blackout in Cuba over the past four months.



A vehicle drives down a street during a blackout in Havana on March 4. (AP)

Tomás David Velázquez Felipe, a 61-year-old resident of Havana, said the relentless outages make him think that Cubans who can should just pack up and leave the island. "What little we have to eat spoils," he said. "Our people are too old to keep suffering."

By Monday night, state-owned media reported that crews had restored power to 5% of Havana's residents, representing some 42,000 customers, as well as several hospitals across the island. Officials said

they would prioritize the communications sector next, all while warning that the small circuits restored so far could fail again.

Cuba's aging grid has drastically eroded in recent years, leading to daily outages and an increase in island-wide blackouts. But the government also has blamed its woes on a US energy blockade after US President Donald Trump in January warned of tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba.

## Haiti has a chance now to tackle gang violence as int'l force deploys: O'Neill

UNITED NATIONS, March 17, (AP): Haiti has a chance now to tackle pervasive gang violence with a U.S.-initiated international force starting to deploy and a prime minister committed to providing alternatives for young gang members, the United Nations' expert on human rights in Haiti said Monday.

"We're in a place now where the next few months are going to be crucial," said William O'Neill, who visited Haiti this month. "And I think it can turn around, because the gangs, at the end of the day, are not that powerful."

The UN Security Council on Sept. 30 approved a plan co-sponsored by the U.S. and Panama to authorize a much larger, 5,550-member force with expanded powers to help stop the escalating gang violence in Haiti. It is aimed at transforming a Kenya-led multinational force, which arrived in Haiti in June 2024 and grew to about 1,100 troops, into a "gang suppression force" with the power to arrest suspected gang members, which the current force does not have.

O'Neill told UN reporters that the support office and other elements of the gang suppressing force are already in Haiti setting up and the first troop arrivals are slated for early April, with more contingents arriving in the fol-



A man walks along a deserted street where a part of the earthquake-destroyed cathedral stands in downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti on March 16. (AP)

lowing months and the entire force on the ground by September. Some contingents in the Kenya-led forces are expected to stay, including from El Salvador, Guatemala and Jamaica, he said.

Gangs have grown in power since the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse in 2021. They now control 90%

of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and have expanded their activities into the countryside, including looting, kidnapping, sexual assaults and rape. Haiti has not had a president since the assassination. Haitian police and the U.N.-backed multinational force have struggled to quell the violence.

## Chile's new far-right president launches work on border barrier

SANTIAGO, Chile, March 17, (AP): Chilean President José Antonio Kast wasted no time.

Less than a week after his inauguration, Chile's arch-conservative president on Monday began overseeing preparations to build a border barrier - part of his flagship campaign promise to block immigrants from crossing illegally.

From Chile's northern frontier area of Chacalluta, where legions of immigrants have slipped across the Peruvian border into one of the region's most prosperous nations, Kast vowed to implement what he calls his "Border Shield" plan. Among other steps, it involves the construction of a physical barrier at the nation's northern border made up of ditches and fences and patrolled by drones and the military forces.

So far, it doesn't look like much. A single bulldozer on Monday could be seen digging into the desert to carve out a trench.

But Kast assured the public that "for all of Chile, this is a milestone."

"We have taken clear and concrete decisions to close our border to illegal



Chilean President Jose Antonio Kast gives a press conference as a machine digs, as part of measures to deter irregular migration, along the northern border at the Chacalluta border crossing, in Arica, Chile on March 16. (AP)

immigration, drug trafficking and organized crime," he said. "We want to implement this without any delay."

## Bolsonaro moves out of ICU - wife

SAO PAULO, March 17, (AP): Former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro was transferred to a semi-intensive care unit after his medical condition improved in the last 24 hours, his wife said Monday.

Michelle Bolsonaro said on Instagram that tests showed the 70-year-old right-wing politician had reduced inflammation since he was placed in the Brasilia hospital's intensive care unit on Friday for pneumonia.

The hospital DF Star said on Sunday that Bolsonaro's kidney function had improved, although he was to stay in intensive care because of pneumonia. The hospital did not mention his transfer to a semi-intensive care unit.

Bolsonaro, who governed between 2019 and 2022, was taken to the hospital on Friday from the prison where he is serving a 27-year sentence for leading a coup attempt in 2023.

The embattled ex-leader was transferred from the local federal police headquarters to a larger cell in January. His family and allies have repeatedly asked Brazil's Supreme Court to allow him to carry out his sentence under house arrest.

## Kuwait oil price surges to \$148.62 pb

KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil edged up by USD 5.58 to hit USD 148.62 per barrel (pb) Monday, compared to USD 143.04 Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Tuesday. In global markets, the price of Brent crude went up by USD 2.93 to reach USD 100.21 per barrel, as West Texas Intermediate rose by USD 5.21 to USD 93.50 pb.

# Business

Delivering fibre-like speeds across Kuwait

## Alghanim Industries launches Starlink services in Kuwait via Sama X

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Alghanim Industries (Kutayba Alghanim Group) today announced the official launch of Starlink services in Kuwait through its technology venture Sama X, bringing SpaceX's satellite internet network and the world's largest constellation of low Earth orbit satellites to customers across the country.

As an authorized global reseller of Starlink, Sama X provides access to high-speed satellite connectivity that delivers fibre-like performance without relying on traditional ground infrastructure. The service offers reliable internet on land and at sea with typical latency as low as 20 milliseconds, supporting remote operations, critical applications, and everyday connectivity needs.

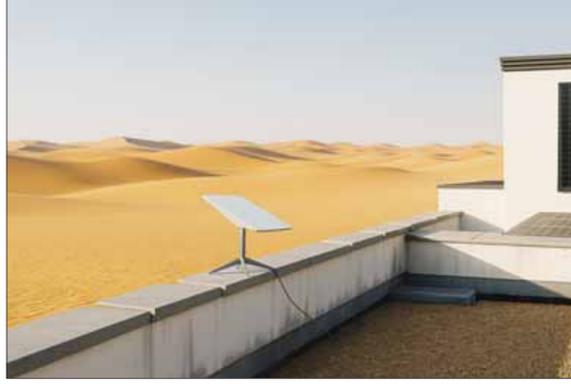
Starlink currently operates the world's largest LEO satellite network, with more than 10,000 satellites launched since 2020. The system now delivers total network capacity of around 450 Tbps and serves more than 10 million users worldwide.

In Kuwait, Sama X will offer a range of subscription plans with download speeds exceeding 300 Mbps, along with fast delivery, professional installation, and local support, including a 24/7 bilingual call centre. The service operates in accordance with Kuwait's telecommunications regulations and the approvals issued by the relevant authorities. For inquiries, customers can call 22055736.

"The launch of Starlink services in Kuwait through Sama X marks an important step in strengthening the country's digital infrastructure," said Kutayba Y. Alghanim, Executive Chairman of Alghanim Industries. "At a time when reliable connectivity has become essential for business continuity and the effective functioning of key sectors, this technology provides advanced connectivity that helps organizations, governments, and communities stay connected wherever they operate — from remote worksites to critical sectors such as healthcare and education. Through this initiative, we continue to support the adoption of advanced technologies that strengthen Kuwait's digital readiness and open new opportunities for innovation and growth."



Kutayba Y. Alghanim



Sama X



From remote offshore oil and gas installations and maritime fleets at sea to enterprises across the country, Starlink provides stable communications that support business continuity, enhance safety, and improve operational efficiency. Reliable connectivity is also increasingly critical for essential services

- As an authorized reseller of Starlink, Sama X provides an end-to-end solution that includes custom consultations, rapid installation, and 24/7 support in English and Arabic
- Low latency, high speed internet on land and at sea, supporting critical applications, remote operations, and general connectivity needs, whether at work or at home
- Through Starlink services, Sama X helps lay foundation for a more digitally empowered future for Kuwait

such as hospitals, schools, research institutions, and emergency response teams that depend on uninterrupted access to digital systems and data.

The service also enables high-speed connectivity for homes and businesses, supporting seamless streaming, cloud-based applications, and data-driven services across multiple industries.

By making Starlink available in Kuwait, Sama X supports the country's ongoing efforts to strengthen its digital ecosystem and expand secure, reliable connectivity nationwide. Starlink services in Kuwait operate in accordance with the country's telecommunications regulatory framework.

Customers can purchase Starlink services directly from Sama X or through Xcite, Kuwait's leading electronics retailer, both online and in-store.

"Making Starlink services available in Kuwait marks an important step in expanding advanced connectivity options for businesses and individuals across the country," said Amit Somani, CEO of Sama X. "At Sama X, we are focused on making this technology easy to access through fast installation and dedicated local support. Our partnership with Xcite further expands availability, allowing customers to purchase Starlink services easily through Xcite's online channels and nationwide stores."

Sama X was established by Alghanim Industries as part of the Group's broader expansion into technology and advanced connectivity solutions across the region. The company already operates in several regional markets and holds a global license to resell Starlink products internationally. The introduction of Starlink services in Kuwait follows the completion of the required regulatory approvals from the relevant authorities.

General index falls 45 points

## Boursa Kuwait closes Tuesday session low

KUWAIT CITY, March 17, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Tuesday's trading session in the red, with its general index slipping 45 points, or 0.53 percent, to close at 8,526.14 points. Trading activity saw 181.4 million shares exchanged through 13,944 cash transactions, generating a total value of KD 54.12 million (around USD 165.6 million).

The Main Market Index declined 16.85 points, or 0.21 percent, to settle at 7,964 points. It recorded 77.3 million shares traded across 5,925 cash deals, amounting to KD 10.6

million (approximately USD 32.4 million).

The Premier Market Index also moved lower, shedding 53.40 points, or 0.58 percent, to finish at 9,087.64 points. Trading volume reached 104.14 million shares through 8,019 transactions, valued at KD 43.5 million (about USD 133 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index dropped 39.21 points, or 0.47 percent, to close at 8,229.51 points, on a turnover of 67.5 million shares across 4,407 transactions, worth KD 9 million (nearly USD 27.6 million).

Operating to Al Ain, UAE via Qaisumah Airport from 18 March

## Jazeera Airways opens Kuwait's gateway to the world

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Jazeera Airways today announced opening Kuwait's gateway to the world. From 18 March, the airline in coordination with the UAE Embassy in Kuwait, Al Ain Airport, and other stakeholders, will recommence daily flights between Kuwait and Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates, via Qaisumah Airport in Hafar Al Batin, Saudi Arabia.

Given Al Ain's proximity to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, two major global aviation hubs, passengers will also benefit from convenient access to a wide range of international destinations.

The launch of Al Ain marks the first connection between Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates since the suspension of operations at Kuwait International Airport, reinforcing Jazeera's efforts to maintain vital travel links during this period.

The service expands the airline's network during the current regional situation and supports passenger connectivity to and from Kuwait. Passengers will be transported safely by bus between Kuwait



Jazeera Airways A320neo

and Qaisumah Airport before boarding onward flights to Al Ain International Airport. Inbound passengers will travel from Al Ain to Qaisumah before continuing overland into Kuwait.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of

Jazeera Airways, said:

"As the only airline operating from Kuwait, we are pleased to start flights from Kuwait to Al Ain via Qaisumah Airport. By connecting to Al Ain, the heart of UAE, we have successfully opened a gateway for passengers to access international destinations through nearby Dubai and Abu Dhabi, two major aviation hubs. These services will help people reunite with their families and loved ones, while also supporting business and essential travel. We are grateful for the close cooperation of authorities and partners in Kuwait, the UAE, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for making these operations possible."

Jazeera Airways is also operating flights to Alexandria, Assiut, Cairo and Luxor in Egypt, as well as Amman, Colombo and Istanbul, with additional destinations and increased frequencies, including to India, expected to be introduced gradually.

Passengers can book their travel through the Jazeera Airways website: [jazeeraairways.com](http://jazeeraairways.com) or the airline's mobile app.

## Iran war pushes countries into energy triage as they conserve power & curb soaring prices

BANGKOK, March 17, (AP): The escalating war with Iran is pushing parts of the world into energy triage, forcing governments to choose where to cut demand or absorb costs, while prioritizing dwindling supplies.

Asia is the most exposed since it relies heavily on imported fuel, much of it shipped through the now-blocked Strait of Hormuz. The narrow passage offshore from Iran is the main route for shipping a fifth of global trade in crude oil and liquefied natural gas.

Governments in the region are scrambling to adjust - tallying oil reserves, conserving energy, competing for supplies and trying to blunt prices. That brings difficult trade-offs: saving power may slow business activity. Prioritizing cooking gas for households can hurt restaurants and other businesses.

"Even relatively modest constraints on energy use can create a drag on industrial activity," said Linh Nguyen, with the consultancy Control Risks. She pointed to Vietnam's energy-intensive export industries and warned that higher fuel costs or conservation measures could quickly raise production costs or slow factory output.

Analysts warn the same hard choices could soon spread beyond Asia to fuel-importing economies in Africa and elsewhere as countries compete for scarce supplies.

"The situation is common across the board," said Putra Adhiguna of the Jakarta-based Energy Shift Institute. "There is no easy decision for the short term."

With oil prices surging despite releases of some reserves, Southeast Asia is stretching dwindling energy reserves by urging households, businesses and government agencies to slash power use.

In the Philippines, officials have switched to a four-day workweek to cut back on fuel consumption and reduce the government's energy use by a fifth. Office have been told to switch off computers during lunch breaks and keep air conditioning no lower than 24°C (75°F). Vietnam has urged people to work from home. While in Thailand, the prime minister has even asked officials to take the stairs instead of elevators.

But this comes at a cost. Dieu Linh, a vegetable seller in Hanoi, said even a 10% rise in fuel costs will eat into her thin margins. "If my costs go up by even a little, the profit is



Motorists wait behind a rope for their turn to get fuel at a pump, fearing a possible fuel shortage due to the Iran war, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Sunday, March 8, 2026. (AP)

almost gone," she said. At the same time, countries in the region are competing for limited supplies at higher costs.

Vietnam has asked refineries and fuel distributors to keep fuel supplies high, while Thailand is stretching its roughly two-month oil reserve and seeking other domestic energy sources. Both are using price supports to shield households from rising costs.

Thailand halted exports to protect its limited reserves, contributing to shortages that have closed nearly a third of Cambodia's roughly 6,000 gas stations.

More than 80% of the liquefied natural gas, or LNG, that passed the Strait of Hormuz in 2024 went to Asia, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, and much of it to Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Japan's first line of defense is its vast strategic oil stockpile, amounting to around 254 days' worth of supplies. This system was set up after the shocks from the 1970s Arab oil crisis.

Japan began releasing about 45 days' worth of oil reserves this week to prevent fuel prices from surging as crude oil imports slow. It last released reserves after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

This will help keep Japan's energy-intensive industries running, from automobiles to steel manufacturing and heavy machinery. Companies like Toyota, Mitsubishi and Nippon Steel depend on steady fuel supplies. South Korea plans to release 22.46

million barrels from its reserves under the International Energy Agency's largest-ever coordinated stock draw.

But analysts said that tapping reserves isn't a long-term solution.

It will give refineries "some buffer" against disruptions. But this does not increase a country's overall supply unless it can buy oil released by other nations, said Muyu Xu of the energy consultancy Kpler.

If the crisis drags on, crude oil shortages could return. The releases may keep refineries running for another few weeks, but companies may need to slow production if disruptions continue, she added.

"The fundamental difficulties will not be solved by this action," said Mika Ohbayashi of the Renewable Energy Institute in Japan, adding that renewable energy was a long-term solution but the Japanese government was uninterested.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is due to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump later this month and Japan's plans to buy more American LNG and restart nuclear power plants are likely to be on the agenda, analysts say.

India is prioritizing household needs for its limited supply of liquefied petroleum gas or LPG, which is used for cooking and to power cars.

It has absorbed more than half of the increase driven by global market disruptions under a federal scheme to keep prices low for poor households, said Indian Petroleum Minister Hard-

deep Singh Puri. But shortages are already seeping into restaurants and hotels in the world's second-largest LPG importer, as eateries shorten hours, close temporarily or trim long-simmered curries and deep-fried snacks from their menus.

The scale of demand in India, the world's most populous nation, limits how long it can cap prices to shield consumers. The situation could worsen within a week if government subsidies lapse, said Duttatreya Das of the think tank Ember, noting gas supplies were the most immediate concern.

"You can't store a lot of gas," Das said, adding that fertilizer factories and small industries will feel the pinch first.

Indonesia, a country of 287 million people and Southeast Asia's most populous nation, also faces hard choices.

