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**Ramadan**

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## Syria leader urges unity, peace

Deadliest clashes in years as more than 1,000 killed in coastal violence



QADMUS, Syria: Syrian forces deploy in this town in Tartus governorate on March 9, 2025. — AFP

**LATAKIA, Syria:** Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa called for national unity and peace on Sunday, after hundreds of civilians were reportedly killed along the country's Mediterranean coast in the worst violence since the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad. Clashes between the new security forces and loyalists of the former government erupted on Thursday in the heartland of the Alawite minority to which Assad belongs, and have since escalated into reported mass killings.

"We must preserve national unity (and) civil peace as much as possible and, God willing, we will be able to live together in this country," Sharaa said from a mosque in Damascus. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor has reported that 745 Alawite civilians were killed in the coastal Latakia and Tartus provinces. The Britain-based Observatory said they were killed in "executions" carried out by security personnel or pro-government fighters and were followed by looting.

The fighting has also killed 125 members of the security forces and 148 pro-Assad fighters, according to the Observatory, taking the overall death toll to 1,018. The interior ministry said on Sunday that government forces were conducting "sweeping operations in Qadmous and the surrounding villages" in Tartus province to "pursue the remnants of the toppled regime". State news agency SANA quoted a

defense ministry source as saying there were violent clashes ongoing in Tanita, another Tartus village.

An AFP photographer in the city of Latakia reported a military convoy entering the Bisnada neighborhood to search homes. In Baniyas, a city to the south, resident Samir Haider, 67, told AFP two of his brothers and his nephew were killed by armed groups that entered people's homes, adding that there were "foreigners among them".

Though himself an Alawite, Haider was part of the leftist opposition to the Assads and was imprisoned for more than a decade under their rule. Defense ministry spokesman Hassan Abdul Ghani said on Saturday the security forces had "reimposed control" over areas that had seen attacks by Assad loyalists.

Education Minister Nazir Al-Qadri announced that schools would remain shut on Sunday and Monday in both Latakia and Tartus, while SANA reported a power outage throughout Latakia province due to attacks on the grid by Assad loyalists. The killings followed clashes sparked by the arrest of a wanted suspect in a predominantly Alawite village, the Observatory reported.

The monitor said there had been a "relative return to calm" in the region on Saturday. A defense ministry source told SANA that troops had blocked roads leading to the coast to prevent "violations", without

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### RAMADAN KAREEM

## Dates a superfood

By Hassan T Bwambale

**D**ates have historically been a major part of Middle Eastern culture and a staple item in the cuisine. The hot, desert climate of the area makes for perfect weather conditions for the date palm to flourish. Apart from having spiritual significance and being juicy, delicious treats, dates are also an incredible source of nutrients, antioxidants and health benefits. While observing the fast in Ramadan from sunrise until sunset, dates are a perfect food to consume to restore your energy and give your body the fuel it needs.

The following is a list of some reasons why dates are a nutritious food to eat after a daylong fast.

1. Dates are high in sugar to give you a natural energy boost: After fasting all day, your body is craving carbohydrates and sugars to maintain its energy sources. Dates are naturally high in sugar and the right kinds of carbohydrates to rejuvenate your body's energy levels. It is common to feel lethargic after fasting. Eating one to three dates before anything else to break your fast is a surefire way to combat the exhaustion you may feel. Within an hour of digesting a date (or two or three), your body feels vigour and the sugar is replenished in the blood, which the lack of is one of the main causes of hunger and tiredness.

2. Dates are a great source of fiber: Fiber helps you to feel full. They also help ease constipation due to their high fibre content.

3. Dates help alleviate symptoms of low blood sugar: During a fast, whether it is during Ramadan or for any other reason, you can experience low blood sugar which can leave you feeling weak, tired, and lightheaded. Dates are a natural sugar supply that will help combat low blood sugar and help you feel better overall.

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## US ends waiver for Iraq to buy Iran electricity

**BAGHDAD:** Washington has declined to renew a sanctions waiver that allowed Iraq to buy electricity from neighboring Iran, a spokesperson for the American embassy in Baghdad said on Sunday. Despite having immense oil and gas reserves, Iraq remains dependent on imports to meet its energy needs, and Iran supplies a third of the country's gas and electricity.

## Protester with Palestinian flag scales Big Ben

**LONDON:** A man who scaled London's Big Ben, and spent the day perched on the historic clock tower with a Palestinian flag, was arrested shortly after he came down after midnight Sunday, police said. Pictures from the scene showed a cherry picker transporting him to waiting emergency crews on the ground.

London's Metropolitan Police force, which was first alerted to the climber around 0700 GMT Saturday, said the man was arrested after the "protract-

ed incident". The man spent the day perched barefoot on a ledge several meters up the landmark, even as emergency crews urged him to come down from the Elizabeth Tower in central London, more commonly known for its clock bell, Big Ben.

Negotiators had boarded a fire truck lift and used a megaphone to speak with the man, but footage on social media showed the figure in a hoodie and baseball cap saying: "I will come down on my own terms." In the footage, negotiators indicated concerns about an injury to his foot, saying there was "quite a lot of blood" and that his clothes were not warm enough as temperatures dropped after nightfall. AFP journalists at the scene earlier said the man appeared to be bleeding from his foot.

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## US schools slap bans on phones despite doubts

**ALEXANDRIA, Virginia:** At a red-brick school in Virginia, Hayden Jones is one of 1,000 students banned from using their phones as part of a trial hoping to boost learning. But the 12-year-old's verdict on the restrictions — a shrug of his shoulders — reflects the skepticism shared by some students and parents. The phone ban at Twain Middle School is among a wave

of measures implemented around the United States, and is part of a global movement replicated in Brazil, France and beyond.

Supporters believe restrictions will guard pupils from the apparent harms of smartphone use while at school, but opponents say the measures fail to prepare teenagers for the digital world they will inevitably enter. Since September, Jones must now place his Android phone in a magnetic pouch each morning, which is locked until the end of the school day as part of a pilot scheme this academic year.

Jones, speaking to AFP in a corridor lined with classrooms, said he

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"The President's maximum pressure campaign is designed to end Iran's nuclear threat, curtail its ballistic missile program, and stop it from supporting terrorist groups," the embassy spokesperson said on Sunday. Calling Iran "an unreliable energy supplier", the spokesperson urged Baghdad "to eliminate its dependence on Iranian sources of energy as soon as possible". "Electricity imports from Iran do not contribute substantially to power delivered to the Iraqi people," the spokesperson added.

Decades of war have left Iraq's infrastructure in a pitiful state, with chronic power cuts that become worse during the blistering summer when temperatures often reach 50 Celsius. Many households receive just a few hours of mains electricity

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LONDON: A protester holding a Palestinian flag gestures from the side of "Big Ben" at the Palace of Westminster on March 8, 2025. — AFP



ALEXANDRIA, Virginia: Eighth-grader Ja' Nae Dorsey unlocks her cellphone pouch after school at Mark Twain Middle School on March 6, 2025. — AFP





# Zain hosts iftar banquet at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base

In recognition of Coast Guard personnel's efforts during holy month



Major General Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and Waleed Al-Khashti with Zain's team and Coast Guard Personnel.

**KUWAIT:** As part of its annual Zain Al-Shuhour campaign, Zain hosted a Ramadan iftar banquet at Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base, located along the Northern Island of Jaber Al-Ahmad Bridge, in honor of the Coast Guard personnel. This initiative aimed to share the blessings of the Holy Month of Ramadan with them while expressing appreciation for their relentless efforts in safeguarding Kuwait's maritime borders around the clock.