While the government has promised to maintain fuel prices throughout Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, Adhiguna of the Energy Shift Institute said there is "no clarity about what will happen after that," adding that this implies fuel prices could increase.

Thailand is also caught in a dilemma. If it ends subsidies that keep prices low, living costs will jump and that could spark a panic if reserves fall further, said Areeporn Asawinpongphan of the Thailand Development Research Institute.

If the conflict continues, Indonesia will have to choose between keeping the subsidies that protect customers or cutting funding to keep to budgetary limits. However, this could fuel inflation. Given Indonesia's limited 20-day reserve, Adhiguna warned that price fluctuations in Indonesia's fuel market will be swift.

"It will eventually reach a breaking point," Adhiguna said.

The European Union is doubling down on its long-term clean energy strategy to cut consumption and rein in prices across the 27-nation bloc that have risen sharply since the war's start. Officials met in Brussels this week, where they considered ways to improve the region's energy security.

"We are looking at how we can reduce people's energy bills," said European Commissioner for Energy Dan Jørgensen. "We are working on immediate measures to help businesses and our most vulnerable citizens."

## Investors flee risk amid Iran conflict

ISTANBUL, March 17, (Xinhua): Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and spiking oil prices are reshaping global capital flows, prompting investors to reassess their exposure to risk, an Istanbul-based economic analyst has said.

"The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and Brent crude prices surging above 100 (U.S.) dollars per barrel are sending immediate shockwaves through financial markets," Murat Tufan, research director at Destek Portfolio Management, told Xinhua.

"Investors are now reallocating portfolios toward safer sectors, including energy, infrastructure, and strategic technologies," he said.

The conflict, which began with attacks involving the United States and Israel against Iran, has spread beyond direct clashes to involve multiple Gulf states. This escalation is heightening regional instability and affecting critical economic and strategic infrastructure.

Tufan noted that Gulf nations, long reliant on oil revenues, have been diversifying their economies in anticipation of a lower global dependence on fossil fuels.

"Countries in the region are investing in tourism, security, digital infrastructure, and energy projects to develop new sources of income," he said. "This shift is attracting international investors, including Chinese firms, targeting projects that could generate cash flow when oil revenues decline."

Despite these diversification efforts, immediate energy disruptions are impacting global markets. "The world remains highly dependent on oil. Any interruption in supply affects transportation, industry, and trade. If prices stay above 100 dollars for a prolonged period, the global economy could face

another wave of inflation," Tufan warned.

He also highlighted rising geopolitical risks for strategic assets, including ports, data centers, and energy supply lines.

"These are no longer just commercial assets -- they have become strategic targets," he said. "Companies with major investments in energy, logistics, and digital infrastructure are reviewing multi-regional backup systems to mitigate potential disruptions."

According to Tufan, even the perception of a disruption in energy supply or strategic infrastructure can trigger sharp swings in commodity prices, global equities, and technology sector valuations.

Tufan added that Gulf countries' efforts to diversify are being closely watched by global investors, who see opportunities in emerging sectors such as renewable energy, smart logistics, and digital finance. "The region is positioning itself for a post-oil future, which could redefine international investment patterns over the next decade," he said.

He also warned that economies heavily dependent on oil imports, including those in Europe and Asia, are facing immediate challenges. "Higher energy costs ripple across manufacturing, transport, and consumer goods, potentially slowing growth and increasing inflationary pressures worldwide," Tufan noted.

Looking ahead, Tufan emphasized that geopolitical tensions could accelerate the adoption of alternative energy and supply chain resilience strategies. "Firms and governments alike are being forced to rethink long-term planning, diversify energy sources, and invest in infrastructure that can withstand geopolitical shocks," he said.

Maintaining growth despite geopolitical headwinds

# Action Energy Co. reports FY 2025 Financial Results

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Action Energy Company K.S.C. (KSE Symbol: ALFTAQA), Kuwait's leading private onshore drilling partner, owner and operator of one of the youngest rig fleets in the region, today announced its financial results for the fourth quarter and full year ended 31 December 2025.

Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chairman of Action Energy Company said: "The results of 2025 demonstrate the strength of our business model and our ability to deliver steady, sustainable growth in Kuwait's upstream sector. These results also mark the start of a new chapter for Action Energy following our recent listing on Boursa Kuwait. Backed by a strong backlog, long-standing relationships with Kuwait's national oil companies, and strategic partnerships with leading global technology providers, Action Energy continues to strengthen its role as a trusted national partner, supporting the development of Kuwait's oil and gas sector, advancing local content, enabling knowledge transfer, building local talent, and delivering reliable technology solutions, while maintaining a clear focus on generating long-term value for our shareholders".

Commenting on the current regional developments, he added: "Action Energy confirms that its operations continue to support Kuwait's energy sector while ensuring the safety of its employees and partners.

The company is committed to serving Kuwait and contributing to the stability of the national energy industry."

## Operational Review by Business Line

### 1. Drilling Services

Drilling and workover services represent 72% of the Company's backlog, with an average remaining contract life of 5.01 years.

In 2025, Action Energy delivered another year of strong operational performance, maintaining 100% fleet utilization across all 20 rigs.

This marks the fourth consecutive year of full utilization and reflects the strength of the Company's young rig fleet, disciplined maintenance practices, and operational standards that have been in place since day one.



Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Chairman



2. Oilfield Services  
Oilfield Services now account for approximately 28% of the Company's backlog, with an average remaining contract duration of 6-7 years.

In line with the Company's strategy to expand its service offering and diversify revenue streams, this segment recorded solid progress in 2025. Action Energy secured several new contracts and pre-qualifications, further strengthening its position in the market and steadily increasing the scale of its Oilfield Services business.

## Business Outlook

AEC remains committed to its 2026 strategic targets and continues to operate with resilience amid current regional developments. While parts of the broader energy sector may face short-term disruption in downstream activities, the Company's core drilling and oilfield services operations remain on track.

The Company has taken precautionary measures to mitigate potential logistical risks, including the early activation of emergency response plans and the strategic stockpiling of critical spare parts.

Barring any material deterioration in the regional security environment, AEC expects its upstream operations to continue without material disruption.

This outlook is supported by a record backlog of KWD 321.5 million, a strong revenue visibility, and an active pipeline of contracts under mobilization.

AEC also continues to advance its growth strategy through the expansion of its fleet to 27 rigs (20 existing and 7 under construction), the seven-year KWD 75 million ESP contract with Kuwait Oil Company, and other oilfield services contracts in pipeline. AEC re-



AEC drilling rigs

mains committed to protecting its people, maintaining operational continuity, and supporting Kuwait's national energy objectives, with its resilient business model and strength of its market position.

The company continues to monitor the current developments closely while maintaining its focus on delivering high quality services and long-term value to its stakeholders.

## Investor & Analyst Conference Call

The Company will hold an earnings call to discuss results on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 2:00 PM Kuwait Time.

Key Financial Highlights						
KWD Millions	Q4 2025	Q4 2024	QoQ %	FY 2025	FY 2024	YoY %
Revenue	9.2	5.4	70%	31.9	20.8	53%
Net Profit	1.7	0.6	173%	5.7	1.9	202%
EBITDA	4.6	2.7	68%	16.4	10.4	57%
Net Profit to Parent	1.7	0.6	172%	5.7	1.9	201%
EPS (Fils)	4.35	1.7	157%	14.35	5.06	184%

## World shares are mixed and US futures slip as Brent hovers above \$100 a barrel

BANGKOK, March 17, (AP): Shares were mixed in Europe and Asia on Tuesday after a drop in oil prices helped send the U.S. stock market to its best day since the war in Iran began.

The reprieve in prices for crude was short-lived, with Brent crude climbing nearly 4% early Tuesday to \$104.13 a barrel. U.S. benchmark crude also climbed, to \$97.53 per barrel after dipping to about \$93 on Monday.

U.S. futures fell back, with the contracts for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average down 0.3%.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gave up early gains to slip 0.1% to 53,700.39 and the Kospi in South Korea jumped 1.6% to 5,640.48.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.1% to 25,668.54, while the Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.9% to 4,049.91.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.4% to 8,614.30 after the central bank hiked its benchmark interest rate to 4.1%.

Citing higher fuel prices, the Reserve Bank of Australia on Tuesday lifted the cash rate from 3.85% which it set at its Feb. 3 meeting in response to surging inflation. That rise was Australia's first since November 2023.

Taiwan's Taix rose 1.5% and India's Sensex picked up 0.6%.

On Monday, the S&P 500 climbed 1% for its biggest gain in five weeks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.8% and the Nasdaq composite jumped 1.2%.

The driver for markets has been oil prices, which have spiked from roughly \$70 before the United States and Israel began their attacks on Iran. In response, Iran has nearly halted traffic through the narrow Strait of Hormuz, where a fifth of the world's oil typically sails from the Persian Gulf to customers worldwide. That has oil producers cutting production because their crude has nowhere to go.

The worry in financial markets is that if the Strait remains closed for a long time, it could keep enough oil off the market to drive inflation up to a debilitating level for

the global economy.

"The panic is still there, just dialled down a notch as crude slipped off the boil. Brent easing back toward \$100 flipped the tape from bunker mentality to opportunistic risk-taking in a heartbeat," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

President Donald Trump over the weekend demanded that other countries hurt by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz "take care of that passage" and said his country "will help - A LOT!"

The U.S. and Israel have kept pummeling what they describe as military targets in Iran's capital, and Israel stepped up its campaign against Iran-backed militants in Lebanon. More than 1 million people have been displaced in Lebanon - roughly 20% of the nation's population - as U.N. peacekeepers say Israel is massing ground troops along the border.

Uncertainty over the war's scope and duration have roiled financial markets since the war began just over two weeks ago, though markets have a track record of bouncing back relatively quickly from military conflicts. Many professional investors are expecting that to be the case again, if oil prices don't go too high for too long. That has helped keep U.S. stock prices near their record levels.

Higher prices are complicating the Federal Reserve's mission of balancing growth and inflation as President Donald Trump pushes the central bank to slash interest rates. Traders do not expect the Fed to cut rates at its policy meeting that wraps up on Wednesday.

Nvidia, whose chips are powering much of the world's move into artificial-intelligence technology rose 1.6% on Monday as its CEO, Jensen Huang, talked up AI's possibilities at a conference, saying he foresaw \$1 trillion in demand for AI chips through 2027. It was the strongest single force lifting the S&P 500.

In other dealings early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar rose to 159.18 Japanese yen from 159.05 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1498 from \$1.1507.

## Viktor Orbán blocks 90bn Ukraine aid

## EU offers pipeline fix to break Hungary veto

BRUSSELS, March 17, (AP): Top European Union officials said Tuesday they have offered to pay Ukraine to repair a damaged pipeline meant to carry crude oil to Hungary, in a bid to persuade the government in Budapest to lift its veto on a massive aid package to the war-ravaged country.

Ukraine and Hungary have been locked in an escalating feud since Russian oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia were halted in January due to damage to the Druzhba pipeline, which crosses Ukrainian territory. Ukrainian officials have blamed the damage on Russian drone attacks.

Hungary's nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of deliberately holding up oil supplies - claims that Zelenskyy denies. In retaliation, Orbán has vetoed a major 90-billion-euro (\$106 billion) EU loan to cover Ukraine's military and economic needs for two years. Hungary is also blocking a new round of EU sanctions against Russia.

EU leaders said in a statement Tuesday that the bloc "has offered Ukraine technical support and funding" to fix the pipeline.

"The Ukrainians have welcomed and accepted this offer. European experts are available immediately," European Council President António Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

Zelenskyy is vehemently opposed to allowing Russian energy to transit through Ukraine. Energy revenue has fueled the four-year war waged by President Vladimir Putin on his country.

But he wrote Tuesday that Ukraine is "undertaking all possible efforts to repair the damage and restore operations."

Costa and von der Leyen wrote to Zelenskyy Monday saying that they hope the EU offer of funding and technical help "can pave the way for overcoming the current blockage and ensure for the rapid repair of the pipeline."

EU leaders have lashed out at Orbán for agreeing to the loan to Ukraine at a summit in December and then renegeing on that deal.

They accuse him of undermining the fundamental EU principle of "sincere cooperation" between the 27 member countries.

Ukraine is desperate for money and Zelenskyy said that it is important for his country to receive at least a first tranche of funding next month.

Orbán, who is trailing in opinion polls ahead of elections next month, has leaned heavily on an election campaign that portrays Zelenskyy as an existential threat to Hungary.

He has alleged that the Ukrainian leader, along with von der Leyen, seek to drag Hungary into the war, and claimed that his reelection is the only guarantee of Hungary's peace and security.



الشركة العمالية للطاقة (ش.م.ك.)  
Action Energy Company (K.S.C)

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS FY 2025

Stock Symbol  
**ALFTAQA**

REVENUE

**KD 31.9M**

▲ +53% Over FY 2024

EBITDA

**KD 16.4M**

▲ +57% Over FY 2024

NET PROFIT

**KD 5.7M**

▲ +202% Over FY 2024

TOTAL BACKLOG  
(AS OF 31 DEC 2025)

**KD 321.5M**

Drilling Services **72%**

Oilfield Services **28%**

RIG SIZE AND UTILISATION



**20**  
Rigs



**100%**  
Utilization



## BUSINESS

Bank adds flexibility to digital Eidiya service

## Weyay provides 'Eidiya Link' and adds group transfers to 'Wamd'

KUWAIT CITY, March 17: Weyay Bank, Kuwait's first fully digital bank, reaffirmed its commitment to being part of customers' special moments by offering innovative, convenient financial solutions that fit every situation.

As Eid Al-Fitr approaches, the Bank announced enhancements to its digital Eidiya experience, giving customers more flexibility and multiple options to send and receive Eidiya easily through the Weyay app.

These updates reinforce Weyay's position as a leader in simplifying financial interactions and expanding digital-first services.

A More Flexible and Secure Digital Eidiya Experience Weyay's digital Eidiya service enables customers to send and receive Eidiya online, without visiting a branch or using an ATM, through fast, secure steps designed to match Kuwait's evolving digital payment landscape.

"Eidiya Link" for Weyay and Jeel Customers

The "Eidiya Link" feature allows users to create a personalized link and add a greeting message. The recipient can then choose the amount they wish to send back to the person who shared the link, offering greater flexibility than traditional payment links.



Mohammad Al-Hunaidi

Weyay Bank continues to offer instant Eidiya transfers through "Wamd" by KNET. This year, the Bank

This service is also available to Jeel cardholders aged 8 to 14, helping introduce younger users to financial awareness and digital payment behavior, especially during an occasion they deeply value, where Eidiya is a central part of their celebration. The feature is designed to provide a safe, simple, and educational digital experience for this age group.

"Wamd" Eidiya Transfers... Now with Group-Sending Feature

is expanding the service with a new group-transfer feature, allowing Weyay cardholders to send Eidiya to up to 5 recipients at once while specifying a different amount for each person. The update delivers a faster and more seamless experience and marks a significant advancement in Kuwait's digital Eidiya solutions.

In this context, Mohammad Al-Hunaidi, Vice President, Products Department at Weyay Bank, stated: "Our new 'Wamd' feature reflects Weyay's commitment to offering financial solutions that naturally align with our customers' lifestyles, making it easier for them to share Eid moments with their loved ones, effortlessly. This isn't just another digital service; it's our way of reimagining the traditional Eidiyah in a modern, seamless experience that matches today's pace of life, giving customers greater flexibility and supporting their everyday digital financial confidence."

Available Throughout the Eid Holiday

The digital Eidiya service will be available via the Weyay app starting from the first day of Eid Al-Fitr and throughout the entire Eid period, giving customers a safe and convenient way to share Eid joy with loved ones anytime and from anywhere.



## Bessent: Talks prevent trade retaliation

## China warns Trump tariffs risk trade stability

PARIS, March 17, (AP): China warned Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump's latest tariff moves could harm the countries' trade relationship, at the end of high-level talks in Paris.

Li Chenggang, China's international trade representative, said the Chinese side had expressed serious concern about trade investigations into manufacturing in foreign countries that the Trump administration launched after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down its earlier tariffs.

"We are concerned that the possible results of such investigations may interfere with or damage the hard-won and stable China-U.S. economic and trade relations," Li told journalists. He said they discussed the possible extension of tariffs and non-tariff measures on both sides, and that China expressed concern over likely uncertainty as the U.S. adjusts its measures. He said both sides agreed to make efforts to keep the tariffs stable.