The iftar gathering was attended by Major General Sheikh Mubarak Ali Yousef Al-Sabah, Director General of the General Administration of the Coast Guard, along with Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain officials, and Coast Guard personnel stationed at the base. This initiative reflects Zain's commitment to embracing the spirit of Ramadan and sharing its blessings with the community, including

Coast Guard personnel who dedicate themselves to protecting the nation and its people 24/7. The iftar banquet was held in their honor as a gesture of gratitude for their sacrifices, particularly during Ramadan, when they remain on duty away from their families.

Such social visits are an integral part of Zain's annual Ramadan program, during which the company's team and volunteers actively engage in visits to various entities to strengthen community bonds and foster collaboration. Every year, Zain Al-Shuhour evolves and expands its programs and initiatives, collaborating with various organizations across the country. Through this campaign, Zain embodies the spirit of generosity that defines the holy month and reflects the deep-rooted values of the Kuwaiti people in supporting others and spreading love and peace.



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and Waleed Al-Khashti at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base.

## Kuwait commends GCC's role in boosting regional stability and security

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya underscored the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) instrumental role in fortifying regional security and stability while addressing challenges confronting the Muslim and Arab worlds. Speaking at a joint press conference alongside GCC Secretary-General Jassem Al-Budaiwi, Al-Yahya, who chaired the 163rd GCC Ministerial Council meeting, said discussions centered on strengthening cooperation across political, economic, security, and developmental sectors in accordance with GCC leaders' directives.

On the sidelines of the 163rd session, ministerial meetings were held with counterparts from Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and Jordan. Al-Yahya described these engagements as valuable platforms for exchanging views on pressing international and regional issues. He reaffirmed the GCC's steadfast commitment to supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent state based on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Addressing the Syrian crisis, Al-Yahya reiterated the GCC's support for a political resolution in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254. He emphasized the importance of preserving Syria's unity and sovereignty while ensuring the safe return of refugees. He also highlighted the GCC's continued efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people through humanitarian aid and relief initiatives.

Al-Yahya noted that the council deliberated on various regional developments of mutual concern, reaffirming the GCC's commitment to fostering cooperation and integration across multiple sectors. He emphasized the council's dedication to working closely with regional and international partners to enhance security and stability in the region. Responding to a query regarding the reopening of Kuwait's embassy in Syria, Al-Yahya confirmed that the embassy remains operational and that diplomatic appointments would be announced soon. On Lebanon, he stated that support would be extended through development funds and direct investments. Regarding sanctions on Syria, Al-Yahya affirmed that efforts would be made to explore viable solutions while urging friendly nations to ease restrictions.

Expressing gratitude, Al-Yahya thanked the foreign ministers of GCC states, Syria, Morocco, and Jordan, along with the GCC Secretary-General and the Secretariat, for their efforts in organizing and preparing the successful meeting. He also extended appreciation to Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan for his warm hospitality.

Meanwhile, GCC Secretary-General Al-Budaiwi reviewed the topics discussed during the joint meetings with Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and Jordan. He emphasized the importance of strengthening strategic relations and joint efforts to promote shared interests. Al-Budaiwi also highlighted discussions on implementing resolutions from the 45th GCC Supreme Council summit, held in Kuwait in 2024.

Meanwhile, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is actively working to integrate the informal sector into official economies as part of broader economic development strategies, contributing no more than 18 percent of the region's GDP, according to a senior Kuwaiti diplomat. Speaking at the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Chair of the GCC Ambassadors Council and Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, emphasized the bloc's commitment to protecting labor rights and ensuring social security for all workers in alignment with national and economic frameworks. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti women playing pivotal role in nation's development

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah reaffirmed on Saturday that Kuwaiti women have long been a beacon of dedication and sacrifice, playing a pivotal role in the nation's development and renaissance. She lauded their leadership in various fields and their significant contributions to the national progress.

Speaking to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) on the occasion of International Women's Day, Al-Huwailah highlighted the resilience of Kuwaiti women, who have consistently demonstrated their ability to overcome challenges and actively participate in the country's construction and advancement. "They have achieved remarkable milestones that make us all proud," she stated. She underscored the unwavering commitment of Kuwaiti women, recalling their heroic role during the brutal Iraqi invasion of 1990. In those dire times, women exhibited extraordinary

resilience and sacrifice, working tirelessly for the liberation of their homeland and the restoration of its sovereignty.

Al-Huwailah also emphasized the pioneering role of Kuwaiti women in education and the workforce, noting that they have been part of the educational system for decades and have ascended to leadership positions across various sectors. These achievements, she stressed, did not happen by chance but were the result of unwavering determination, strong will, and deep faith in their integral role in society.

She further commended the Kuwaiti leadership's steadfast commitment to empowering women, providing them with opportunities to engage in decision-making and assume ministerial and executive roles. This reflects society's confidence in their abilities and their vital contribution to national development. Concluding her remarks, Al-Huwailah reaf-

firmed that Kuwaiti women will always be a source of national pride, calling for continued support and empowerment to enable them to achieve greater milestones and contribute to a brighter future for upcoming generations.

### Arab Women Recognized

President of the Arab Parliament Mohammad Al-Yamahi reiterated the parliament's full support for initiatives aimed at enhancing women's empowerment across various sectors. Marking International Women's Day, he extended his greetings to Arab women, acknowledging them as key partners in the development and progress of the region.

Al-Yamahi emphasized that the Arab Parliament prioritizes the advancement of women, commending their achievements on regional and international levels. He paid special tribute to Palestinian women for their immense sacrifices and resilience in the face of ongoing atrocities and genocidal acts committed by the occupying forces in the Palestinian territories. He noted that the majority of victims in Gaza over the past year and three months have been women and children. "Palestinian women remain an enduring symbol of struggle, resilience, and heroism until their people attain their legitimate rights," he affirmed. — KUNA



Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah



KUWAIT: Desert truffle vendors sort their merchandise at the truffle market on March 8, 2025. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat





Participants pose for a group photo at the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



(From left) Kuwait Times and Kuwait News Content Creator Dhoja Al-Issa, PR and CSR Manager Jana Aln-aeqeb, Reporter Passant Hisham and Editor Nebal Snan



Dominique Diaz



Farah Asaad

# Volvo marks International Women's Day

## Ghabga aimed at celebrating and empowering women

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Volvo marked International Women's Day, on Saturday, with a collaborative Ghabga aimed at celebrating and empowering women. Farah Asaad, Brand Experience Specialist at BNK Automotive, said "This event is all about women empowering each other. We want to raise awareness that all these sister companies actively encourage women to grow and lead."

BNK Automotive is also making strides in gender equality within the automotive industry; Asaad noted that Volvo's team within BNK Automotive has an equal ratio of men and women, a rare achievement in the sector, adding "The Company's service department is led by a female acting manager, a position traditionally dominated by men." She continued, "In the automotive world, it's uncommon to see a woman managing a service center.

We are proud to be part of an organization that supports women in leadership roles. Also, the marketing team is predominantly female, with women making up 80 percent of the department." For her part, Lulwa Al-Qaoud, Senior engineer at Arkan Al-Kuwait Real Estate Company shared her journey of resilience and growth, emphasizing the challenges of balancing motherhood and a thriving career, saying "We are here to celebrate the resilience, ambitions, and achievements of women across the world and within our holding. We're here to empower women with all of our success stories together."