The meeting was meant to prepare for Trump's planned trip to China in about two weeks, though the president has warned that it could be delayed. Li did not address that, and did not take questions.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who led the U.S. delegation in Paris, said the talks "were constructive and they show the stability in the relationship," and noted: "The purpose of these meetings is to prevent any retaliation."

Trump's visit to China would be the first for a U.S. president since he went in his first term in 2017. It would come five months after he met President Xi Jinping in the South Korean city of Busan.

The Iran war has emerged as a potential stumbling block as the U.S. and

China were patching up relations following a tariff war in which import taxes soared to triple digits. The two sides later agreed to a one-year truce.

Trump has suggested he may delay the much-anticipated China visit as he seeks Beijing's help to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and calm oil prices that have soared during the Iran war.

But Bessent said any postponement wouldn't be to pressure China on that issue.

"If the president's visit is postponed, it would have nothing to do with the Chinese making a commitment to the Straits of Hormuz," he told journalists.

"It would obviously be in their interest to do so, but a postponement would not be as a result of any asks from the president not being met," Bessent added. "The postponement, if it happens, would be because the commander in chief of the United States military believes that he should stay in the United States while this war is being prosecuted."

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, accompanying Bessent, said the talks sketched out "the general terms of a work plan" for a Trump-Xi meeting so that it could produce "potential deliverables."

He said they also covered the trade investigations that concern China.

"We started these talks, really, by giving them a preview of what we're doing on U.S. trade policy as we adjust to the Supreme Court," Greer said. "Remember: The president's trade policy hasn't changed. Our tools may change, and we're conducting these investigations. We don't want to prejudice them, and we had a good conversation with our counterparts about that process."

## 'AI buildup just beginning for Nvidia'

## Nvidia CEO heralds 'inference inflection' as next phase of AI boom, backed by \$1 trillion in orders

WASHINGTON, March 17, (AP): Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang on Monday elaborated on his vision for keeping his company at the forefront of the artificial intelligence boom that he predicted will produce a \$1 trillion backlog in orders within the next year.

Sporting his signature black leather jacket, Huang spent more than two hours sauntering across a stage in a packed arena in San Jose, California, explaining how Nvidia's processors became indispensable AI components and highlighting the products that he believes will keep the company in the catbird seat.

Huang, 63, also touched upon many of the themes that he has been trumpeting since he emerged as one of Silicon Valley's most influential voices during the past few years, including his thesis that the AI buildup remains in its infancy.

"We reinvented computing, just like the PC (personal computer) revolution and the internet revolution," Huang proclaimed. "We are now at the beginning of a new platform change."

To hammer home his points, Huang predicted that Nvidia will be grappling with a \$1 trillion backlog in orders for its chips by the end of the year, doubling his estimate from a year ago.

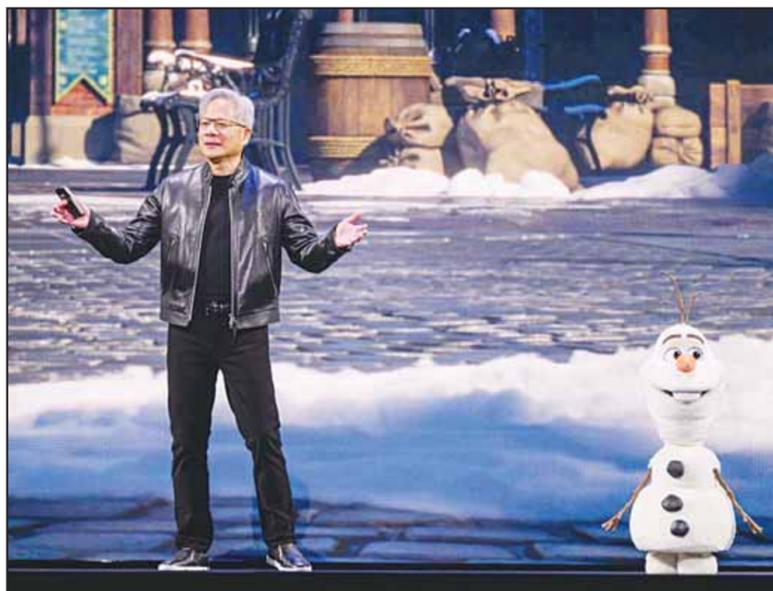
Nvidia has leveraged its dominant position in the AI chip market so far to increase its annual revenue from \$27 billion in 2022 to \$216 billion last year - a growth rate that has translated into a \$4.5 trillion market value for the Santa Clara, California, company.

But Nvidia's once-torrid stock has cooled since the company briefly became the first to surpass a \$5 trillion market value last October amid worries that the AI buzz is overblown.

"This is just a white-knuckle period for the technology industry," said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives.

Even after Nvidia released a quarterly report in late February that far exceeded analyst forecasts and management provided a rosy outlook, the company's stock price is still down by 6% from where it stood before those numbers came out. After Huang's disclosure about an anticipated doubling in backlogged chip orders, Nvidia's shares edged up by nearly 2% to close Monday at \$183.22.

While analysts expect Nvidia's revenue to surpass \$330 billion for the upcoming year, the company is facing its first serious challenges in the AI chip mar-



NVIDIA CEO Jensen Huang, left, speaks next to Disney's robotic Olaf during an Nvidia conference focusing on artificial intelligence in San Jose, Calif., Monday, March 16, 2026. (AP)

ket as other technology powerhouses such as Google and Facebook's corporate parent Meta Platforms try to develop their own processors.

Nvidia's potential growth is being held back by security and trade barriers imposed by the U.S. that have impeded the company's ability to sell its advanced chips in China.

Huang envisions Nvidia maintaining its instrumental role in AI by continuing to feed the feverish demand for chips that power chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini and expanding its reach into the emerging market for inference processors.

Once an AI tool is trained, inference chips enable

the technology to take what it has learned and produce responses - whether it is writing a document or creating an image - more efficiently than the processors that were used while the large language models were being built.

"The inference inflection has arrived," Huang said. To help navigate its transition into the inference field, Nvidia struck a multi-billion dollar licensing deal with market specialist Groq that included the hiring of that startup's top engineers.

"Nvidia isn't going to cede any market share to Google or Meta," said Ives, who believes Nvidia's market value will eclipse \$6 trillion during the next year or so.

## Bots at center of Musk-Twitter shareholder showdown

## Elon Musk faces Twitter investors in fraud trial

SAN FRANCISCO, March 17, (AP): Closing arguments are set to kick off Tuesday in a trial pitting Elon Musk against Twitter shareholders who say the world's richest man engaged in a pattern of deceptive behavior that misled investors as he attempted to back out of his \$44 billion deal to buy the social media platform in 2022.

The civil trial in San Francisco centers on a class-action lawsuit filed just before Musk took control of Twitter, which he later renamed X, in October 2022, six months after agreeing to buy the embattled company for \$44 billion, or \$54.20 per share. The price represents a sliver of the Tesla CEO's fortune, now estimated at \$839 billion.

Much of the trial focused on Musk's claims about the number of bots on Twitter. Musk testified, as he long contended, that Twitter had a much higher number of fake and spam accounts than the 5% it disclosed in regulatory filings. He used what he called Twitter's misrepresentation of the number of fake accounts on its service as a reason to renege on the purchase.

After Musk tried to back out, Twitter went to court in Delaware to force him to honor his original deal. Just before that case was scheduled to go to trial, Musk reversed course again and agreed to pay what he had originally promised.

The problem of bots and fake accounts on Twitter wasn't new at the

time Musk negotiated the deal. The company had paid \$809.5 million in 2021 to settle claims it was overstating its growth rate and monthly user figures. Twitter also disclosed its bot estimates to the Securities and Exchange Commission for years while also cautioning that its estimate might be too low.

But Musk claimed the number was much higher, at least 20% according to some analysts. Saying the bot number was at least this high was like "saying the grass is green or the sky is blue," Musk said.

Twitter's former CFO Ned Segal disputed this claim and said on the witness stand that the number was actually closer to 1%.

Asked if Twitter ever filed false filings to the SEC that misstated its spam numbers, Segal said it did not. But he mentioned that the company once restated its finances after it became aware of a mistake in its calculation of daily users. In 2017, Twitter said it had been overstating its monthly user numbers by mistake because it was including users of a third-party app it should not have.

On Monday, the two sides met to go over instructions to the jury. Judge Charles R. Breyer noted that many in the jury pool had negative views on Musk. But, he added, a person who is "not universally liked" still deserves a fair trial, and should not be treated in a discriminatory or prejudicial way.

## Amazon launches 3-hour delivery for fee

NEW YORK, March 17, (AP): Amazon said Tuesday that it has started offering faster U.S. deliveries of selected products for a fee, including pantry staples, clothing, over-the-counter medications, cleaning supplies and electronics.

The e-commerce colossus said customers in more than 2,000 cities, towns and suburban areas can now choose to have orders from its speedy-shipment inventory of 90,000 items delivered in three hours. The charge is \$4.99 for Amazon Prime members and \$14.99 for nonmembers.

One-hour delivery slots are available in hundreds of places, including major metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, and smaller cities such as Des Moines, Iowa and Boise, Idaho, the company said. Prime members will get charged \$9.99 for the service, which costs nonmembers \$19.99, Amazon said.

The Seattle-based company said it started testing the express delivery service late last year and expanding it this month.

"We saw an opportunity to use our unique operational expertise and delivery network to help make customers' lives a little easier while unlocking even more value for Prime members," Udit Madan,

senior vice president of worldwide operations at Amazon, said in a statement.

Amazon launched its Prime program in 2005, offering members free two-day delivery on a selection of 1 million items, primarily DVDs, CDs, and books. Prime members now have access to over 300 million items across 35 categories, and tens of millions of products are available for free same-day or next day deliveries.

The company has used robotics and artificial intelligence technology to speed up order fulfillment. Regionalizing its U.S. delivery network into eight areas also has helped reduce delivery times, Amazon said.

Amazon is testing an ultra-fast service for deliveries in 30 minutes or less. Amazon Now is available in various cities in India, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates and is being tested in several communities in the U.S. and the United Kingdom, according to the company.

Rival retailer Walmart has focused on faster deliveries too. The Bentonville, Arkansas-based company says it offers same-day deliveries in under three hours to 95% of the U.S. population, compared to 76% three years ago.

## Avoid last-minute tax surprises

## Key tax moves before filing day

Every year, tax day sneaks up in a hurry. Whether you use tax preparation software or outsource to a certified public accountant, here are some key strategies to ensure a smooth and worry-free tax season.

Using a tax checklist or organizer can help you avoid that paper chase and assemble all the key documents in advance; completing your return is then a matter of filling in data. Tax checklists abound online.

If you use an accountant, it's a good bet they send you a tax organizer, either paper or digital; such forms often come prepopulated with your tax data from the previous year. It's a handy way to track trends in your income, interest earned on your investments, and charitable giving.

If you employ a tax advisor, they may have provided some guidance on whether to itemize based on your 2024 return. If you do your own taxes, you can get a pretty clear view of whether to use the standard deduction by taking stock of the major deductible items.

For the 2025 tax year, itemizing could be worthwhile if your deductions are greater than the standard deduction of \$15,750 for single taxpayers and \$31,500 for married couples filing jointly. People over 65 can take advantage of a new senior deduction of \$6,000 that's available to both itemizers and non-itemizers. (It's \$12,000 for married couples filing jointly if both partners are over 65.) However, the deduction phases out at modified adjusted gross incomes of more than \$75,000 for singles and double that amount for married couples filing jointly.

For most households, the biggest-ticket deductible items include state and local taxes (including property taxes), home mortgage interest, and medical expenditures in excess of 7.5% of adjusted gross income. The good news on the state and local tax deduction is that the maximum deductible amount jumped from \$10,000 to \$40,000 following the passage of the tax and domestic policy bill last year. Here again, income limits apply: The higher deduction amount phases out for people with modified adjusted gross incomes of more than \$500,000, and people with MAGI over \$600,000 are

stuck with a cap of \$10,000 on the amount of state and local taxes that are deductible.

If you decide to itemize, you'll need to round up supporting documentation on your deductible expenses. If you can't track down all the receipts, don't despair. The previous year's credit card statements can help you identify those expenses. Healthcare providers and pharmacies are also usually happy to prepare a year-end statement documenting your out-of-pocket outlays over the previous year.

By now you've probably received your W-2s and 1099s, which report various types of income. Investment firms typically maintain "tax centers" where you can download or print forms. Take a moment to see if you can learn anything from that 1099 that might help you improve your portfolio. For example, if you owe significant capital gains taxes and you haven't sold anything, that's a red flag that you should pay closer attention to "asset location"-housing tax-efficient assets like equity exchange-traded funds in your taxable brokerage account.

Your deadline for contributing to an IRA or health savings account is the same as your tax-filing deadline. But if you want to deduct that contribution on your tax return, you'll need to make it before you file your return. Ditto if you're taking advantage of the Saver's Credit. Note that these deductions are available whether you itemize or not. However, you can't make an IRA contribution unless you have earned income. You can't make an HSA contribution unless you're covered by a qualifying high-deductible healthcare plan; an HSA is also off-limits if you're covered by Medicare.

Some investors wait to make those contributions because they want to see what their tax bills are first. If that describes your situation, consider an automatic investment program for your future IRA contributions so you're not at the mercy of your tax bill each year. For the 2026 tax year, investors under age 50 can hit their full \$7,500 maximum IRA contribution by putting in \$625 a month; those over 50 can max out with a \$716 monthly contribution. (AP)

'One of the greatest writers in any genre'

## Len Deighton, author of bestselling spy thrillers, dead at 97

LONDON, March 17, (AP) — **Len Deighton**, a prolific writer whose tough, stylish spy thrillers featured on bestseller lists for decades, has died. He was 97.

Deighton's literary agent, Tim Bates, said he died Sunday. No cause of death was given.

Deighton's first novel, "The IPCRESS File," helped set the tone of cool and gritty 1960s thrillers and was made into a film starring Michael Caine that helped launch both author and actor to long and stellar careers.

"Len was a Titan," Bates said Tuesday. "He was not only one of the greatest spy and thriller writers of the 20th century but also one of our greatest writers in any genre."

Born to a working-class family in a wealthy part of London in 1929 - his father was a chauffeur and his mother

a part-time cook - Deighton grew up with a keen eye for the intricacies and absurdities of Britain's class system.

He served in the Royal Air Force as part of Britain's then-mandatory national service, studied art and worked as a waiter, pastry chef and flight attendant before having success as a book and magazine illustrator. His designs included the first U.K. edition of Jack Kerouac's "On the Road" in 1958.

He wrote "The IPCRESS File" to amuse himself during a vacation. The story of a secret agent confronted with duplicity and bureaucracy from his own side while investigating a Soviet kidnap ring, it was published in 1962 and went on to sell millions of copies.

The novel was adapted into a 1965 film, with Caine in a star-making performance as Deighton's protagonist,

a sardonic working-class sophisticate with a love of gourmet food. The character is unnamed in the book, though Caine's character was given the name Harry Palmer.

Deighton's depiction of espionage as a grubby, error-strewn business was a contrast to the glamour of Ian Fleming's James Bond novels.

"I had never read a James Bond book," Deighton said in a 1997 BBC interview, but by chance "The IPCRESS File" was published the month the first 007 movie, "Dr. No," was released.

His book's gritty mood, like the murky spy world of John le Carré's fiction, chimed with the times, and Deighton said he benefited from a backlash against Bond's huge success. He recalled a friend telling him that "You're a blunt instrument that



This Jan. 9, 1973 file photo shows British author Len Deighton who has died at the age of 97. (AP)

the critics have used to smash Ian Fleming over the head."

Subsequent thrillers "Horse Under Water," "Funeral in Berlin," "Billion-Dollar Brain" and "An Expensive Place to Die" all featured the same hero. "Funeral in Berlin" and "Billion-Dollar Brain" were both also filmed with Caine in the starring role.

"Berlin Game," published in 1983, was the first of 10 novels featuring the smart, cynical MI6 officer Bernard Samson. Along with "Mexico Set" and "London Match" it was adapted into the 1988 TV series "Game, Set and Match."

Deighton set several novels around World War II, including "Bomber" (1970), which depicted the conflict in the air war from both British and German viewpoints, and "SS-GB" (1978), an alternative-history novel set in a Nazi-occupied Britain. It was

made into a TV series in 2017.

Deighton wrote more than two dozen novels in all. The last book in his final trilogy, "Faith," "Hope" and "Charity," was published in 1996.

He also wrote historical nonfiction, including a book about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and "Fighter: The True Story of the Battle of Britain."

Another passion was food. Deighton was food correspondent for The Observer newspaper in the 1960s and wrote several cookbooks aimed at men - a then-novel idea - including "Len Deighton's Action Cook Book" (1965), with recipes illustrated like comic strips.

Deighton's first marriage, to illustrator Shirley Thompson, ended in divorce. He later married Ysabelle de Ranitz. They had two sons.

### Variety

LONDON: Prince William said Sunday he remembers his late mother Princess Diana "today and every day" as he shared a photo of them together on social media to mark Mother's Day in the UK.



William

"Remembering my mother, today and every day. Thinking of all those who are remembering someone they love today. Happy Mother's Day," the royal wrote on Instagram,

signing off with "W."

The prince, 43, posted a photo showing Diana with a 2-year-old William in a field of flowers that was taken at the family's main home at Highgrove, Gloucestershire, in 1984.

Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris in August 1997, when William was 15 and his brother Prince Harry was 12. She was 36.

The royal family also posted other photos on social media to mark Mothering Sunday, which is celebrated in the U.K. on the fourth Sunday of Lent. (AP)



LONDON: Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, have hit back at the author of a new book on Britain's royal family, describing his writing as "deranged conspiracy and melodrama."

In a strongly worded statement issued on Saturday, Harry and Meghan said author Tom Bower "has long crossed the line from criticism into fixation."

In extracts of Bower's book published in the Times of London on Friday, the author claimed that Queen Camilla once told a friend Meghan had "brainwashed" her husband. He also alleged that Prince William and his wife Catherine "evidently saw Meghan as a threat rather than an ally" as tensions soared ahead of the Sussexes' decision to leave Britain for the United States and split from the royal family.

"This is someone who has publicly stated, 'the monarchy in fact depends on actually obliterating the Sussexes from our state of life,' language that speaks for itself," Harry and Meghan's statement said. (AP)



WINDHOEK: Namibian youth and diplomats on Saturday gathered at the Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre (FNCC) in Windhoek for the annual Francophone Fair, celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity through exhibitions, food and performances.

The event marked the official launch of this year's Francophonie Week and brought together more than 200 high school and university students from across Namibia who are studying French.

The students organized a one-day exhibition highlighting the traditions, history and geography of various French-speaking countries.

"We use March for the celebration of the Francophone fair. It is an opportunity to gather students from Namibia who are learning French in school," FNCC Director Martin Beyer told Xinhua in an interview. (Xinhua)

### Film



Jessie Buckley accepts the award for actress in a leading role for 'Hamnet' during the Oscars on Sunday, March 15, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

'Sinners,' 'One Battle' highlight new era for originals

## Oscar wins signal hope, shift in Hollywood

LOS ANGELES, March 17, (AP) — A horde of children chased host Conan O'Brien onto the Dolby Theatre stage in the opening moments of the 98th Academy Awards, and throughout an Oscar ceremony that saw "One Battle After Another" win best picture, it was like they never left.

A queasy future, both immediate and for generations to come, pervaded an Academy Awards shadowed by war, political turmoil and whatever might happen to the movies in an artificial intelligence-supercharged tomorrow. These were the high anxiety Oscars. At almost every turn, they seemed to be trying to rally a little optimism despite omnipresent storm clouds.

"We pay tribute tonight, not just to film, but to the ideals of global artistry, collaboration, patience, resilience and that rarest of qualities today - optimism," O'Brien said in his opening monologue. "We're going to celebrate. Not because we think all is well, but because we work, and hope for better."

The last time the Oscars took place just after a US launch of war in the Middle East was 2003. Just days after the Iraq War began, the musical "Chicago" won best picture.

But it was a different story Sunday. The night's big winner, Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another," a father-daughter saga of revolution, immigrant detention and white supremacy, arrived uncommonly tailored to the times. The film, which won six Oscars, triumphed in part because it spoke to right now.

When asked about the movie's relevancy and America's future backstage, Anderson, still reeling from the first Oscars - including best director and best adapted screenplay - of his 30-year career,

was initially caught off guard. "I thought we were supposed to be partying," he joked.

But then Anderson, who had largely avoided speaking directly about the movie's message during the film's near-sweep of awards season, granted that his film's power lay partly in its timeliness.

"Our film obviously has a certain amount of parallels to what's happening in the news every day," Anderson said.

"In terms of where it's going, I don't know," he added, shrugging his shoulders. "But I know that the end of our movie is our hero, Willa, heading off to continue to fight against evil forces, and, I think, like I said in my speech, bring at least common sense and decency back into fashion."

The connection between what was on screen, with current events off it, made the 98th Oscars an appropriately destabilized affair. For the first time in a long time, the movies and the Oscars were almost in step with the moment. That was true not only in "One Battle After Another," but also in the apocalyptic road movie "Sir," the Iranian revenge drama "It Was Just an Accident" and Ryan Coogler's "Sinners," about the forces that prey on Black culture.

But if "One Battle After Another" and "Sinners" (four awards, including best actor for Michael B. Jordan and, in a first for women and Black directors of photography, best cinematography for Autumn Durald Arkapaw) maybe suggested a hopeful dawn for big-budget, original American movies, their wins also reflected the rapidly shifting ground in Hollywood.

Warner Bros., the studio behind those films, took home a record-

ing 11 Oscars. David Zaslav, in a memo Monday to staff, called it "a remarkable moment for Warner Bros. Discovery." It was also potentially a last hurrah for Warner Bros. as a standalone studio. The studio has agreed to be acquired by David Ellison's Paramount Skydance in a deal worth \$111 billion.

The film industry, which has already seen MGM gobbled up by Amazon and 20th Century Fox bought by The Walt Disney Co., knows that contraction inevitably means fewer jobs. Film production in Los Angeles has cratered in recent years.

O'Brien, himself, imagined he could be out of a job soon, calling himself "the last human host" of the Oscars, which in three years will move from ABC to YouTube. In comic bits throughout the broadcast, O'Brien focused on the difficult plight of movies today. One segment spoofed iconic widescreen films cut to fit the smartphone-friendly vertical format. Another imagined "Casablanca" - a Warner Bros. film, by the way - dumbed down with constant plot regurgitation for half-watching streaming audiences.

So it's gotten a lot harder, on Hollywood's biggest night, to trot out the same song-and-dance pitch for the Dream Factory. The Oscars are now more like a beleaguered pep talk to keep up the good fight. Lost in the hoopla over Timothée Chalamet's comment worrying about the movies becoming like opera or ballet was a genuine concern for the marquee pop culture medium's future.

"The theatrical experience is something that's a little bit vulnerable right now," director Joachim Trier told reporters backstage after winning best international film for "Sentimental Value." "So I'm very proud that (for) our film ... people have shown up."

### Micro-budget horror 'Undertone' emerges as surprise box office hit

## 'Hoppers' holds onto No. 1 as 'Reminders' overperforms

LOS ANGELES, March 17, (AP) — Pixar's "Hoppers" held onto the top slot at the box office, bouncing back with \$28.5 million in its second weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, while Colleen Hoover's "Reminders of Him" added to the author's successful streak at the box office.

After its \$45.3 million debut, The Walt Disney Co.'s "Hoppers" release dipped a modest 37% in its follow-up weekend, a promising sign for an animated movie hoping to have strong legs through March. The Pixar original, about a young woman who transforms into the body of a beaver to help defend a pond from development, is hoping to keep attracting audiences with good reviews (94% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) and strong audience scores (an "A" CinemaScore).

While many of Pixar's sequels have been blockbusters on arrival - like 2024's "Inside Out 2" (\$1.7 billion worldwide) - their originals have recently needed time to get going. In 2023, "Elemental" launched with a disappointing \$29.6 million but went on to gross a hefty

\$496.4 million globally.

"Hoppers," which has taken in \$164.7 million globally thus far, has a long way to go to match that, but it's off to a good start. It faced little direct new competition this weekend. The upcoming Amazon MGM sci-fi adventure "Project Hail Mary," however, will soon take up IMAX screens and compete for family moviegoers.

Universal's "Reminders of Him" debuted in second place this weekend with a better-than-expected \$18.3 million. The film, starring Maika Monroe as a woman attempting to rebuild her life after prison, is the third Colleen Hoover adaptation to reach the big screen, following 2024's "It Ends With Us" (\$351 million worldwide for Sony) and 2025's "Regretting You" (\$91 million for Paramount).

"Reminders of Him," which cost about \$25 million to make, got poor reviews (56% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) and notched a not-great "B" CinemaScore with audiences. But the film, the first from a screenplay co-written by Hoover, extends the bestselling author's popularity with moviegoers.

"Undertone," a micro-budget horror movie from A24, opened with \$9.3 million. The film, written and directed by Ian Tuason, has been touted as A24's best horror film since Ari Aster's "Hereditary" (2018), one of the movies that helped put the indie studio on the map. With a budget of just \$500,000, "Undertone" makes particular use of sound design in a one-setting tale about a paranormal podcaster (Nina Kiri) caring for her dying mother.

After its disappointing debut, Warner Bros. "The Bride!" plummeted in its second weekend, dropping 70% with just \$2.1 million. The Maggie Gyllenhaal-directed riff on "The Bride of Frankenstein" cost about \$80-90 million to produce, but so far has grossed just \$11.3 million domestically.

Oscar weekend is often slow in theaters, with the industry's attention largely focused on Sunday's Academy Awards. But the trio of moderate successes in "Hoppers," "Reminders of Him" and "Undertone" lifted moviegoing ahead of Hollywood's biggest night. Year-to-date ticket sales are up 15.2% from the same point last year, according to Comscore.



This image released by A24 shows Nina Kiri in a scene from 'Undertone.' (AP)

## Traditional Chinese style sparks fashion buzz on social media

## Cheongsam style tops Indonesia's Eid fashion trend



A model wears a creation by Chinese brand Xuajuan on a runway at the Moscow Fashion Week in Moscow, March 15. (AP)

## 'It sounds like victory'

## A wooden holztrompete joins Met's new 'Tristan'

NEW YORK, March 17, (AP) — About 4-1/2 hours after the first notes of Wagner's "Tristan und Isolde," a startling sound emerges from the wings, one many in the audience likely have never heard before.

A nearly 4-foot wooden horn known as a holztrompete, specially constructed to the composer's somewhat ambiguous specifications, signals the arrival of the ship carrying Isolde and King Marke to Brittany, inspiring a mortally wounded Tristan to hang on to life for a few more moments.

"Joyous," said Billy R. Hunter Jr., the Metropolitan Opera's principal trumpet, who plays the wooden horn from stage left.

Yuval Sharon's compelling new production starring Lise Davidsen that opened Monday to mostly rave reviews features a specially constructed horn nearly Hunter's height - it measures a minimum 46.5 inches and lengthens slightly if the tuning slide is turned.

"You listen to the sound of the holztrompete and the imitation, it's a clear difference," said bass-baritone Ryan Speedo Green, who sings Marke alongside Davidsen's Isolde and Michael Spyres' Tristan. "It blows my mind to think that Wagner created it himself. How many humans have created an instrument? It really sounds like victory."

While the Wagner Tuba was invented in the 1850s by the composer for his Ring Cycle to bridge the sounds of horn and trombones, the holztrompete's details are more nebulous.

Wagner wrote the notes for an English horn but included a footnote to his score saying it should have "the effect of a very powerful natural instrument, such as the alphon." As pointed out in research by Daniël Vernooij, Wagner added in a June 15, 1861, letter to violinist and conductor Heinrich Esser that he wanted it to be "at least three feet long, made of wood, almost trumpet-like, slightly curved downwards so that the bell is open to the side."

While a wood trumpet was used at the opera's premiere, Wagner's Bayreuth Festival in Germany switched in 1891 to a newly created woodwind called the Heckel-clarina, which resembled a soprano saxophone. Conductor Hans Richter replaced that at Bayreuth in 1902 with a tárogató, a woodwind common to Hungarian folk music. The tárogató was used by the Met when James Levine conducted "Tristan" from 1981 through 2008.

Mitch Weiss, a Met clarinet for 38 years, took over the tárogató in the 1980s from Roger Hiller.

"One day he said, 'I'm sick and tired of playing this. You play it.' And he handed me the tárogató," recalled Weiss, now 93.

And then, Weiss had to audition for Levine alongside principal trumpet Mel Broiles.

## Instrument

"We each had to play the solo," Weiss said. "I played it on a tárogató and the first trumpet played it on a low horn. And Jimmy said: 'Tárogató play it.'"

"The Hungarians used it as a battle cry instrument because it was very loud," said Dean LeBlanc, a Met orchestra clarinet and bass clarinet who played the tárogató in the 2016 production conducted by Simon Rattle.

When Daniel Barenboim led the opera at the Met later in 2008, he brought his own holztrompete.

"He pulled out this thing. I'm like: What in the world?" Hunter recalled. He said Barenboim told him, "This is what we use at Bayreuth."

Barenboim took the horn with him after the run. Thomas Lausmann, hired in 2019 as the Met's director of music administration, ordered a new one to be manufactured by Thein Brass in Bremen, Germany, which built its initial version for the Hamburg State Opera.

"They recreated an instrument that they believed would come very, very close to the instrument Wagner would have had in his time," Lausmann said.

Hunter said the bells of the Barenboim and current Met version are slightly different. Martin Wagemann, principal trumpet of the Deutsch Oper Berlin, has played the Holztrompete at Bayreuth since 2018. He uses different versions at each hall.

"The Deutsche Oper trumpet sounds slightly darker and woodier, but it is softer and therefore harder to articulate," Wagemann wrote in an email. "The Bayreuth instrument has slightly better intonation and a brighter sound, which allows for clearer articulation - something you need in the Bayreuth acoustic."

Hunter compared the holztrompete to a bugle. Its one valve lowers the notes down a step - a trumpet has three valves.

"On a regular trumpet, there's slides you can adjust with pitch but with this, there is no adjustment," Hunter said.

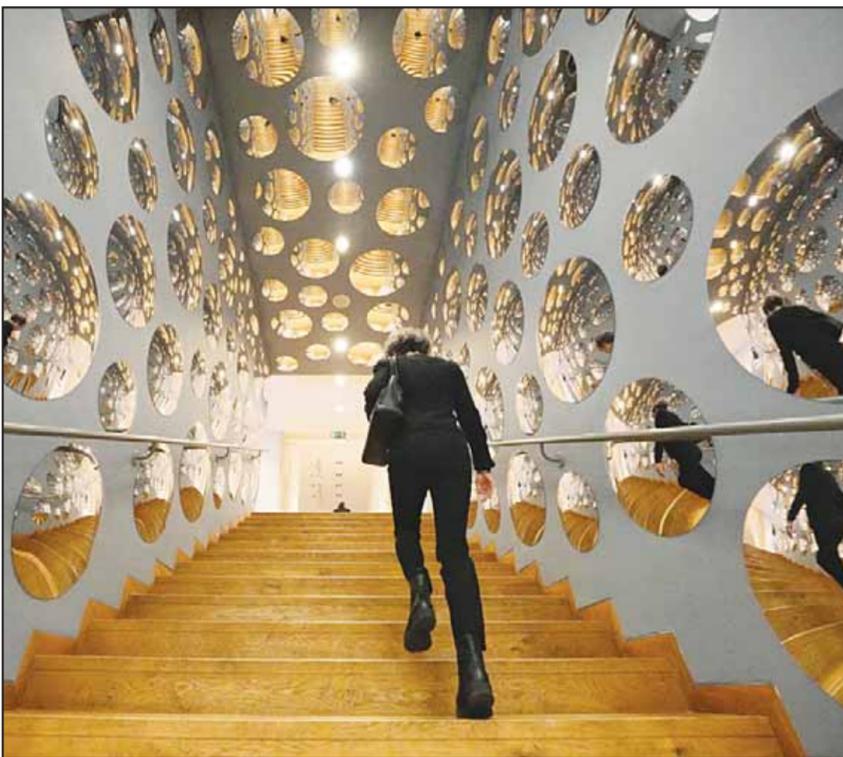
Preparing for the mostly sold-out run through April 4, Hunter practiced for a month in the living room of his Upper West Side apartment, with an audience of his wife - who is a pianist - and their children.

"If the kids like it, then I know it's OK," Hunter said. "It's like the food. If they eat the food, it means you did a good job."