Reflecting on her own experience, Al-Qaoud spoke about transitioning from motherhood into the professional world, crediting her company for providing a



Lulwa Al-Qaoud



Norah Al-Shammari



Rebecca Watson



Fatemah Al-Habib

supportive environment, something she acknowledged is not always the case globally. She described motherhood as an enlightening journey that has given her newfound patience, perspective, and the ability to work under pressure. She likened the balance between career and parenting to a "delicate dance", emphasizing the importance of self-care.

Likewise, Norah Al-Shammari, Senior Associate Marketing & Corporate Communication of Investments Company (NIC), during her pregnancy found herself caught between two worlds. On one hand, there was the irresistible pull of returning to a professional life; on the other, a profound sense of loss for the life she once knew, saying "I was experiencing a lot of guilt post-partum because I wanted to be back at work."

She realized that the skills she gained as a mother like resilience and focus made her even more valuable at work, adding "I'm happy to be a part of a company that accepted my transition, realized I'm not the same person anymore, and helped

me become better." For her part, Dominique Maria Diaz, PR & Communication Coordinator of Al-Safat, acknowledged the challenges of working in a demanding environment, adding "I had the privilege of working with a lot of people, a lot of beautiful women, half of them is here today. They're so inspiring. I learn so much from them every day."

She recalled, "I think what makes me proud is looking back at when I first came to Kuwait and knowing how not only scared but just hesitant about whether I was going to do well if I could push myself. I'm an ambitious person I wanted to reach a level that my family could be proud of." As she reflects on her journey, Diaz finds strength in the community around her, she said "I have a lot of people in my life that have been very supportive, that inspire me every day. Not only my co-colleagues, I have a great group of girlfriends, and it's great to watch so many women in my life do so well, and have so many achievements, whether they've just

got married, they've had kids or a work accomplishment."

Meanwhile, Kuwait Times' Content Creator Dhoja Al-Issa shared her experience on how TikTok which she used during the pandemic became the first step to her rising career. Despite doubts from people who warned her that no one would hire her because of her videos, Al-Issa proved them wrong. Embracing the digital revolution during the lockdown, she began producing engaging TikTok content that showcased her creativity and humor which eventually led her to be famous in the "Content creator" career.

Known as a woman-led business, Kuwait Times impressed Al-Issa not only with its progressive values but also with its all-women team, a dynamic she admired deeply. "It's nice that my co-workers are mainly women, my boss is a woman, a great woman to learn under," she said. During her speech, Fatemah Al-Habib, Founder of Qesati, said that she has redefined community building through the art of storytelling while

creating a safe space where women and indeed every individual are invited to share their experiences without fear, forging a collective narrative that empowers and unites.

Al-Habib's inspiration came from a simple yet profound saying that declared, "I am every woman," explaining "I wouldn't be able to understand that line had I not gone through the journey that I did. Because it requires a storyteller to understand that you are every single person around you." After living abroad for 23 years, she returned to Kuwait only to discover that the sense of belonging she craved was missing.

"I realized that Kuwait was missing a space, a community where people could share their stories and experiences without feeling afraid, especially for a woman to do so." The growth of Qesati has exceeded her expectations and what started as a personal project has blossomed into a vibrant community that not only celebrates individual journeys but also fosters a collective identity. Rebecca Watson, personal trainer at SVN, also shared her heartfelt experience of how her company celebrated and empowered its female workforce, adding "The initiative, driven by the Human Resources department, reached out to every woman in the organization, inviting them to join in a day of recognition and unity."

She revealed that every woman at work received a rose a symbol of appreciation and strength, noting that this simple act of kindness set the tone for a day dedicated to honoring the contributions and resilience of women. Partnering with Kuwait Times, Kuwait News, Al-Safat, Arkan, NIC, Ride Safe, Qesati, Atyab Al-Marshoud, and Al-Thiqqa, the event also featured panel discussions, personal success stories, an artistic exhibition on the sidelines, and a musical performance featuring a female artist playing the qanun.



Women pose for a photo at Volvo Studio.



Women attend the event to celebrate International Women's Day.

## Kuwait seeks nuke-free Mideast, urges Zionist entity to join NPT

**VIENNA:** Kuwait has called on the international community to exert pressure on Zionist entity to immediately join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subject all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The appeal was made by Counselor Bashar Al-Duwaisan, Member of Kuwait's Permanent Delegation to the United Nations in Vienna, during a meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors discussing Zionist nuclear capabilities.

Al-Duwaisan emphasized that while all Middle Eastern nations remain committed to the NPT and the implementation of the comprehensive safeguards agreement, Zionist entity continues to refuse any international oversight of its nuclear facilities or any serious efforts toward establishing a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East. He highlighted the crucial role of the IAEA in verifying the peaceful nature of nuclear programs and stressed the importance of keeping the issue of Zionist nuclear capabilities on the agenda of IAEA meetings.

The Kuwaiti diplomat reiterated the necessity of continued scrutiny of Zionist nuclear activities. He noted that these discussions are taking place against the backdrop of a severe humanitarian crisis in occupied Palestine, where Zionist military aggression has resulted in the deaths of thousands, predominantly women and children. He strongly condemned these actions as

blatant violations of international laws and conventions.

Al-Duwaisan urged the international community to fulfill its responsibilities by intensifying pressure on Zionists to cease its aggression, protect Palestinian civilians, and hold perpetrators accountable. He reaffirmed Kuwait's unwavering support for all efforts aimed at ensuring regional security and stability, as well as ending Zionist violations.

### Nuclear Threats

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Arab Group at International Organizations in Vienna, Salah Abdelshafi, warned that recent threats by Zionist officials to use nuclear weapons against Gaza represent a serious breach of international law and pose a direct threat to both regional and global security. Abdelshafi, who also serves as Palestine's Ambassador to Austria and its Per-

manent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna, made these remarks during an IAEA meeting on Friday.

He reiterated the Arab Group's firm stance on the risks posed by Zionist nuclear capabilities, referencing an IAEA resolution issued in September 2009 that expressed concern over Zionist nuclear arsenal. The resolution called on Zionist entity to accede to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive international safeguards. Abdelshafi expressed deep regret over the failure to hold the 2012 conference intended to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, describing it as a setback to international disarmament efforts. He stressed that all initiatives aimed at creating such a zone serve both regional and global security and highlighted the significance of recent UN General Assembly discussions on the matter.—KUNA



## Kuwait Heritage



Collecting water from areas where rain falls outside the walls of Kuwait, in 1938. (Source: Dame Violet Dickson, *Umm Saud's Fascinating Life in Kuwait (1929–1990)*, by Claudia Al-Rashoud, privately printed, 1997.) — Compiled by Mahmoud Zakaria, researcher in heritage.

# Kuwait underscores the importance of statistical cooperation at UN session

## GCC inflation rises to 1.7 percent

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) has emphasized the importance of presenting the country's vision at the 56th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSD), highlighting the crucial role of international cooperation and knowledge exchange in advancing statistical methodologies. Speaking to KUNA, Acting Director General of CSB Wafa Al-Yahya stated that Kuwait's participation in the session reflects its commitment to aligning with international standards and practices to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Al-Yahya noted that CSB has outlined a comprehensive vision addressing various agenda topics, submitting 20 documents to the UNSD's website under Kuwait's name. The vision includes key proposals, such as the adoption of the 2025 System of National Accounts as an international standard with flexible implementation mechanisms.