Metropolitan Opera Orchestra principal trumpet player Billy R. Hunter Jr. practices with a holztrompete, a wood horn specified by Richard Wagner for the third act of 'Tristan und Isolde,' at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on Feb. 28, 2026. (AP)

## Art



A woman walks through the art installation 'Invisible Life' during a preview of the new exhibition of legendary Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. (AP)



A woman takes pictures of the artwork 'Flowers that speak all about my heart given to the sky' in front of the Cologne Cathedral during a preview of the new major exhibition of legendary Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Thursday, March 12. (AP)

## Museum Ludwig marks its 50th anniversary

## German museum honors famed Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama in vast new exhibit

COLOGNE, Germany, March 17, (AP) — A mirror room dappled with colored dots. Contorted, bright sculptures of flowers on a rooftop at the foot of Cologne's famed cathedral. A vast showroom with giant octopus-like tentacles that offer up a mesmerizing meander through space and obstacles.

The renowned Museum Ludwig in the western German city is celebrating its 50th anniversary by opening a nearly five-month exhibit on Saturday, with more than 300 works of the famed Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama.

The trek through the time and transformation of the now nonagenarian artist assembles works ranging from her first drawing in the mid-1930s to a newly commissioned "Infinity Mirror Room" made for the show.

Kusama, who turns 97 this month, has become a social media sensation with her use of bright colors and oozy shapes that reflect her feeling of awe about life. Her own life carried her from patriarchal postwar Japan to New York to the Flower Power and anti-Vietnam war movements in the 1960s. She returned home to Japan in 1973.

told Xinhua.

She said most buyers are teenagers and young adults who are active on social media. Many customers come directly asking for "viral cheongsam Eid al-Fitr outfits" or show photo and video references they found online.

Social media has become a major driver behind the popularity of the Chinese-inspired clothing in Indonesia over the past few months. The phenomenon began with the trend of cheongsam-style jackets introduced by a well-known sportswear brand and has since evolved into Eid al-Fitr clothing designs.

On TikTok, the hashtag "tunik cheongsam" has garnered hundreds of posts. A tunic is a type of loose-fitting women's top that extends from the thigh to the knee. One video posted by clothing store owner @leviorofficial featuring a cheongsam-style tunic has been viewed more than four million times and received nearly 100,000 likes.

Fransiska, a private-sector employee in Jakarta, said she has purchased two cheongsam-style outfits from an e-commerce platform to wear during Eid al-Fitr later this week.

"What I find interesting about this style is the

many unique buttons, and most importantly the upright collar, which suits hijab wearers like me," she said.

Another reason, she added, is that some cheongsam-inspired Eid al-Fitr outfits are versatile enough to be worn not only during the holiday but also as daily work attire. After buying her first cheongsam-style outfit, Fransiska said she has become interested in collecting more similar pieces for work.

Although inspired by the Chinese cheongsam, most of these Eid al-Fitr outfits have undergone several adaptations. In terms of color, they are predominantly pastel, unlike traditional cheongsams, which are typically brighter.

In addition, while the traditional cheongsam is usually a one-piece dress, these Eid al-Fitr outfits are designed as tunic-style tops paired with skirts or trousers, making them more suitable for women who wear the hijab.

Long before the cheongsam trend appeared in this year's Eid al-Fitr fashion, Indonesia's Muslim men's attire, known as the "baju koko," was widely believed to have been influenced by traditional Chinese clothing, as seen in its distinctive upright collar and front-button design.

## Variety

WASHINGTON: The Kennedy Center's board of directors voted on Monday to shut down operations for two years following this summer's July 4 celebrations. The widely expected decision comes in the wake of numerous resignations and cancellations during President Donald Trump's second term, although Trump himself has cited the need for repairs as a reason for the closure.

"We're going to ensure it remains the finest performing arts facility of its kind anywhere in the world," Trump told reporters at the White House before the board met Monday.

The board also voted to install Matt Flocas as CEO and executive director, replacing Trump ally Richard Grenell, who oversaw far-reaching changes at the venue that prompted an outcry from many artists and exacerbated the operation's financial challenges. Trump praised Grenell on Monday, saying he had been a longtime friend, and wished Flocas "good luck with everything." (AP)



Trump

TOKYO: Cherry blossom spotters from the Japanese government announced Monday the first blooming of the country's favorite flower in three cities, marking the official start of the season.

Japan Meteorological Agency officials examined the benchmark tree of the Somei Yoshino variety in three locations - Kochi in the southwest, and Gifu and Yamaguchi in central Japan - declaring they found more than five flowers on each tree, the minimum required for the announcement.

The tree in Kochi blossomed first, for the third year in a row, six days earlier than the average year, the JMA said. Those in Gifu and Yamaguchi were nine days earlier than the average.

Shinobu Imoto from Kochi Meteorological Agency told TBS television that low rainfall during the winter and longer hours of sunshine might have helped the early blooming. (AP)

LHASA: DeepZang, a large language model designed for the Tibetan language, was unveiled Sunday in Lhasa, capital of southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region. This language model is the first of its kind in the country.

Developed by a local company, CHOKNOR, the platform supports intelligent interaction in Tibetan, Chinese and English, and it integrates multiple functions including artificial intelligence (AI) dialogues, real-time translation and speech-to-text transcription, according to the company founder Tenzin Norbu.

So far, the model has accumulated nearly 70 million entries of standardized parallel corpora and over 30,500 hours of voice data covering Tibetan's three major dialects.

DeepZang is China's first Tibetan-large language model to complete national registration for generative AI algorithms and models, filling a technological gap in the field and helping promote the high-quality development of Tibetan-language AI. (Xinhua)

BOSTON: A throng of revelers lined the streets of South Boston on Sunday for the city's annual St. Patrick's Day parade, one of the nation's largest celebrations of Irish heritage.

The parade drew crowds from across Massachusetts and beyond, with marching bands, floats, veterans' groups and local organizations making their way through the neighborhood.

Police lined the route as Irish dancers, bagpipers and Revolutionary War reenactors marched past cheering spectators.

Students stood on rooftops while residents leaned over porch railings of South Boston's triple-decker homes waving and cheering. Along the sidewalks, spectators wearing green beads, shamrock hats and Boston Celtics gear crowded behind barricades, some waving Irish flags as the parade passed.

One college student stood out in a fluffy green robe, while parents pushed toddlers in strollers draped with Irish flags. (AP)

late to the world of nature. She grew up in the greenhouses and fields of her family's enormous seed nursery in Matsumoto, Japan. When Kusama was young, she began having vivid hallucinations, some of which involved polka dots or flowers spreading around her. She has fought through existential anxieties.

"In my more than 70 years as an artist, I have always been in awe of the wonder of life," she said in a statement. "More than anything, this strong sense of the life force in artistic expression is what has supported me and gave me power to overcome feelings of depression, hopelessness and sadness."

## Also:

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast: France returned a sacred talking drum looted during the colonial period to Ivory Coast on Friday as part of a nearly decade-old effort by the French government to return cultural artifacts to African nations.

It was the first such return by France to Ivory Coast, and was part of a broader campaign among European and Western governments to return treasured objects after decades of resistance.

Curator Stephan Diederich says the exhibit, which runs through Aug. 2, is "very diverse, wide-ranging, and depicts an immensely rich, creative life spanning more than eight decades, still looking ahead."

Works include her series "My Eternal Soul, 2009-2021," including a patchwork of paintings, to "The Universe as Seen from the Stairway to Heaven" - made of mirror, glass and acrylic sheet. The museum entrance hosts her widely-recognized 2009 "Pumpkin" of fiber-reinforced plastic and polyurethane paint, belonging to Museum Voorlinden in the Netherlands.

The rooftop display features painted-bronze sculptures "Flowers That Speak All about My Heart Given to the Sky" from 2018, and "I'm Here, but Nothing," whose origins date back to 2000, involves fluorescent stickers and ultraviolet fluorescent lights illuminating a room of household objects.

"Kusama is undoubtedly one of the most significant artists of our time," he said. "Her mirror rooms, balloon installations and polka dots have achieved cult status and are now iconic."

Her multifaceted works often re-

‘Four minutes of stairs equal 10 minutes brisk walk’

# Stair climbers love their exercise despite security challenges

NEW YORK, March 17, (AP): Tom McGee began climbing stairs for exercise 20 years ago as part of an effort to stay off cigarettes. It hasn't always been easy: His climbs in hotel stairwells sometimes draw the attention of security guards.

“I’ve gotten kicked out of about every hotel in the city,” said McGee, a 69-year-old market researcher who lives near Chicago.

Climbing stairs has become increasingly ingrained in exercise guidance, but many people who do it regularly say it can be challenging in an era where office tower managers commonly cut off access to stairwells.

Here’s a look at stair climbing as a form of exercise, and some of the unexpected challenges some people face in trying to do it.

Dr. Luis Rodriguez, a semi-retired pediatric pulmonologist, participates in stair-climbing events and lauds the benefits.

“You are working your legs. You are working your heart. You are working your lungs,” said Rodriguez, 66. “You can get a lot more benefit than just walking, because gravity is working against you.”

He’s backed up by research that found climbing stairs for four minutes

is roughly equivalent to about 10 minutes of brisk walking or 20 minutes of slower walking.

In 2018, federal physical activity guidance was changed to promote short-burst activities - like taking the stairs every time you have to move between floors at work. The guidelines said such activities can add up over the course of a day, meaning you can improve your health even if you can’t go for a run or do a 30-minute workout.

Many people “don’t realize that they don’t have to exercise all in one bout for it to be effective,” said Stella Volpe, a Virginia Tech exercise expert.

Stair climbing also has the potential to improve mental health for many people and is associated with improved feelings of energy, said Jennifer Gay, a public health researcher at the University of Georgia.

People who might have trouble on stairs should talk to their doctors before trying a climbing regimen, experts say.

The American Lung Association holds fundraising events each spring in office towers in cities across the country. The “Fight for Air” events are widely regarded as fun, but organizers say the name draws from the shortness of breath people can experience after



Participants make their way up 86 flights of stairs during the 35th Annual Empire State Building Run-Up in New York, on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2012. (AP)

climbing dozens of floors - or having a lung disease.

Landlords aren’t always so accommodating.

Some law firms tell landlords and building owners that they can be held liable if someone trips or slips on a staircase. Poor lighting, liquid on steps

and broken handrails are among the conditions that can be cited in lawsuits if someone falls and gets hurt.

Many building managers have taken such advice to heart, saying stairs can only be used in emergencies.

A study of hospital emergency department visits, published in 2018,

concluded that more than 1 million stair-related injuries occur in the U.S. each year, with broken bones more common in older people. More than 60% of the injured were women.

Research suggests there’s very little risk of injuries for people climbing stairs, Gay said. Going down stairs can be riskier and building managers “can’t make it a one-way street,” she added.

For more than a decade, some health advocates have pressed for better access to steps.

In 2013, a California-based health policy nonprofit called ChangeLab Solutions issued a resource guide that urged property owners to open their stairwells, arguing they posed no greater liability risk than other common areas.

Gay and her colleagues have estimated that 60% of US workers do their jobs in multistory buildings with stairwells. But there are no statistics showing what percentage of those buildings have restrictions on stair access.

Many people who like to climb have stories about trouble finding staircases they can use.

Lisa Bai, a New Yorker who works in real estate, said she’s not able to use the stairs in her office building. It would seem like an easy way to get

some exercise, but sometimes “it’s not,” she said.

Bai and others say they find other ways to step up. Fitness equipment such as StairMaster machines can approximate the physical work of stair climbing, although people who participate in tower climbs say it isn’t as arduous as the real thing.

You might have to get creative if you don’t have easy access to stairs at home or in public spaces.

Carmen Erickson and Vivian Dawson, who live in the Detroit suburbs, have been meeting about three times a week to climb stairs, usually in a nearby park, for roughly a decade.

But it can be trickier when they travel. When they vacation together, they make a point to stay on the top floor of tall hotels so they can use the stairs. They also look for hills and hospital parking decks.

They also have negotiated after-hours access to one building’s stairwells, agreeing to sign a waiver and check in with security officers each time.

“If you connect with the right people and tell them what they’re doing and agree to the rules, it hasn’t really been a problem for us,” said Erickson, 53.

But Dawson, 64, added: “You have to really want to do it.”

Proper ADHD diagnosis can reduce secondary anxiety

## Anxiety and ADHD can overlap: expert

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



By Deldhy Nicolás Moya Sánchez

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)

For decades, one of the greatest challenges to treating neurological disorders like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder is that its symptoms often resemble those of several other conditions. Overlapping disorders are extremely common when it comes to neurological diagnoses.

A child who struggles to sit still, focus or complete tasks could have ADHD, anxiety, a learning disability or simply be reacting to stress at home. A teenager who seems emotionally volatile and impulsive might be showing early signs of a mood disorder, ADHD or trauma. An adult who constantly misses deadlines, forgets important obligations and feels chronically overwhelmed might be dealing with workplace burnout, a severe anxiety disorder or undiagnosed ADHD.

I am a practicing psychiatrist at the National Medical Center “20 de Noviembre” in Mexico City, and a professor of medicine at UNAM, the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In my work, I frequently see cases that initially look like anxiety, but I often find that this issue is only the tip of the iceberg. Anxiety improves, and what emerges is undiagnosed ADHD.

The reverse can also be true: What looks like ADHD - difficulty focusing, restlessness, poor performance - sometimes turns out to be driven primarily by anxiety. However, in my practice, I most frequently see the opposite scenario. Young adults arrive seeking treatment for severe anxiety, but clinical evaluation often shows that their condition is rooted in executive functions - such as planning and problem-solving - that have been fragile since childhood. Patients in this situation have compensated for their undiagnosed ADHD for years through exhausting effort and the fear of failure.

Diagnosing untreated ADHD matters because in adults, this condition is associated with depression, anxiety, work difficulties, academic problems and financial stress.

Because these conditions are so tightly intertwined, it is not always possible to know which came first - and in many cases, both are genuinely present at the same time. Treating only what is visible may bring relief but only partial relief, leaving the underlying driver unaddressed.

This is why evaluation by a clinician who can assess the full picture matters. When ADHD is properly identified and treated, secondary anxiety often resolves more completely than it ever did with therapy or medication alone. But the reverse is not reliably true: Treating anxiety does not correct the underlying attention issues that may be driving it. Identifying the right target - or targets - is what leads to lasting improvement. This comprehensive approach is especially important given the growing recognition that emotional dysregulation - such as intense, rapid mood shifts or an inability to manage one’s distress - is often a core, yet historically overlooked, symptom

of undiagnosed ADHD.

Here’s why undiagnosed ADHD can hide behind anxiety, some signs that can help differentiate these two conditions, and why this diagnostic blind spot - treating the visible anxiety while missing the underlying ADHD - is so common.

I had been seeing a patient in his late 20s for some time who suffered from anxiety when he came to an appointment convinced that he was finally emerging from a terrible year. He had stopped having panic attacks, was sleeping better and no longer lived intensely focused on his own body, waiting for the next wave of fear. After months of antidepressants and cognitive behavioral therapy, the crises seemed controlled.

But then something different emerged: constant difficulty concentrating, procrastination that left him stuck for hours, impulsive speech and a stubborn inner restlessness. These symptoms are often overshadowed when someone feels suffocated by anxiety and consumed by worries.

Anxiety and ADHD have many common symptoms, including restlessness, irritability, sleep difficulties and concentration problems. This overlap can lead to diagnostic errors and treatments that don’t address the root cause.

During childhood, many ADHD symptoms are interpreted as personality traits. A child may be labeled as distracted, inconsistent, impulsive or restless. Over time, these people learn to compensate through excessive effort, perfectionism or constant self-monitoring - strategies that raise baseline stress and may trigger anxiety years later.

Anxiety is often the first way the body expresses overload. When this threat response eases, previously masked struggles with planning, organization, sustained attention and time management surface.

Several studies show a strong association between ADHD traits, anxiety and depression. In the United Kingdom, recent research found that ADHD traits predict emotional problems more strongly than traits related to the autism spectrum.

Systematic reviews indicate that 25% to 50% of adults with ADHD experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives. Major depressive disorder is also more common among this group than in the general population. For many people, anxiety is the consequence of years trying to function with an impaired executive system, the part of the brain that manages planning, organization and impulse control.

It can be easy for parents, teachers or co-workers to misinterpret ADHD symptoms as character traits. Impulsivity can be seen as bad temper, disorganization as laziness, and difficulty maintaining attention as lack of interest. In adults, these difficulties are often interpreted as personal flaws rather than neuropsychiatric disorders.

ADHD rarely causes physical symptoms, but anxiety does. Heart palpitations, intense fear or insomnia drive people to seek care, while attention symptoms are less recognized.