Additionally, Kuwait's recommendations advocate for enhanced regional and international cooperation in census-taking, the adoption of innovative methodologies to improve inclusivity, and the advancement of digital infrastructure. The vision also stresses the need for greater collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Council and the modernization of the commission's operations. Further recommendations call for adherence to the fundamental principles of official statistics, updating the SDG indicator database, strengthening partnerships with international organizations, and improving data quality on migration while accounting for regional particularities. Al-Yahya underscored the importance of empowering regional bodies such as the GCC Statistical Center and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to support member states in implementing global statistical standards.

She also highlighted Kuwait's participation in

ESCWA's Statistical Committee meeting as part of preparations for the UN Statistical Commission session, alongside representatives from international organizations and national statistical agencies. Reaffirming Kuwait's commitment to bolstering the global statistical framework, Al-Yahya stressed the country's dedication to strengthening partnerships with regional organizations, including ESCWA and the GCC Statistical Center.

### GCC inflation rises

The Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) general inflation rate increased to 1.7 percent by the end of October 2024, compared to the same period in 2023, according to data from the GCC Statistical Center (GCCSC). The primary drivers of inflation were a 6.4 percent rise in housing costs and a three percent increase in the services and commodities sector, the report indicated. The restaurant and ho-

tel sector saw a 1.7 percent uptick, while culture and entertainment rose by 1.4 percent, education by 1.2 percent, and food and beverages by 0.8 percent. However, transport prices declined by 3.6 percent, while household furniture and equipment, tobacco, communication, and clothing and footwear recorded decreases of 1.9 percent, 1.1 percent, 0.9 percent, and 0.4 percent, respectively.

The report also highlighted global inflation figures for October 2024, with the European Union registering an inflation rate of 2.3 percent, Brazil at 4.8 percent, India at 4.4 percent, the UK at 3.2 percent, the US at 2.6 percent, Japan at 2.3 percent, Germany at 2 percent, South Korea at 1.3 percent, France at 1.2 percent, Italy at 0.9 percent, and China at 0.3 percent. Headquartered in Oman, the GCCSC serves as the official statistical authority for the Gulf region, providing essential economic and statistical data for member states. — KUNA

## Gold prices surge as uncertainty drives safe-haven demand

**KUWAIT:** Gold prices climbed 2.3 percent last week, closing at \$2,910 per ounce, following weak economic data from the United States, according to a specialized report by Kuwaiti firm Dar Al-Sabayek. The report, released Sunday, highlighted that the precious metal continues to attract investors seeking a safe haven amid global economic instability.

The report noted that ongoing uncertainty surrounding US trade policies, particularly in light of tariff disputes with Canada, Mexico, and China, has further bolstered demand for gold. While tariffs on certain goods from Canada and Mexico have been lifted, Canada's tariffs remain in effect, and China is set to introduce new trade measures next week. These developments have heightened market uncertainty, reinforcing gold's appeal as a hedge against economic volatility.

Dar Al-Sabayek also pointed to a continued trend of central banks increasing their gold reserves. The People's Bank of China added 10 tons of gold to its reserves in early 2025, while the National Bank of

Poland purchased 29 tons — its largest acquisition since 2019 — underscoring sustained global interest in gold as a store of value amid economic and political fluctuations.

While short-term price fluctuations are expected, gold remains a focal point for investors seeking stability. The report suggested that the metal may require a fresh catalyst to drive prices higher. It also underscored the need to monitor the impact of new European policies on the gold market, particularly the European Union's recently announced €1 trillion military spending fund, which could influence investment flows and increase demand for gold.

Despite temporary challenges, the report maintained that gold remains well-positioned for long-term gains, contingent on factors such as inflation and persistent economic and political uncertainty. It projected that if inflationary pressures and global economic tensions persist, gold could surpass the \$3,000 per ounce threshold this year.

On the local market, Dar Al-Sabayek reported that 24-karat gold was priced at KD 28.98 per gram (approximately \$89), while 22-karat gold stood at KD 26.56 per gram (about \$81). Silver prices remained stable at KD 363 per kilogram (around \$1,176). The report also reiterated that gold is measured in troy ounces, equivalent to 31.103 grams, distinguishing it from the standard ounce, which weighs 28.349 grams. — KUNA



## Municipality signs Museum contract

**KUWAIT:** Acting Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng Manal Al-Asfour signed a contract on Sunday to establish the Imam Abdulrahman Al-Faisal Museum in the historic Mubarakia market in Kuwait City. The project aligns with the municipality's strategic vision to develop Mubarakia into a premier cultural and tourist destination.

In a press statement, the municipality explained that the museum will be situated near Al-Bahr Mosque and the Central Gold Market in the fourth commercial block of the Qibla area. Spanning a total area of 4,490 square meters, the project will feature a main museum replicating the original residence of Imam Abdulrahman Al-Faisal, alongside supporting museums, commercial buildings, a basement and a café. The design study phase is set to be completed within one year.

The museum aims to highlight the historical and cultural ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, shedding light on an important era of their shared history. It will narrate the story of the House of Al Saud and the deep-rooted relationship between the Kuwaiti and Saudi peoples, emphasizing the significance of Imam Abdulrahman Al-Faisal's time in Kuwait's Mubarakia area.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality officials sign contract to build Imam Abdulrahman Al-Faisal House Museum, embodying the depth of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations. — KUNA photos

Al-Asfour affirmed that the project underscores the strong familial and historical connections between the two leaderships and peoples. She emphasized Kuwait's dedication to preserving the rich heritage shared with Saudi Arabia, reflecting the traditions and way of life of that period. The museum will serve as a cultural bridge, linking past and present while reinforcing the enduring legacy of Kuwaiti-Saudi relations for future generations. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti jeweler arranges gold items at his shop in Kuwait City. - Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat





Protesters rally on International Women's Day, fearing far right

## Ailing pope thanks doctors as his condition improves

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BEIT LAHIA: A Palestinian family eat an iftar meal in their destroyed house amid the rubble of buildings in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on March 4, 2025. — AFP

# Zionist entity strikes north Gaza, rattling ceasefire

Only 10 percent of the required medical supplies have been allowed in Gaza since truce: Official

**GAZA:** The Zionist entity carried out an air strike on Sunday, rattling an already fragile ceasefire as it prepared for fresh talks in Doha on the future of its truce with Hamas. The Palestinian militant group has repeatedly called for an immediate start to negotiations on the ceasefire's second phase, which it hopes will lead to a permanent end to the war. However, the Zionist entity says it prefers an extension of phase one until mid-April.

The disagreement over how to proceed came as the deal's first phase ended at the start this month, with the Zionist entity cutting off aid to the territory over the impasse. Hamas representatives met mediators in Cairo over the weekend, emphasizing the urgent need to resume humanitarian aid deliveries to the besieged territory "without restrictions or conditions", a Hamas statement said. "Hamas stresses the urgency of forcing the occupation to immediately begin second-phase negotiations under the agreed parameters," senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Mardawi told AFP, adding this would pave the way for a permanent end to the fighting.

Hamas's key demands for the second phase include the Zionist entity's full withdrawal from Gaza, an end to the Zionist entity's blockade, the reconstruction of the Palestinian territory and financial support, Mardawi said. Following talks with mediators, Hamas spokesperson Abdel Latif Al-Qanoua said indicators were so far "positive". A Hamas source said Sunday its delegation had now left Cairo for Doha.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it would send delegates to the Qatari capital on Monday, and Zionist media reported the security cabinet

would discuss the matter later on Sunday. Despite the end of the truce's initial phase, both sides have refrained from returning to all-out war, though there have been sporadic episodes of violence.