ADHD is strongly genetic, with inheritance rates estimated at 70% to 80%. This genetic component also means that closely related relatives have a higher risk of emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression. When several family members share similar traits, these attributes often are considered part of the

family personality.

The key question in clinical practice is this: What remains when the anxiety decreases?

If emotional distress diminishes but the following symptoms persist, then the pattern aligns more with adult ADHD:

- prolonged procrastination
- difficulty initiating tasks requiring mental effort
- frequently forgetting instructions or appointments
- constant inner restlessness
- daily disorganization
- easy distraction by minimal stimuli

A formal diagnosis, made by a trained health professional, requires an assessment of symptoms that have been present since childhood and a determination that the patient is impaired in more than one life area. Caregivers will rule out other medical or psychiatric causes, using validated tools such as structured interviews and specific scales.

Neurobiological studies have shown that people with ADHD have identifiable differences in several brain regions, including their connections in the deep neural tissue known as white matter and the reward circuitry of the brain. They also have imbalances in dopamine

and norepinephrine - brain chemicals that regulate attention, motivation and impulse control. These differences can make it harder for people to initiate tasks or sustain efforts.

Antidepressants and therapy can reduce emotional distress and overlapping symptoms such as restlessness or sleep disruption, but they do not modify the attention difficulties that create daily chaos - affecting relationships, academic performance and work functioning. If this root is not addressed, the patient improves partially but continues living in disorganization, leading to new cycles of distress.

When I explain how anxiety can mask ADHD to patients, their most common reaction is a mix of relief and frustration. They finally understand their emotional history, but see that they spent years interpreting their symptoms and struggles as flaws.

Studies show that adults with anxiety and untreated ADHD suffer greater functional impairment and more frequent relapses, meaning their severe anxiety or depressive episodes keep returning despite therapy or medication. They live under a burden of self-reproach that harms their self-esteem. This cycle can repeat for years: emotional improvement, relapse and seeking treatment again, without identifying the main problem.

The good news is that once ADHD is diagnosed, it is treatable. Robust evidence shows that treatment for ADHD reduces impulsivity and improves sustained attention and daily functioning at all ages.

Regulating dopamine and norepinephrine enables patients to initiate tasks and sustain their efforts until the work is completed. When this happens, secondary anxiety often decreases more deeply and stably because people no longer have to work twice as hard just to keep up. This also improves their relationships at home, school and work.

Identifying hidden ADHD does not erase the past, but it changes the future. When people understand the root cause of their anxiety and gain tools to manage it, they can move from surviving to living a more functional life. (AP)



A certified medical assistant holds a syringe for a flu vaccine at a clinic in Seattle, Sept 10, 2025. (AP)

‘Win for science-based policy’

## US court halts HHS plan to cut vaccines for kids

WASHINGTON, March 17, (AP): A federal judge on Monday temporarily blocked federal health officials from cutting the number of vaccines recommended for every child, and said US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. likely violated federal procedures in revamping a key vaccine advisory committee.

The decision halted an order by Kennedy - announced in January - to end broad recommendations for all children to be vaccinated against flu, rotavirus, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, some forms of meningitis and RSV.

It also stopped a meeting of a Kennedy-appointed vaccine advisory committee, which was set to convene this week in Atlanta.

The judge’s order, however, is not the final word. The blocks are temporary, pending either a trial or a decision for summary judgment.

Federal health officials indicated they planned to appeal. “HHS looks forward to this judge’s decision being overturned just like his other attempts to keep the Trump administration from governing,” said Department of Health and Human Services spokesman Andrew Nixon.

The order issued Monday is the latest development in a lawsuit filed last July by the American Academy of Pediatrics and some other medical groups. The lawsuit in federal court in Boston originally focused on Kennedy’s decision to stop recommending COVID-19 vaccinations for most children and pregnant women.

The lawsuit was updated as Kennedy took more steps that alarmed medical societies, causing the plaintiffs to ask Judge Brian E. Murphy to take steps to address those policy changes too.

For example, the plaintiffs amended the lawsuit to stop the scaling back of the nation’s childhood vaccination schedule. They also asked the court to look at Kennedy’s actions concerning the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which advises public health officials on what vaccines to recommend to doctors and patients.

Murphy, who was nominated to the bench by President Joe Biden, said Kennedy’s reconstitution of ACIP likely violated federal law. He ordered the appointments - and all decisions made by the reformed committee - put on hold.

The ACIP was scheduled to meet this week to discuss COVID-19 vaccine safety, among other issues, but that gathering was postponed, officials said.

“ACIP as currently constituted cannot meet,” said Richard Hughes IV, an attorney representing the AAP. “How can a committee meet without nearly the entirety of its membership?”

Jason Schwartz, a Yale University vaccine policy expert who has studied the committee, called the halting of an ACIP meeting for legal reasons “unprecedented” in its 62-year existence.

Hughes called the judge’s order “a momentous step toward restoring science-based vaccine policy,” and he was echoed by leaders of several doctors’ groups and public health organizations.

Oldest known whale recordings discovered

## Whale song could unlock ocean mysteries

PORTLAND, Maine, March 17, (AP): A haunting whale song discovered on decades-old audio equipment could open up a new understanding of how the huge animals communicate, according to researchers who say it’s the oldest such recording known.

The song is that of a humpback whale, a marine giant beloved by whale watchers for its docile nature and spectacular leaps from the water, and was recorded by scientists in March 1949 in Bermuda, said researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

Just as significant is the sound of the surrounding ocean itself, said Peter Tyack, a marine bioacoustician and emeritus research scholar at Woods Hole. The ocean of the late 1940s was much quieter than the ocean of today, providing a different backdrop than scientists are used to hearing for whale song, he said.

The recovered recordings “not only allow us to follow whale sounds, but they also tell us what the ocean soundscape was like in the late 1940s,” Tyack said. “That’s very difficult to reconstruct otherwise.”

A preserved recording from the 1940s can also help scientists better understand how new human-made sounds, such as increased shipping noise, affect the way whales communicate, Tyack said. Research published by



This photo provided by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution shows a whale off the West Antarctic Peninsula on Jan. 4, 2017. (AP)

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration states that whales can vary their calling behavior depending on noises in their environment.

The recording predates scientist Roger Payne’s discovery of whale song by nearly 20 years. Woods Hole scientists on a research vessel at the time were testing sonar systems and performing acoustic experiments along with the U.S. Office of Naval Research when they captured the sound, said Ashley Jester, director of

research data and library services at Woods Hole.

The scientists didn’t know what they were hearing, but they decided to record and save the sounds anyway, Jester said.

“And they were curious. And so they kept this recorder running, and they even made time to make recordings where they weren’t making any noise from their ships on purpose just to hear as much as they could,” said Jester. “And they kept these recordings.”

Raw milk blamed

## ‘Cheese E. coli’ sickens 7 in US

NEW YORK, March 17, (AP): At least seven people in three states, including young children, have been sickened by E. coli food poisoning linked to cheddar cheese made from raw milk, federal health officials said Monday.

California-based Raw Farm made the cheese that is the “likely source” of the outbreak, according to the US Food and Drug Administration, though no Raw Farm products have tested positive for E. coli during the outbreak period, the FDA noted.

Illnesses were reported between September 2025 and mid-February, the agency said. Five cases were reported in California and one each in Florida and Texas. More than half of the illnesses were in children aged 3 or younger. Two people were hospitalized.

The FDA recommended that Raw Farm voluntarily remove its raw cheese products from sale, but the company has declined.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged consumers to “consider not eating” the products.

Predicting future trends

## China uncovers drivers of climate changes in Asia

LANZHOU, March 17, (Xinhua): Chinese scientists have uncovered the drivers of divergent climate changes across Asia over the past 130,000 years, making headway in the study of dust accumulation, humidity evolution, and the driving mechanisms at multi-spatial and temporal scales in Asia, according to L Lanzhou University.

“Published in the journal Science Advances, this study provides a long-term timescale benchmark for predicting future climate-change trends,” Li Guoqiang, professor at the College of Earth and Environmental Sciences of Lanzhou University, told Xinhua.

“It has also offered a significant scientific basis for analyzing the trend of aridification in Asia, changes in precipitation patterns, and risks of dust activities under the background of global warming,” he added.

Climate change in Asia is influenced by several large-scale circulation systems, including the mid-latitude westerly monsoon, the East Asian and South Asian summer monsoons, and the East Asian winter monsoon. The fluctuations in strength and weakness of these climate systems and their interactions have profoundly shaped the hydroclimatic pattern in the region and had a far-reaching impact on people’s living environment and social development.

Previously, there was considerable controversy over the evolution processes and driving mechanisms of different climate systems, as well as their impacts on the spatial differentiation of climate change in Asia, according to Li.

Loess-paleosol sequences across Asia provide a critical archive of past dust deposition and climate dynamics shaped by westerlies and Asian monsoons. Applying a new potassium feldspar infrared luminescence dating technology, the study team systematically established high-resolution dating scales for over twenty loess-paleosol sequences in the arid regions of Central Asia and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

In collaboration with researchers from over 30 universities and institutions both at home and abroad, the study team constructed and released the world’s first dataset of Asian Loess luminescence dating and paleoclimate proxy indicators, providing an important data basis for conducting comprehensive research on the Asian continental scale.

The study results showed that dust accumulation in Asia is not a single response to variations in winter wind strength. The accumulation of loess across different regions is jointly influenced by multiple factors, including material supply, vegetation cover, local topography, sea-level fluctuations, and human activities.

## SPORTS

## Still work to get done on big items

## Another marathon WNBA CBA negotiation with no deal done

NEW YORK, March 17, (AP): Another marathon negotiating session between the WNBA and its players union didn't end with a new collective bargaining agreement.

For the seventh consecutive day the two sides met for over 12 hours and while they said progress was being made heading into Monday's negotiating session, there was still work that needed to be done when the sides ended discussions for the night around 3:30 a.m. EDT Tuesday morning.



Cathy Engelbert

Revenue sharing continues to be the big sticking point between the sides.

Neither side spoke to reporters after the session, but both had said earlier Monday that progress had been made over the last few days.

"We're working as hard as we can to get it done as quickly as possible," WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said after Sunday's 15-hour session finished that also ended after 3 a.m. "It's complex. There's a lot. There's a lot of system elements. There's a lot of structure elements. ... This is a big, big league and we want to do everything we can for the players. So, we're going to keep making progress."

It's been a long week of discussions with the WNBA and union meeting face-to-face for around 90 hours since the first in-person bargaining session last Tuesday. None of the sessions have ended before midnight.

"We're still working. We're still fighting. There's still some things that we have to - big issue things - that we have to get through," union executive director Terri Carmichael Jackson said before Monday's session. "So, we're just going to stick with it and stay with it."

Jackson said there is agreement on some areas but there's still work to get done on big items.

Before Monday's negotiating session, union counsel Deborah R. Willig was asked if she thought a deal could get done that day.

"For myself, I thought we were going to get this done yesterday, and I thought the day before so I would hope, but this has been an extraordinarily unusual set of labor negotiations, and I've been doing this for over 50 years," the managing partner of Willig, Williams and Davidson said. "I think the why, frankly, is because the league underestimated seriously the resolve of the players and what they sought to achieve."

The executive committee of players have been putting in the time alongside the union leadership throughout the

negotiations, showing their resolve. Committee members Nneke Ogwu-mike, Breanna Stewart, Napheesa Collier, Brianna Turner and Alysha Clark have been there for most of the discussions, frequently leaving well past 2 a.m.

"The fact that they just don't want to stop, both sides, it's not just the league side, it's even the union," said Connecticut Sun president Jen Rizzotti, who is on the labor relations committee. "They want to get it done. I think it's admirable to know that they're paying attention to the fact that this is crucial and time is of the essence and we need to have a season."

The key sticking points have been revenue sharing and housing.

League proposals have involved net revenue - revenue after expenses - and union ones have talked about gross revenue - revenue before expenses. When negotiations first started more than a year ago, the union was asking for 40% of gross revenue and had come down to 26% before the marathon in-person bargaining session Tuesday. The league had been offering more than 70% net revenue for the players.

Teams have paid for player housing in the WNBA since the beginning and the league wanted to amend that in the new CBA.

"We're trying to enter into this transitional space where we are now making enough money to be able to take care of that, but we're not quite at the point where we can eliminate it outright," Ogwu-mike said.

If these two major items can get figured out, the season most likely would be able to start on time on May 8. But the clock is ticking. Engelbert said she didn't know if training camp would be moved from April 19 if a deal isn't done soon.

"I wish I knew the answer to that. I do not know the answer to that," Engelbert said. "But you see us here at three in the morning, four in the morning, at five in the morning. So that gives an indication that both sides are motivated at that time."

Jackson said the players understand what's ahead schedule wise.

"There's a season schedule that has their own milestones. Right? Absolutely. We recognize that and we respect those," Jackson said. "But do we also recognize that these are big time negotiations and so there may be a need to adjust? Absolutely. And the players more importantly, recognize that, understand that, and are prepared for it as they always have been."

The league's first two preseason games are on April 25 with Caitlin Clark and Indiana visiting New York and Seattle playing Golden State.

Before the preseason games even happen, there's a lot to do with an expansion draft for Portland and Toronto as well as free agency for 80% of the league. The college draft also needs to take place.

## 'Happiness comes first'

## Vonn not ready to discuss her future

WASHINGTON, March 17, (AP): Lindsey Vonn hasn't completely shut the door on ski racing again. She hasn't decided to return, either.

The 41-year-old who is recovering from a serious downhill crash at the Milan Cortina Olympics is still trying to figure it all out, which she made clear in a social media post.

"No, I'm not ready to discuss my future in skiing," Vonn wrote on X. "It was incredible to be #1 in the world again at 41 years old and set new records in my sport, but at my age, I'm the only one that will decide my future."

"I don't need anyone's permission to do what makes me happy," she added. "Maybe that means racing again, maybe that doesn't. Only time will tell. Please stop telling me what I should or should not do. I'll let you know when I decide."

Vonn is on the mend after suffering a complex tibia fracture in her left leg when she crashed just 13 seconds into her Olympic downhill run on Feb. 8. She recently said she nearly lost her left leg after the trauma from the crash led to compartment syndrome in the leg. Compartment syndrome involves excessive pressure building up inside a muscle, either from bleeding or swelling. High pressure restricts blood flow and can lead to permanent injury if not treated quickly.

She thanked Dr. Tom Hackett, an orthopedic surgeon who works with the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Team, for conducting a fasciotomy and saving her leg.

Since her return from Italy, Vonn has been posting videos showing her lifting weights and, just recently, riding a stationary bike.

"I'm biking!!!" she wrote. "Starting with 5 minutes... making progress one day at a time."

Vonn made a comeback last season after nearly six years away from racing. She was feeling healthy and strong again thanks to a partial titanium implant in her right knee.

Vonn won two downhill races this season and earned a podium spot in three others. She was among the favorites leading into the Olympic downhill, an event she won at the 2010 Vancouver Games.

But in a downhill race on Jan. 30, in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, she crashed and wound up in the safety nets. She later revealed she damaged the ACL in her left knee but was still confident she could compete in Cortina.

Moments after leaving the start gate, she clipped a gate with her right shoulder and pinwheelled down the slope before ending up awkwardly on her back. She was treated for quite a while before being taken off the hill by helicopter.

Soon after the frightening crash, her father said he would urge her retire.

day, training after training, match after match. We will reach our goal, there's still the final squad," Neymar said.

The World Cup squad will be announced on May 18. The team's last warmup will be on May 31 against Panama in Rio de Janeiro.

**Squad:**  
**Goalkeepers:** Alisson (Liverpool), Bento (Al-Nassr), Ederson (Fenerbahce)

**Defenders:** Alex Sandro (Flamengo), Danilo (Flamengo), Leo Pereira (Flamengo), Bremer (Juventus), Douglas Santos (Zenit St. Petersburg), Gabriel Magalhães (Arsenal), Ibanez (Al-Ahli), Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain), Wesley (Roma)

**Midfielders:** Andrey Santos (Chelsea), Casemiro (Manchester United), Danilo (Botafogo), Fabinho (Al-Ittihad), Gabriel Sara (Galatas-

## Kerr earns 600th win, Warriors snap skid as Lakers move 1-1/2 games ahead of Rockets



Los Angeles Lakers' Luka Doncic (77) is guarded by Houston Rockets' Amen Thompson (1) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Houston. (AP)

## Spurs hold off Clippers

WASHINGTON, March 17, (AP): Kristaps Porzingis scored 30 points, De'Anthony Melton added 27 and the Golden State Warriors snapped a five-game losing streak with a 125-117 victory over the Washington Wizards on Monday night, earning coach Steve Kerr his 600th career victory.

Golden State is without Stephen Curry (right knee) and Jimmy Butler (torn right ACL), and Seth Curry (left groin) and Al Horford (left calf strain) were also out Monday. The Warriors are almost assured of ending up in the play-in round in the Western Conference, but it matters where among that foursome you finish, and they were able to end their skid against the lowly Wizards.

Washington has dropped 12 in a row, but the Wizards still haven't taken over last place in the East because Indiana has lost 13 straight.

The Warriors rested Draymond Green, Porzingis and Melton in Sunday's loss at New York, and those three were able to help them on the second night of this back-to-back. Golden State led by 17 in the second quarter before the Wizards fought back to within two. It was 64-57 at the half.

Golden State led by 15 early in the fourth before the Wizards made one more push. They could draw no closer than five.

Trae Young scored 21 points in 21 minutes for Washington.

## Lakers 100, Rockets 92

In Houston, Luka Doncic scored 36 points to lead Los Angeles to a victory over Houston in the opener of a two-game series between teams fighting for Western Conference playoff position.

Los Angeles moved 1 1/2 games ahead of Houston for third in the West standings. There were 13 lead changes in a game that had a playoff atmosphere, but the Lakers ultimately won their sixth straight.

LeBron James found Marcus Smart for a corner 3-pointer that put Los Angeles up 94-90 with 2 minutes remaining. James finished with 18 points, five rebounds and five assists.

Doncic hit back-to-back 3-point-



Golden State Warriors head coach Steve Kerr set up a play during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Washington Wizards in Washington. (AP)

ers in the fading minutes of the third quarter to give the Lakers an 83-80 lead after trailing 57-51 at halftime. Doncic was 4 for 12 on 3s in the game and needs 11 more to match D'Angelo Russell's franchise record of 226 in a season.

## Spurs 119, Clippers 115

In Inglewood, Victor Wembanyama had 21 points and 13 rebounds, and San Antonio overcame an early 14-point deficit before blowing most of a 24-point lead and recovering to hold off Los Angeles.

Stephen Castle had 23 points, eight assists and seven rebounds to lead the Spurs (50-18), who reached 50 wins for the first time since 2016-17 and trail the first-place Thunder by three games in the West. Devin Vassell added 20 points.

Fighting to secure a spot for the play-in tournament, the Clippers' second straight loss dropped them back to .500 with Kawhi Leonard watching from the bench. The NBA's sixth-leading scorer sat out with a sprained left knee.

Darius Garland led six Clippers in double figures with 25 points and 10 assists. Jordan Miller had 22 points off the bench, which outscored the Spurs' reserves 57-30.

## Celtics 120, Suns 112

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 18 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter and Jayson Tatum scored 21 in his fifth game back from an Achilles tendon injury to help Boston beat Phoenix.

Devin Booker scored 40 for the

Suns, who have lost back-to-back games after snapping a four-game winning streak. Jalen Green scored 21 for Phoenix.

Derrick White, who was presented with February's Eastern Conference's Defensive Player of the Month Award before the game, had 21 points for Boston, and Payton Pritchard scored 19.

## Hawks 124, Magic 112

In Atlanta, Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored a career-high 41 points, Jalen Johnson had his 13th triple-double of the season and Atlanta rolled past the Magic, extending their winning streak to 10 games and snapping Orlando's at seven.

The Hawks improved to 38-31 and reclaimed eighth place in the Eastern Conference, bumping Philadelphia back to ninth.

Johnson had 24 points, 15 rebounds and 13 assists in his second straight triple-double. Dyson Daniels added 15 points and 12 rebounds.

Alexander-Walker scored 24 points in the first half, helping Atlanta to a 67-50 lead at halftime. Alexander-Walker's previous career high was 38 points against the Spurs earlier this season.

## Trail Blazers 114, Nets 95

In New York, Deni Avdija and Toumani Camara each scored 18 points, and Portland coasted to a victory over Brooklyn.

Donovan Clingan finished with 14 points and 11 rebounds and reserve Scoot Henderson had 16 points for the Blazers, who never trailed and

led by as many as 31.

Nic Claxton had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the short-handed Nets, who have lost four consecutive games and 14 of 16. Leading scorer Michael Porter Jr. (ankle) missed his third straight game and Noah Clowney (rest) was held out.

## Pelicans 129, Mavericks 111

In New Orleans, Zion Williamson scored 27 points and New Orleans defeated injury-depleted Dallas.

Saddiq Bey had 23 points, while Jeremiah Fears and Trey Murphy III each added 17 to help the Pelicans win for the eighth time in 12 games.

Naji Marshall scored 32 points for the Mavs against his former team. Dallas rookie Cooper Flagg, the top pick in the 2025 draft, had 21 points, eight assists and seven rebounds.

## Bulls 132, Grizzlies 107

In Chicago, Josh Giddey had 16 points, 15 rebounds and 13 assists for his fourth triple-double in five games, and Chicago blew out Memphis to hand the depleted Grizzlies their eighth straight loss.

Giddey is third in the NBA with 12 triple-doubles this season, trailing Nikola Jokic (27) of the Denver Nuggets and Jalen Johnson (13) of the Atlanta Hawks. Giddey is averaging 17.9 points, 8.4 rebounds and 8.8 assists, all career highs. The fifth-year guard has been limited to 46 games this season by hamstring and ankle injuries.

Matas Buzelis led the Bulls with 29 points, including five 3-pointers. The second-year forward, who was the 11th pick in the 2024 draft, has logged three of the four highest-scoring totals of his career in just the last three weeks.

Travis Jones added 17 points and Rob Dillingham had 15 off the bench for the Bulls, who started a four-game homestand by winning for just the fifth time in their last 23 games. The Bulls, who are in 12th place in the Eastern Conference and six games out of the last play-in spot, outscored the Grizzlies 71-50 in the second half.

Cedric Coward led the Grizzlies with 17 points on 7-for-13 shooting, and Jaylen Wells and Taylor Hendricks each added 16 points. The Grizzlies, who have shelved standout Zach Edey for the remainder of the season and not had star Ja Morant play for nearly two months, were also without starters Ty Jerome (bruised shoulder) and G.G. Jackson (sore foot). Memphis is 3-15 in its last 18 games.

## Coach says will extend contract to 2030 World Cup

## No Neymar for Brazil's last friendlies before Ancelotti names World Cup squad

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 17, (AP): Neymar was left out of Brazil's friendlies in the United States this month. The 34-year-old former captain has struggled to be fit since he tore his ACL in October 2023.

Brazil will play France in Boston on March 26 and Croatia in Orlando four days later.

"This is a squad that takes into account players who are 100% fit," Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Monday. "We had important injuries to players like Eder Militao, Bruno Guimaraes, Estevao, Rodrigo."

Neymar didn't play well on Sunday in Santos' 1-1 draw with Corinthians in the Brazilian league.

Hours later, Neymar told media at an event in Sao Paulo he was "upset and sad" for not being in Brazil's squad for the two friendlies.

"But my focus remains, day after



Brazil's national soccer team head coach Carlo Ancelotti announces the players who will play friendly matches against France and Croatia in preparation for the upcoming World Cup, in Rio de Janeiro. (AP)

ray)

**Forwards:** Endrick (Lyon), João Pedro (Chelsea), Gabriel Martinelli (Arsenal), Igor Thiago (Brentford), Luiz Henrique (Zenit St. Petersburg), Matheus Cunha (Manchester United), Raphinha (Barcelona), Rayan (Bournemouth), Vinicius Junior (Real Madrid)

Meanwhile, Ancelotti says the Brazilian Football Confederation is set to extend his contract to the 2030 World Cup.

The 66-year-old Italian took over Brazil last May to the 2026 World Cup and has noted in interviews he would like to have the job for a four-year World Cup cycle.

Ancelotti said neither he nor the CBF "have any issues to extend the deal."

He replaced Dorival Júnior after some lackluster performances and had to scramble quickly to com-

plete South American qualifying for the World Cup. Ancelotti has compiled 14 wins, 10 draws and nine defeats.

"When a couple wants to carry on I think there's no problem," Ancelotti said at a press conference at CBF headquarters in Rio de Janeiro. "Either before or after the next World Cup we will make this extension official."

He was there to announce his latest squad for friendlies against France and Croatia this month.

The former AC Milan and Real Madrid coach, a five-time Champions League winner, jokingly said he talked to CBF officials about the benefit of extending his contract sooner rather than later.

"(Extending) before the World Cup will be cheaper, afterwards it will be more expensive," Ancelotti quipped. "I am very confident."

# New Zealand routs South Africa to level series

## Conway tops all scorers with 60

**HAMILTON, New Zealand, March 17, (AP): Devon Conway topped all scorers with 60 as New Zealand beat South Africa by 68 runs in the second Twenty20 to level their five-match series at 1-1.**

New Zealand made 175-6 after being sent in on a pitch which became trickier as the evening wore on.

South Africa was bowled out for 107 in 15.3 overs as pacers Ben Sears and Lockie Ferguson shared six wickets. Batters struggled for timing on a pitch which provided variable pace and bounce and all 10 South Africa wickets fell to catches.

South Africa lost its last six wickets for 40 runs and only George Linde stood against the collapse, scoring 33 from 12 balls with three fours and three sixes.

Sears was New Zealand's traveling reserve at the recent T20 World Cup and took 3-14. Ferguson took 3-16, dismissing Linde to end the innings.

"I thought we bowled really well up to a point and then lost our way with the bat," South Africa captain Keshav Maharaj said. "We thought the dew was going to play a large factor in terms of changing the wicket."

"There was dew in the outfield but the wicket got a little bit worse and I'll take it on my chin. We know dew is a factor back home which makes the wicket better but I think the way New Zealand bowled really stifled us up front and forced us to make a play on a very tricky wicket."

New Zealand began its inning strongly with Conway scoring square of the wicket and Tom Latham using ramp shots for a six and a four over fine leg.

They were 43-0 after the powerplay and 81-2 after 10 overs, including Latham (11) picking out Otneil Baartman at third man with a reverse sweep.

But New Zealand wasn't able to accelerate early in the second part of its innings as the dew settled and the pitch at Seddon Park became more two-paced.

Nick Kelly had 21 from 12 balls then played and missed at a ball from Wiaan Mulder and was bowled, and Mitchell Santner made 20 from 14 before being beaten by a ball from Baartman which cut back between bat and pad.

They were 123-4 after 15 and soon after lost Conway, who had held up one end for three quarters of the innings. He top-edged a pull shot to wicketkeeper Connor Esterhuizen.

"It's been a pretty quiet couple of months for me, going over to India and not playing and not featuring at the World Cup," Conway said. "It was a nice opportunity for me to have my feet up and watch the boys do their thing. Getting the opportunity to play, it's been nice to be able to contribute and be with the boys."

Josh Clarkson cameoed with 26 from nine balls and he and Cole McConechie helped themselves to 24 runs from the last over bowled by Maharaj.

The third international will be in Auckland on Friday.

## Fiorentina pulls away from Serie A drop zone

# Thiago celebrates Brazil call-up with goal in Brentford draw with Wolves



Brentford's Kevin Schade, left, and Wolverhampton Wanderers' Jackson Tchatchoua battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Brentford and Wolverhampton Wanderers in London. (AP)

LONDON, March 17, (AP): Igor Thiago celebrated his first call-up to the Brazil squad by scoring Brentford's second goal in a 2-2 thriller against Wolves in the Premier League.

Nearing halftime, the striker tapped into the empty net for his 19th league goal of the season.

A few minutes earlier, Michael Kayode's glancing header put Brentford 1-0 up. It was his first goal in his 41st league appearance for the Bees.

Adam Armstrong pulled a goal back for Wolves a minute before halftime to round off a thrilling half.

Wolves, the league's bottom side, equalized with 13 minutes left when Tolu Arokodare headed home at the back post.

The result extended Wolves' unbeaten league run to three games but it remained bottom of the table, 12 points from safety.

"We know where we are in the league, it hasn't been good enough," Armstrong said, "but since I've come in it's been very positive. The results have been changing. To get my first goal is nice but the main thing is to get the three points. We didn't quite get that today but we'll take the positives."

Brentford stayed in seventh place, two points ahead of Everton but three behind Chelsea.

"We're disappointed to have let the game slip," Bees captain Jordan Henderson said.

Just hours before kickoff, Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti named Thiago in the squad for friendlies against France in Boston on March 26 and Croatia in Orlando four days later.

The former Cruzeiro, Ludogorets and Brugge striker was one of nine forwards included in a 26-man list that featured Endrick of Lyon, Rayan of Bournemouth, and Joao Pedro of Chelsea but no Neymar, who has underperformed recently at Santos.



Fiorentina's Fabiano Parisi scores during the Serie A soccer match between Cremonese and Fiorentina in Cremona, Italy. (AP)

He has excelled for Brentford this season and could have scored one or two more against Wolves. His 19-goal tally is the highest ever by a Brentford player in one Premier League season.

Meanwhile, Fiorentina beat fellow Serie A struggler Cremonese 4-1 in its biggest away win of the season and moved four points clear of the relegation zone.

It was only the second time all season that Fiorentina scored more than three goals in one game and moved it into 16th place.

The loss extended Cremonese's winless run to 14 matches and left

it third from last, four points behind Fiorentina and three behind Lecce.

Pisa and Verona shared last place.

Fabiano Parisi put Fiorentina ahead with a fine solo effort after 25 minutes and Roberto Piccoli doubled the when he converted a perfect pass from Robin Gosens.

Dodo made it 3-0 with a lovely solo goal early in the second half and although David Okereke pulled a goal back for Cremonese nearly an hour in, Albert Gudmundsson added the fourth for Fiorentina.

Also, Pathé Ciss' controversial goal in stoppage time gave Rayo Vallecano a 1-1 draw and shattered visiting Levante's hopes of a rare win that would boost its chances of avoiding relegation from La Liga.

Levante started the night second from bottom in the table and went ahead when 20-year-old Carlos Espi headed the opener - his fourth goal in three games - four minutes before halftime.

However, in the fourth minute of second half added time, Ciss stole in at the back post to control a cross and stroke the ball past goalkeeper Mathew Ryan. Although Levante claimed he handled the ball before shooting, Ciss swore there was no touch.

The man less was Nobel Mendy, who was shown a second yellow eight minutes after halftime.

## A fresh start

# Asylum-granted Iranian players make debut training appearance in Brisbane

BRISBANE, Australia, March 17, (AP): Two players from the Iranian women's soccer team have joined a practice session with a professional club in Brisbane in their first publicly-shared appearance since it emerged they had been granted asylum in Australia.

Fatemeh Pasandideh and Atefeh Ramezani were pictured smiling and wearing the club's colors as they posed alongside a women's elite squad in photos posted to Instagram by the Brisbane Roar on Monday.

The update came as the rest of Iran's soccer delegation left Malaysia bound for Oman, apparently capping a tumultuous episode that saw Australia's government offering most of the squad humanitarian visas after the team was knocked out of the Women's Asian Cup. Seven women initially accepted the asylum offer before five changed their minds and said they would return to Iran.

Brisbane Roar, which plays in Australia's elite A-League Women's domestic competition, posted a welcome to "Fatemeh and Atefeh" on Instagram, along with an emoji of a lioness, a nod to the name the Iranian players are known by.

"We remain committed to providing a supportive environment for them whilst they navigate the next stages," Brisbane Roar CEO Kaz Patafta wrote.

Both women left comments on the post. "Thank you for everything," Ramezani said.

The club declined further comment and referred all questions to Australia's Department of Home Affairs. The Roar last week offered the women "a place to train, play and belong" in a statement on social media.

They have been moved to an undisclosed safe location and are receiving assistance from the government, officials have said. They have not given interviews but Pasandideh posted to Instagram Monday a photo of herself and FIFA Chief Football Officer Jill Ellis, overlaid with the words, "Everything will be fine."

Iran's squad had arrived in Australia for the women's continental championship shortly before the Iran war began on Feb. 28. They drew global attention after some players stayed silent during Iran's national anthem before their first game.

The silence was cast as an act of resistance or protest by some commentators and

a show of mourning by others. The players didn't publicly disclose their views or explain their actions and sang the anthem before their next two matches.

When the team was knocked out of the tournament and faced the prospect of returning to a country under bombardment, calls grew for Australia's government to offer the women asylum. Iranian groups in Australia and United States President Donald Trump were among those who expressed fears for the women's safety, with some citing remarks by Mohammad Reza Shahbazi, a hardline sports commentator in Iran, who on television referred to the women as "war-time traitors" because they didn't sing the anthem.