The Zionist entity's military said its air strike Sunday targeted militants who "were identified operating in proximity to IDF troops and attempting to plant an explosive device in the ground in northern Gaza". The truce largely halted more than 15 months of fighting in Gaza, where virtually the entire population was displaced by the entity's relentless military campaign in response to Hamas's 2023, attack.

The six-week first phase revolved around the exchange of 25 living Zionist entity hostages and eight bodies for the release of about 1,800 Palestinian prisoners held in Zionist entity. It also allowed much-needed food, shelter and medical assistance to re-enter Gaza. After the entity again cut off the aid flow over the disagreement on the truce extension, UN rights experts accused the government of "weaponizing starvation". "To date, only 10 percent of the required medical supplies have been allowed in, exacerbating the crisis," Gaza health ministry spokesman Khalil Al-Dakran said, adding that the "continued closure of the crossings threatens the lives of patients in Gaza".

Displaced Palestinian widow Haneen Al-Dura told AFP she and her children spent weeks living on the street "among dogs and rats" before receiving a tent. "As the family's provider, it was distressing and I couldn't sleep at all during the night," she said.

**'Last warning'**  
Last week, US President Donald Trump threat-

ened further destruction of Gaza if all remaining hostages were not released, issuing what he called a "last warning" to Hamas leaders. He also alluded to repercussions for all Gazans, telling them: "A beautiful future awaits, but not if you hold hostages. If you do, you are DEAD!" Hamas said Trump's threats would only encourage the Zionist entity to ignore the terms of the truce. The Trump administration has also confirmed the start of unprecedented direct talks with Hamas, which Washington had previously refused contact with since designating it a terrorist organization in 1997. Of the 251 hostages taken by the Palestinian militants during the October 7 attack, 58 remain in Gaza, including five Americans. Four American captives have been confirmed dead, while one, Edan Alexander, is believed to be alive.

Trump had previously floated a widely condemned plan to expel Palestinians from Gaza, prompting Arab leaders to offer an alternative. Their proposal would see Gaza's reconstruction financed through a trust fund, with the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority returning to govern the territory. "We need more discussion about it, but it's a good-faith first step," Steve Witkoff, Trump's Middle East envoy, told reporters in Washington in response to the Arab plan. Witkoff will be returning to the region this week as he travels to Saudi Arabia for talks on the war in Ukraine. At a weekend rally in Tel Aviv, family members of Zionist entity hostages demanded the government fully implement the ceasefire. "The war could resume in a week," Einav Zangauker, the mother of Matan Zangauker, told the crowd. "The war won't bring the hostages back home, it will kill them." — AFP

## Smotrich: Trump's plan to displace Gazans 'taking shape'

**JERUSALEM:** The Zionist entity's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said on Sunday that US President Donald Trump's plan to remove Palestinians from war-battered Gaza was "taking shape", despite widespread rejection by governments in the region. "This plan is taking shape, with ongoing actions in coordination with the (US) administration," Smotrich told an event in the Zionist entity's parliament, adding that preparations were underway to form a managing body that would oversee displacement. "This has the potential to create a historic change in the Middle East and for the (Zionist entity)," said Smotrich, who has repeatedly backed resuming the war against Hamas and has expressed support for re-establishing permanent Zionist presence in the territory.

The plan proposed by Trump would require finding countries willing to take in at least some of the Gaza Strip's 2.4 million people, Smotrich noted. "It involves identifying key countries, understanding their interests — both with the US and with us — and fostering cooperation," he said.

Implementing the plan, which other Zionist leaders have welcomed but Palestinians, Arab governments and some world leaders have condemned, would be a massive logistical operation, said Smotrich. "Just to give you an idea — if we remove 10,000 people a day, seven days a week, it will take six months," he said. "If we remove 5,000 people a day, it will take a year. Of course, this is assuming we have countries willing to take them, but these are very, very, very long processes."

Experts have said that forcibly removing Gazans would amount to a violation of international law. Just days after he took office, Trump triggered global outrage when he suggested the US take over Gaza and turn it into the "Riviera of the Middle East", while forcing its Palestinian inhabitants to relocate to neighbouring Egypt and Jordan. Last week, an Arab counterproposal to Trump's plan was put forward, with several Islamic nations and European governments endorsing it. The Arab proposal aims to rebuild Gaza without displacing Gazans, who endured more than 15 months of devastating war before a fragile ceasefire took effect on January 19.

Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said the Arab plan was a "good-faith first step from the Egyptians", even as other Zionist entity and US officials have expressed reservations. Smotrich said he was pushing for Trump's plan to happen, calling it "an opportunity to bring an end to the conflict" between Zionists and the Palestinians. Since the entity's creation in 1948 and "until today, we have been dragging this along for 76 years, searching for solutions ... With the current (US) administration, we will do much more." — AFP

## Iran's Khamenei slams 'bullying' after Trump threats

**TEHRAN:** Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday slammed what he described as bullying tactics a day after US President Donald Trump threatened military action. "Some bully governments — I really don't know of any more appropriate term for some foreign figures and leaders than the word bullying — insist on negotiations," Khamenei told officials after Trump threatened military action if Iran refuses to engage in talks on its nuclear program. "Their negotiations are not aimed at solving problems, they aim at domination," Khamenei said.

On Friday, Trump said he had written to Iran's supreme leader, urging new talks on the country's nuclear program but warning of possible military action if it refuses. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran had yet to receive any letter from the US president by Saturday. "We have heard of it (the letter) but we haven't received anything," he told state television.

Khamenei accused the bullying powers of deliberately setting new conditions they did not expect Iran to meet. "They are setting new expectations that they think will definitely not be met by Iran," he said, without naming the United States or referring to Trump's comments. On Friday, Araghchi told AFP in an interview that Iran would not negotiate under "maximum pressure".

The policy, reinstated by Trump on his return to the White House in January, saw him reimpose



TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with Iranian government officials in Tehran on March 8, 2025. — AFP

sweeping sanctions on Tehran during his first term after abandoning the nuclear accord formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Struck between Tehran and major powers in 2015, the deal had offered relief from sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear activities.

Tehran has in recent months engaged in diplomatic efforts with the three European parties to the deal — Britain, France and Germany — aimed at resolving issues surrounding its nuclear ambitions. However on Saturday, Khamenei condemned the three governments for "declaring that Iran has not fulfilled its nuclear commitments under the JCPOA".

"You say that Iran has not fulfilled its commitments under the JCPOA. Okay, have you fulfilled your commitments under the JCPOA?" he asked.

Khamenei recalled that Tehran had abided by the terms of the JCPOA for a whole year after Trump abandoned it in 2018 before beginning to roll back on its own commitments. He said there had been "no other way" following legislation by the Iranian parliament. Iran has since sharply ramped up its enrichment of uranium far beyond the limits set by the JCPOA. US officials now estimate that Iran could produce a nuclear weapon within weeks if it chose to do so. — AFP



## International

# Ailing pope thanks doctors as his condition improves

## Pope hopes violence in Syria ends 'with full respect for all ethnic and religious components of society'

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis, who is responding well to treatment for pneumonia, thanked his doctors and healthcare workers Sunday as he missed delivering a fourth straight Angelus prayer in person. The 88-year-old, in Rome's Gemelli hospital since February 14, issued a written Angelus in which he thanked those who volunteer to help others in need, praising their "closeness and tenderness". "I too experience the thoughtfulness of service and the tenderness of care, in particular from the doctors and healthcare workers, whom I thank from the bottom of my heart," he said. "We need this, the 'miracle of tenderness' which accompanies those who are in adversity, bringing a little light into the night of pain," he said in the text published by the Vatican.

The leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics spent time at the Gemelli before, notably for colon surgery in 2021 and a hernia operation in 2023. This hospitalization has been more serious, however, with Francis suffering several respiratory crises, prompting fears the road to recovery would be long, or might force the elderly pontiff to resign. On Saturday, the Vatican said the pope appeared finally to be responding well to treatment and had seen "a gradual, slight improvement", marking several days without crises.

Though the pope does not have a fever, his doctors want to see the more positive results "in the coming days" before giving a prognosis, an evening medical bulletin said. The next bulletin is expected

Monday afternoon.

Francis has been alternating rest, prayer and bits of work when he feels up to it. On Sunday morning he received Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state, and Edgar Pena Parra, a Venezuelan archbishop who is also a senior Vatican official. People who gathered in St Peter's Square on Sunday, where Francis would usually stand at a Vatican window to read the Angelus to crowds below, said his presence was sorely missed. "He is a wonderful person who has given so much and I hope that he can return as soon as possible", said Diana Desiderio, who volunteers with the civil protection agency in Pescara.

She and fellow volunteers are praying that Francis will "return to the window again and bring peace and serenity to everyone, because we need it", she told AFP. The pope ended the Angelus with his traditional call for peace in conflicts, "in particular in tormented Ukraine, Palestine, (the Zionist entity), Lebanon, Myanmar, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo".

He said he had "learned with concern of the resumption of violence in some areas of Syria: I hope that they cease definitively, with full respect for all ethnic and religious components of society". Catholics have also been gathering at the Gemelli hospital to pray for Francis or leave flowers, candles and cards. Giuseppe Antonio Perazzo, 74, was at the hospital for the second Sunday in a row, dressed



ROME: A man prays at the feet of a statue of John Paul II at the Gemelli Hospital where Pope Francis is hospitalized with pneumonia, in Rome, on March 9, 2025. — AFP

smartly in a suit and tie in the hope that the pontiff might appear at the window. A sign he propped up in sight of the windows of the pope's rooms urged

the Argentine pontiff — a notoriously headstrong patient — to "keep doing what the doctors and nurses tell you to do". — AFP

## Japan's worst wildfire in 50 years now under control

TOKYO: Japan's worst wildfire in more than half a century, which killed at least one person, has been brought under control, the mayor of the northern city of Ofunato said on Sunday. The fire had raged in the mountains around the rural region since February 26, killing at least one person, damaging at least 210 buildings and forcing more than 4,200 residents to flee their homes, local officials said. "Following an aerial survey, we assessed that the fire no longer posed the risk of further spread. I declare that the fire is now under control," Ofunato

Mayor Kiyoshi Fuchigami told a news conference.

The fire engulfed about 2,900 hectares (7,170 acres) — around half the size of Manhattan — making it Japan's largest in more than 50 years. It surpassed the 2,700 hectares burnt by a 1975 fire on Hokkaido island. Wet weather that began on Wednesday following a record dry period helped firefighting efforts.

Japan endured its hottest summer on record last year as climate change pushes up temperatures worldwide. Ofunato received just 2.5 millimeters (0.1 inch) of rainfall in February, breaking the previous record low for the month of 4.4 millimeters in 1967 and far below the average of 41 millimeters. The number of wildfires in Japan has declined since a peak in the 1970s. Wildfires in Japan tend to occur between February and May, when the air dries out and winds pick up. There have been around 1,300 a year in recent years. — AFP



OFUNATO: Firefighters walk amongst burnt trees as they battle a wildfire in Ofunato city of Iwate Prefecture, Japan in this photo taken on March 6, 2025. — AFP

## Dates a superfood...

Continued from Page 1

Headaches are a common result of low blood sugar levels and fasting. Dates can help alleviate headaches.

4. Dates can help with digestion: You can often experience nausea or an upset stomach in general when you start eating after fasting all day. By eating a few dates before you consume anything else, you can satisfy your hunger without overeating and causing yourself any discomfort. You can ease your body back into eating a normal meal, without overdoing it.

5. Dates are full of vitamins and nutrients: It is no wonder that dates are a significant part of Middle Eastern culture. They are jam-packed with essential vitamins and nutrients. Dates contain more potassium than a banana, and magnesium, iron, copper, phosphorus and calcium.

6. Dates and pregnancy: Research on date consumption during pregnancy has shown that women who eat six dates a day for 4 weeks had a shorter first stage of labor than women who do not eat dates.

Dates may be one of the superfoods that no home should be without! They are a source of folate (a salt or ester of folic acid) and iron. Dates contain the B vitamin folate, an important nutrient during pregnancy as it prevents serious birth defects such as spina bifida. Doctors recommend that pregnant women take folate in a folic acid supplement to reach the daily recommended amount of 600 mcg. Dates provide 15 mcg of folate per 100-gram serving.

Pregnant women are at a higher risk of iron-defi-

ciency anemia, and need twice the amount of iron as those who aren't pregnant. Severe iron-deficiency anemia can raise your chances of having a preterm or low-weight baby and developing postpartum depression.

The Noble Quran states that Mary (PBUH) was advised to eat dates after conceiving Jesus (PBUH) and before labor in order to ease childbirth and strengthen the body. Experiments have also shown that dates contain stimulants that strengthen the muscles of the uterus in the last months of pregnancy. This helps the dilation of the uterus at the time of delivery and reduces bleeding.

About Mary (PBUH) eating dates while pregnant, Almighty Allah says, translated as: "So, the birth pangs drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She said, 'O alas for me! Would that I had died before this and become a thing utterly forgotten!' Then (the angel) called to her, from beneath her: 'Oh, do not sorrow! Indeed, your Lord has already made flow beneath you a rivulet. Moreover, shake toward yourself the trunk of the date-palm and it will drop freshly ripened dates upon you. So, eat and drink and cool your eye..." (Maryam 19: 23-26)

Muslim scholars spoke about ripe and fresh dates and their benefit for woman. Ibn Al-Jawzi said in Zaad Al-Maseer: "The Salaf (our righteous predecessors) recommended ripe fresh dates for women during their postpartum bleeding, quoting the story of Maryam (Mary)." At the conclusion of the study, researchers discovered that the women who ate six dates a day for 4 weeks had a shorter first stage of labor, a higher mean cervical dilatation, and had intact membranes upon arrival at the hospital. (In other words, their cervix was riper for giving birth.)

Courtesy of Kuwaiti Society for Cultural Dialogue

According to the latest Department of Education figures, with several statewide measures also in place or under consideration. They are largely backed by teachers, with the National Education Association saying 90 percent of its members support policies banning phones during lessons.

"The biggest problem is that kids aren't in a place developmentally where they're able to handle the type of technology that we're talking about," said Sabine Polak, co-founder of the Phone-Free Schools Movement, which backs full-scale phone bans. Critics of the restrictions argue that educating children about the potential risks of social media and smartphone use is better than prohibition.

"The answer is not to just ban and put our heads in the sand," said Keri Rodrigues, president of the National Parents Union, which represents over 1,000 parent organizations in the United States. She compared efforts to ban phones to "abstinence education," noting that failing to properly teach children about complicated issues such as sex has failed in the past. "It's not effective, and frankly, it's dumb," Rodrigues told AFP. "What we need to do is equip our kids with the information, with the skills and the strategies they're going to need to navigate a digital future."

At the school in Virginia, Jones said the phone ban has not changed how he interacts with his device, still using it for games, social media and watching YouTube videos. His one complaint about his phone? "Nothing really, honestly. I mean besides the fact that it weighs a ton in my pocket." — AFP

## Syria leader urges unity...

Continued from Page 1

specifying who was committing them. Latakia province security director Mustafa Kneifati told the news agency: "We will not allow for sedition or the targeting of any component of the Syrian people."

Sharaa's Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which led the lightning offensive that toppled Assad in December, has its roots in the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda and remains proscribed as a terrorist organization by many governments including the United States. Since the rebel victory, it has moderated its rhetoric and vowed to protect Syria's religious and ethnic minorities.

The Alawite heartland has been gripped by fear of reprisals for the Assad family's brutal rule, which included widespread torture and disappearances. Social media users have shared posts documenting the killing of Alawite friends and relatives. The Observatory, which relies on a network of sources in Syria, has reported multiple "massacres" in recent

days, with women and children among the dead.

The Observatory and activists released footage showing dozens of bodies in civilian clothing piled outside a house, with blood stains nearby and women wailing. Other videos appeared to show men in military garb shooting people at close range. Rami Abdulrahman, the head of the observatory, told Reuters on Sunday that the death toll was one of the highest since a chemical weapons attack by Assad's forces in 2013 which killed some 1,400 people in a Damascus suburb.

During a sermon on Sunday, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch John X said Christians were among those killed, and called on Sharaa to "put a stop to these massacres... and give a sense of safety and security to all the people of Syria, regardless of their sects". The majority of those killed were "innocent, unarmed civilians" and not "regime remnants", he said.

Aron Lund of the Century International think tank said the violence was "a bad omen". The new government lacks the tools, incentives and local support base to engage with disgruntled Alawites, he said. "All they have is repressive power, and a lot of that... is made up of jihadist zealots who think Alawites are enemies of God." — Agencies

## US ends waiver for Iraq to buy...

Continued from Page 1

per day, and those that can afford it use private generators to keep appliances such as fridges running. Tehran also regularly cuts off its supply, worsening the power shortages that affect the daily lives of 46 million Iraqis.

Iraqi government spokesman Bassem Al-Awadi told state media on Saturday that the authorities had prepared "for all scenarios" regarding the waiver, including the use of gas platform vessels via a pipeline connected to power stations in the southern province of Basra. Iraq hopes to increase its natural gas production to help reduce dependence on imports, and has repeatedly stressed the need to diversify energy sources.

Last year it began importing electricity from Jordan and Turkey, and it also hopes to connect to the electricity grid of Gulf countries. The government's

plans also include recovering flared gas, which is natural gas produced during crude oil extraction. Gas flaring is the polluting practice of burning off excess gas during oil drilling. The government has made eliminating this a priority, and plans to halt it by the end of 2027.

The US has used the waiver review in part to increase pressure on Baghdad to allow Kurdish crude oil exports via Turkey, sources have told Reuters. The aim is to boost supply to the global market and keep prices in check, giving the US more room to pursue efforts to choke off Iranian oil exports. Iraq's negotiations with the semi-autonomous Kurdish region over the oil export resumption have been fraught so far.

"Iraq's energy transition provides opportunities for US companies, which are world-leading experts in increasing the productivity of power plants, improving electricity grids, and developing electricity interconnections with reliable partners," the spokesperson said. The spokesperson played down the impact of Iranian electricity imports on Iraq's power grid, saying, "In 2023, electricity imports from Iran were only 4 percent of electricity consumption in Iraq." — Agencies

## US schools slap bans on phones...

Continued from Page 1

hopes the ban will be gone by the time he starts eighth grade in September. "I like being able to go to my locker and call my parents. That's a big concern for me," he said, adding that some pupils have found ways to still use their devices — including by bringing a "dummy phone" to put in the pouch.

School principal Matthew Mough admitted that enforcing the ban — and winning over students — has proved challenging, though he said most follow the rules. "The majority of kids who have phones don't love it," he said. "However, if you dig deeper with them in the conversation, they will acknowledge that it's helped them remain focused." Mough said the phone ban has reduced classroom distractions, cyberbullying and instances of students meeting up to skip lessons.

Cell phone bans come alongside research suggesting that social media use increases the likelihood of mental illnesses like anxiety and depression in young people. Advocacy groups regularly cite these studies as justification for school phone bans, which have seen rare political consensus in a nation deeply divided on virtually every other political issue.

Around 76 percent of US public schools — from liberal California to conservative Florida — had some sort of ban on non-academic phone use, ac-

police officers patrolling Portcullis House and the parliamentary estate. Where were they today?" Conservative MP Ben Obese-Jecty posted on X. "On Monday there needs to be a full explanation to MPs and staff as to how this protester was able to evade security so easily."

On Friday night, pro-Palestinian protesters sprayed "GAZA IS NOT 4 SALE" in huge white letters on the lawn of US President Donald Trump's golf resort in Scotland. The Palestine Action group said it was a "direct response to the US administration's stated intent to ethnically cleanse Gaza". Police Scotland told AFP it was investigating after receiving a report of damage. — AFP

## Protester with Palestinian flag...

Continued from Page 1

Crowds gathered from behind a police cordon, with supporters chanting "Free Palestine" and "you are a hero". Police had closed off the surrounding area, including Westminster Bridge, while the Houses of Parliament cancelled tours. Westminster police later said all roads in the area had been reopened.

"Every day in Parliament I see dozens of armed



International

# Protesters rally on International Women's Day, fearing far right

'Trump, the masculinists, they make lots of noise but they're not as strong as we are'



ISTANBUL: Women march during a rally to mark International Women's Rights Day near Taksim Square, in Istanbul.



BRUSSELS: Participants hold placards and banners during a demonstration marking International Women's Rights Day in Brussels on March 8, 2025. — AFP photos

PARIS: Protesters took to the streets across the world Saturday to mark International Women's Day, demanding equal pay, political representation and an end to gender-based violence while voicing fears of rising repression. In eastern Ukraine, scores of demonstrators held a minute's silence to honor women killed defending the country from Russia's invasion. Many carried banners bearing the faces of the deceased. "Women are half of our society and we need to talk about what they do, what they are like, how they protect and what they do to make our country free and independent," activist Iryna Lysykova told AFP in Kharkiv.

Many of the women marching in European capitals including Paris, Berlin and Madrid said they feared the growing strength of reactionary political forces, including a resurgent far right. "It is coming now and we're taking backwards steps," said Dori Martinez Monroy, 63, in the Spanish capital. "We have to reclaim what has already been won, because women are the first to be targeted."

In Jakarta, one activist, Ajeng, accused the Indonesian government of budget cuts that were "making women lose their rights. "Women are killed, impoverished, criminalized," she said, as nearby protesters held up placards reading "This body belongs to me" and "Glory to the women of the working class". "Indonesian woman are fighting against the state for these reasons," she said.

**'Not over'**

Some demonstrators directed their ire at US President Donald Trump. In Paris, women from the Femen activist group marched topless with either the US or the Russian flag, marked with a swastika, painted on their chests. The Republican has



MEXICO CITY: A demonstrator throw a molotov cocktail towards a wall during a rally for the International Women's Day in Mexico City.