An Iranian official last week dismissed suggestions that the women would be unsafe if they returned home.

"Iran welcomes its children with open arms and the government guarantees their security," Iranian first Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said. "No one has the right to interfere in the family affairs of the Iranian nation and play the role of a nanny who is kinder than a mother."

Australian officials publicly divulged details of their asylum offers to the women before the Iranian delegation left Australia, which included private airport meetings with each woman without team minders present. A total of six players and one team staffer at first accepted humanitarian visas and guarantees of permanent residence in Australia, while their teammates departed Sydney for Kuala Lumpur on March 10.

Over the next few days, however, five of those who accepted asylum offers changed their minds and flew to join their teammates in Malaysia. No reasons have been given publicly for the reversals, though Australian news outlets reported that local Iranian groups as suggesting the women had faced pressure from Tehran.

The remaining squad flew from Kuala Lumpur to Oman on Monday night. The Asian Football Confederation's General Secretary Windsor John told The Associated Press the team's departure was arranged by the Iranian embassy.

Asked if the Confederation was satisfied that the women would be safe in Iran, Windsor said his organization and FIFA would check on them regularly through the Iranian football federation "as they are our girls as well."



Iranian soccer player's Fatemeh Pasandideh, fourth from right in front row, and Atefeh Ramezani, fourth from left in front row, pose for a photo with the Brisbane Roar women's A-League team at a training session in Brisbane, Australia. (AP)

## 'An amazing opportunity'

# Albon backs Thai GP plans amid government change

BEIJING, March 17, (Xinhua): Williams driver Alex Albon says plans for a Formula 1 race in Thailand are well advanced, but there is uncertainty following the change in government.

London-born Albon, who races under the Thai flag, has been involved in discussions around a potential Thai Grand Prix around the streets of the capital Bangkok, including meetings with senior officials and the Sports Authority of Thailand.

"I've had a few meetings with the now ex-prime minister," Albon told Xinhua during the Chinese Grand Prix weekend. "The Sports Authority of Thailand is a big part of getting this underway, and there's a huge Thai tourism incentive as well." Under former Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Thailand had shown interest in bringing F1 to the country as part of a broader push to boost high-value tourism and global visibility. However, Paetongtarn was removed from her position in August 2025.

Albon indicated that much of the groundwork has already been completed, but that final approval will depend on political clarity.

"I've been involved in a lot of the talks around the Thai GP," he said. "At the moment, there are quite a lot of government changes and we just have to wait for it all to settle down." "But the plan is there, and they've done a lot of the heavy lifting. Now it's more about the final green button." It also remains unclear how a Thai Grand Prix would be funded. While the involvement of the Sports Authority suggests a degree of state backing, the scale of F1 hosting fees means any bid would likely require a combination of public funding, private investment, and commercial partnerships.

It had previously been reported that the Paetongtarn administration had allocated a budget of over 40 billion baht (1.23 billion U.S. dollars) to the project, according to government officials.

The intention had been for the event to be funded by the private sector with government money there as a back-up.

Albon pointed to the tourism potential of a race, particularly if staged in Bangkok, as a key part of the proposal.

"I see it as an amazing opportunity," he said. "I'd love to be able to introduce people to Thailand, especially because they are targeting it towards a different style of tourism, not just what you might call backpacker tourism." "It's a different side of things, and I think Thailand, and Bangkok especially, with the hotels and everything, is a smart place to do it." Albon is Thailand's first F1 driver since the 1950s, and he said Thai interest in the sport had grown beyond a niche audience since his debut in 2019.

"It's grown every year, exponentially," he said. "Especially in the beginning, it was more the people who were already into motorsport, which you could argue was a small percentage of the country." "Before [the Australian Grand Prix, on March 8], I spent a few days in Bangkok, and it's great to see the general public getting more involved and enjoying it more." He added that visibility remains a barrier, with F1 not currently on free-to-air platforms in Thailand, but said broader interest in motorsport is increasing, helped by events such as MotoGP.

"It's not as accessible as it is everywhere else. It is behind a pay-per-view system, and I'd love it to be a bit more attainable for everyone," he said.

"But that being said, I feel like Thailand itself is pushing more and more towards motorsport. MotoGP is happening over there as well, and there is a bug. If you've been to Thailand, you'll know people enjoy their cars." Asked what it would mean to race at a home grand prix, Albon placed the prospect among his career ambitions.

"If you take away my general ambitions in life, scoring my first podium with Williams, becoming a race winner and becoming a world champion, having a Thai GP in F1 would be up there as well," he said.

"So it would mean a lot."

**ARAB TIMES**  
Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

**For Subscriptions and Complaints**

Please Call

**51508991**  
**51526559**





Australia's Caitlin Foord, left, celebrates after scoring her team's first goal during the Women's Asian Cup semifinal soccer match between China and Australia in Perth, Australia. (AP)

# Sports

## Kerr fires Australia into Women's Asian Cup final

Defending champion China falls

**PERTH, Australia, March 17, (AP): Sam Kerr broke a second half deadlock and Australia edged defending champion China 2-1 for a spot in the Women's Asian Cup final on Tuesday.**

The veteran Chelsea forward started the attacking movement on halfway and finished it off with a left-foot shot from a tight angle in the 58th minute, the decisive moment of a semifinal that was tied 1-1 at halftime.

The Australians will play the winner of Wednesday's semifinal between Japan and South Korea. Australia last won the continental championship in 2010.

Caitlin Foord gave the host the lead in the 17th when she finished off an attacking raid that started with Mary Fowler combining with Ellie Carpenter on the right. Carpenter crossed back into the area, where Fowler cut the ball back for Foord to fire.

China equalized in the 26th through Zhang Linyan from the penalty spot. Zhang won the penalty after she swooped on a defensive blunder and was felled in the area by goalkeeper Mackenzie Arnold.

All of the semifinalists qualified automatically for the 2027 Women's World Cup. The losing quarterfinalists go into playoffs for two more guaranteed places in Brazil.

The two Iran players who remained in Australia on protection visas following their team's group-stage exit joined a practice session Monday with a professional club in Brisbane in their first publicly shared appearance since it emerged they were given asylum.

Fatemeh Pasandideh and Atefeh Ramezaniadeh were pictured smiling and wearing the club's training uniform as they posed alongside a women's elite squad in photos posted to social media by the Brisbane Roar.



Australia's Ellie Carpenter and China's Wang Yanwen, right, compete for the ball during the Women's Asian Cup semifinal soccer match between China and Australia in Perth, Australia. (AP)

No points deduction

## Chelsea fined over \$62 mln 'undisclosed payments'

**LONDON, March 17, (AP):** Chelsea was fined \$14.3 million but avoided a points deduction after admitting to breaching Premier League rules in relation to undisclosed payments of more than \$60 million during its previous ownership under Roman Abramovich.

Sanction agreements were reached, the league said Monday, after Chelsea self-reported potential breaches to the Football Association that came to light in 2022 when American investors Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital led a consortium to buy out Abramovich for 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion).

Payments worth around 47 million pounds (\$62.5 million) were made from third-party entities which, the Premier League said, were "controlled by or associated with" Abramovich to unlicensed agents and individuals connected to selling clubs, facilitating transfers for players including Eden Hazard, David Luiz, Samuel Eto'o and Willian.

"It was established that between 2011 and 2018, undisclosed payments by third parties associated with the club were made to players, unregistered agents and other third parties," the league said in a statement.

"These payments were not disclosed to the football regulatory authorities at the time, including the Premier League."

The undisclosed payments "were made for the benefit of Chelsea," the statement said, "and should have been treated as having



From left, Chelsea's Marc Cucurella, Enzo Fernandez, Pedro Neto and Alejandro Garnacho during a training session in Stoke d'Abernon, England ahead of the Champions League soccer match against Paris Saint-Germain. (AP)

been made by the club."

They "constituted a breach of the requirement to act in good faith towards the league," the competition said.

Chelsea accepted fines totaling 10.75 million pounds (\$14.3 million), which were ratified by an independent commission, and was given an immediate nine-month academy transfer ban and a suspended one-year transfer ban for first-team players.

No points deduction was applied, however.

The club said it was "pleased" to reach a settlement with the Premier League.

"From the outset of this process," Chelsea said in its own

statement, "the club has treated these matters with the utmost seriousness, providing full cooperation to all relevant regulators."

The league noted Chelsea's "proactive self-reporting, admissions of breach and exceptional cooperation throughout the investigation acted as significant mitigating factors," with the club sharing more than 200,000 documents with the Premier League.

The league also said it was satisfied that Chelsea "in no scenario" would have breached the league's profitability and sustainability rules in those periods if the payments made had been properly included in the club's

accounts.

These factors helped to reduce the fine by around 50% and meant a points penalty was not deemed appropriate.

Chelsea manager Liam Rose-nior said the sanctions would not be a "negative distraction" to the team.

"I think actually that's a line drawn through that issue and we can move on and we can plan to make this club as strong as possible in the long term," he said at a news conference Monday ahead of a Champions League match against Paris Saint-Germain.

Chelsea's new owners have been fined on multiple occasions by UEFA for financial breaches.

In 2023, during the first year of new regime, Chelsea paid UEFA a 10 million euros (then \$11.8 million) fine to settle irregularities committed while the club was owned by Abramovich, who was forced to sell the club after Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. That was also self-reported by the club.

Last year, Chelsea was fined 20 million euros (then \$23.6 million) for failing to approach break-even and a further 11 million euros (\$13 million) for spending more than an 80% set limit of its revenue on so-called "squad cost" such as transfers and wages.

A separate disciplinary process conducted by the Football Association is ongoing and relates to the same breaches for which Chelsea has been sanctioned by the Premier League.

Bayern's goalkeeper shortage eases

## Barcelona seeks win over Newcastle in Camp Nou

**MADRID, March 17, (Xinhua):** Barcelona hosts Newcastle United at Camp Nou on Wednesday aiming to seal its place in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Barcelona escaped with a 1-1 draw in Newcastle a week ago thanks to Lamine Yamal's 95th-minute penalty after an underwhelming display at St. James' Park, leaving Hansi Flick's side as the clear favorite for the return leg.

Flick rested Yamal and Fermin Lopez for Sunday's 5-2 home win over Sevilla, and the comfortable nature of that victory allowed him to withdraw other key players such as Pedri, Joao Cancelo and Marc Bernal in the second half to give them much-needed rest.

The Barcelona coach admitted Sunday that Pedri needs careful management to avoid a relapse of the muscle problems he has suffered this season, although with Frenkie de Jong still sidelined, the Spain international is expected to start Wednesday night.

With fullbacks Jules Kounde and Alejandro Balde also unavailable, Cancelo is set to start against Newcastle, while Flick must decide whether to use Eric Garcia at right back or keep faith with teenager Xabi Espot, who impressed both in last week's first leg and in his home debut against Sevilla.

Although the ongoing redevelopment of Camp Nou means the stadium is operating at a reduced capacity of 62,000, returning home after two seasons at the former Olympic Stadium on Montjuic has been highly positive for Barcelona. The team has won all 11 matches there since returning last November, scoring 34 goals in the process.

That sets up an intimidating trip for Newcastle, which took a morale-boosting 1-0 win at Chelsea over the weekend. With players such as central defender Dan Burn, the English side carries a threat from set pieces, while Anthony Gordon's pace in attack could trouble Barcelona's back line.

Newcastle paid for its inexperience in last week's first leg, and Camp Nou will provide an even tougher test against an opponent unlikely to repeat the same mistakes.

Bayern Munich's goalkeeping situation appears to be easing ahead of Wednesday's UEFA Champions League last-16 second leg against Atalanta.

While Manuel Neuer and Bayern's third-choice goalkeeper Sven Ulreich remain sidelined through injury, the door appears to be reopening for Jonas Urbig. The 22-year-old resumed light training Monday after suffering a concussion last week as the reigning German champion crushed Bergamo 6-1.

Bayern must follow a strict recovery protocol for head injuries, and a final decision on Urbig is expected shortly before kickoff, pending approval from the club's medical staff.

In the meantime, Bayern's 16-year-old U-19 goalkeeper Leonard Prescott has moved into the spotlight as a possible replacement.

The youngster could either sit on the bench or set a record as Bayern's youngest goalkeeper to play since 1963 at the age of 16 years and 176 days.

Because of Prescott's age, Bayern had to obtain special permission under German youth labor laws, which prohibit young workers from working after 8 p.m.

While coach Vincent Kompany remained cautious about making a final decision, the former Manchester City defender expressed confidence in the young goalkeeper's ability.

Bayern's confidence has also been boosted by the sizable lead from the first leg. Ulreich is reportedly out for at least four weeks, while Kompany said Neuer may not return before early April because of a muscle injury.

Historic late shake-up

## Iran opens talks with FIFA over World Cup venue change

**MEXICO CITY, March 17, (AP):** Iran's Embassy in Mexico on Tuesday said the country is negotiating with FIFA to move Iran's World Cup matches from the U.S. to Mexico after President Donald Trump discouraged the team from attending the tournament, citing safety concerns.

It was unclear whether such talks are happening with FIFA, which did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Iranian officials have previously said it is up to FIFA and the U.S. to keep the team safe during the World Cup.

The Embassy posted a statement attributed to Iranian soccer federation president Mehdi Taj saying Iran wants to move its group stage matches to Mexico to ensure the safety of players and officials.

"When Trump has explicitly stated that he cannot ensure the security of the Iranian national team, we will certainly not travel to America," the statement said. "We are currently negotiating with FIFA to hold Iran's matches in the World Cup in Mexico."

The World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. Iran is scheduled to play against New Zealand on June 16 and Belgium on June 21 in Inglewood, California, before finishing group play in Seattle against Egypt on June 26.

Moving the games would be unprecedented less than three months before the start of the World Cup.

Trump said last week that the Iran team was welcome at the World Cup despite the ongoing war in the Middle East but "I really don't believe it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety."

Iran has sent mixed signals about its participation in the tournament after the U.S. and Israel launched attacks.

Sports minister Ahmad Donyamali told state TV last week that it was not possible to play "due to the wicked acts they have done against Iran."

But after Trump's post the national team said on Instagram that "no one can exclude" it from the tournament and a gov-

ernment spokesman in Tehran stressed in it was the responsibility of FIFA and the U.S. as a co-host nation to keep players safe and secure.

"FIFA is the organizer of the World Cup," Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said. "When warnings are issued at the highest level about the environment being unsafe for Iranian football players, this indicates that the host country apparently lacks the capacity and ability to provide security for such an important sporting event."

Soccer is followed passionately in Iran, a nation of more than 90 million people which has qualified for seven men's World Cups and each of the past four editions. The team is ranked No. 20 in the world by FIFA and behind only Japan from Asia.

FIFA has not commented in recent days beyond an Instagram post by president Gianni Infantino last week that he'd received assurances from Trump that Iran was welcome at the tournament.

## 2028 Olympics soccer to kick off early, matches set across 7 cities

**LOS ANGELES, March 17, (AP):** Men's and women's soccer at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics will begin four days before the opening ceremony and be played in seven cities around the United States.

The early start, approved by the IOC, allows teams two extra rest days during the tournament compared to previous Olympics. The schedule also includes additional rest days after the group stage and quarterfinals, giving teams time to travel.

The matches will start on July 10, with the group stage and quarterfinals being played in New York, Columbus, Ohio, Nashville, Tennessee, and St. Louis.

The knockout rounds will move to California, taking place in San Jose, San Diego and Pasadena, with the gold medal matches at the historic Rose Bowl. The stadium hosted the 1994 men's World Cup final, the 1999 women's World Cup final and the 1984 Olympic gold-medal match.

New York and Columbus will host nine men's and women's matches on

July 10-11, July 13-14 and July 16-17, as well as a men's quarterfinal on July 20. Nashville will also host nine matches, with group-stage games on the same dates and both men's and women's quarterfinals on July 20-21.

St. Louis will host eight matches on July 10-17, with a men's quarterfinal on July 20.

San Jose will host seven matches, including women's group-stage games on July 11, 14 and 17 and a quarterfinal on July 21.

San Diego will be the site of 11 matches, including women's group-stage games, a women's quarterfinal on July 21, men's and women's semifinals on July 24-25, and the bronze-medal matches on July 27-28.

The tournament ends at the Rose Bowl, which will host five matches, including a women's quarterfinal on July 21, men's and women's semifinals on July 24-25 and the gold-medal matches on July 28-29.

The complete schedule will be released later this year.