BUENOS AIRES: A woman takes snapshots of an installation, symbolizing support for those affected by domestic violence during a protest against President Javier Milei's government within the commemoration of the International Women's Day in Buenos Aires.

been accused of sexual abuse by multiple women, and his administration has been blamed for pushing through policies hostile to women. "This is a battle, it's not over," said 49-year-old Sabine, who was marching with her seven-year-old son in Paris, where organizers put turnout at around 250,000. Police gave a figure of 47,000. "We're going in the right direction: Trump, the masculinists, they make lots of noise but they're not as strong as we are," she told AFP.

In Argentina, thousands joined demonstrations across the country, with many criticizing President Javier Milei for policies including shuttering the min-

istry responsible for addressing gender violence and inequality. At the Berlin protest, some demonstrators held placards bearing messages including "Burn the patriarchy not the planet". One marcher, Steff Voigt, expressed her fears for the future. "I find it quite frightening how certain developments are reversing, how women's rights could simply be moving backward again, so to speak, because of the right. Especially in the USA," she said.

At the rally in Istanbul, Cigdem Ozdemir took aim at male violence against women and the Turkish authorities' declaration of 2025 as "The Year of the Family". "Since 2025 was declared 'The Year of

The Family', we as women have been confined to our homes," the psychologist lamented. "Today, we are here to make our struggle visible, to defend our lives against male violence, to defend our place in society and our rights."

In Mexico, where the UN says an average of 10 women are murdered every day, thousands marched in the capital, Mexico City. In Venezuela, around 150 protesters, most with their faces hidden for fear of reprisals from security forces, gathered in Caracas. Many called for the release of political prisoners held by the government of President Nicolas Maduro. — AFP

## Floods, mass power cuts as wild weather bashes Australia

SYDNEY: Gusts and torrential rain have blacked out more than a quarter of a million properties and swamped parts of Australia's east coast, officials said Sunday, with one driver confirmed dead and a dozen troops injured in the wild weather. After days hovering off the coast as a category 2 tropical cyclone and battering a 400-kilometre (250-mile) stretch of coastline, Alfred weakened into a tropical depression before making landfall on Saturday evening.

But as the remnants of the cyclone moved inland, hundreds of thousands of people remained without power on Sunday, and video images showed knee-high water pouring through roads in some of the worst-hit areas of southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales. A total of 23 centimeters (nine inches) of rain had descended on the Queensland resort of Hervey Bay in just a few hours, flooding homes and forcing emergency rescues in rapid waters, the state's premier, David Crisafulli, told a news conference.

The weather system "continues to pack a punch"



GOLD COAST: A general view shows erosion at Miami Beach after the sand was washed away during Tropical Cyclone Alfred on the Gold Coast on March 9, 2025. — AFP

as it moves inland, Crisafulli said, adding that more than 1,000 schools shuttered across the state would gradually start reopening on Monday. Utility companies said about 268,000 homes and businesses in southeast Queensland and another 12,500 in northeast New South Wales were still without power on Sunday afternoon. "Customers need to be prepared to be without power for several days," Queensland's Essential Energy said.

"The biggest challenges to getting power back on will be rising flood waters and swollen creek beds, fallen vegetation and mud slides impacting access

roads," it said in a statement. About 14,600 people are under emergency warnings related to the weather system in New South Wales, the state's emergency services said. "In the last 24 hours, 17 incidents have occurred as a result of people driving into flood waters," said emergency services deputy commissioner Damien Johnson.

"Not only is it a danger to yourself and your family, it is also dangerous as well for the volunteers, the emergency services workers that need to rescue you." A 61-year-old man's body was found Saturday, a day after his four-wheel-drive pickup truck was swept off a bridge into a river in northern New South Wales. He had escaped from the pickup and tried in vain to cling to a tree branch in the river before disappearing into the rapid waters, police said.

**Perilous weather**

In a separate incident Saturday, police said 13 soldiers were injured and taken to hospital when two army trucks rolled over during a deployment to clear roads near the flood-prone New South Wales city of Lismore. Twelve soldiers were still in hospital Sunday, two of them in a serious condition, New South Wales Premier Chris Minns told a news conference. "We wish a speedy recovery for all of those young soldiers," he said.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese warned that the weather was still perilous. — AFP

## China to tighten 'noose' around Taiwan if separatism escalates

BEIJING: China's military vowed Sunday to tighten its "noose" around Taiwan if separatism on the island escalated, warning independence proponents to step back from the "precipice". Beijing considers the self-ruled island of Taiwan to be part of its territory and has not ruled out using military force to claim it. China has increased pressure on Taiwan's authorities in recent years with military drills and frequent dispatches of fighter jets and naval vessels around the island. "The more rampant 'Taiwan independence' separatists become, the tighter the noose around their necks and the sharper the sword hanging over their heads will be," army spokesman Wu Qian said in an interview published by state broadcaster CCTV. "The PLA is a force of action in countering separatism and promoting reunification," said Wu, using an acronym for China's military. "You've ridden your steed to a precipice of a cliff, but behind you lies land — if you persist in taking the wrong course, you will meet a dead end," he warned.

The comments, made during China's "Two Sessions" annual political gathering, come days after Beijing announced a 7.2 percent increase to its defense budget in 2025. The increase, the same percentage as in 2024, will drive the rapid modernization of China's armed forces as strategic competition with the United States intensifies. It is above the government's annual GDP growth target of around five percent. Calling the increase "limited ... reasonable and stable", Wu said the extra cash would be used to develop "combat forces in new fields and with new qualities", and to enhance reconnaissance, joint strike and battlefield support capabilities.

China's military spending has been on the rise for decades, broadly in line with economic growth. The country has the world's second-largest defense budget, but lags well behind the United States, its primary strategic rival. Beijing's 1.78-trillion-yuan (\$245.7-billion) budget for this year is still less than a third of Washington's. — AFP

## Argentina port city 'destroyed' by big rainstorm, 13 dead

BAHIA BLANCA: Argentina's port city of Bahia Blanca has been "destroyed" after being pummeled by a year's worth of rain in a matter of hours, killing 13 and driving hundreds from their homes, authorities said Saturday. Two young girls — reportedly aged four and one — were missing after possibly being swept away by floodwaters in the wake of Friday's storm. The deluge left hospital rooms underwater, turned neighborhoods into islands and cut electricity to swaths of the city. National Security Minister Patricia Bullrich said Bahia Blanca was "destroyed."

The death toll rose to 13 on Saturday, up from 10 on Friday, authorities said. The mayor's office said more casualties were possible in this city of 350,000 residents, located 600 kilometers (370 miles) southwest of the capital Buenos Aires. The missing girls



BAHIA BLANCA, Argentina: People travel on a tractor through flooded waters the day after a heavy storm in Bahia Blanca, 600 km south of Buenos Aires on March 8, 2025. — AFP photos

"may have been carried away by the water," Bullrich told Radio Mitre. At least five of the victims died on flooded roadways, possibly after being trapped in their cars by fast-rising water.

The downpour, which began Friday morning, dumped more than 400 millimeters (15.7 inches) of rain in the area in just eight hours, "practically what



Damaged vehicles are pictured the day after a heavy storm in Bahia Blanca, Argentina.

Bahia Blanca gets in an entire year," provincial security minister Javier Alonso said. "This is unprecedented," he added. Tempers flared Saturday as Bullrich and Defense Minister Luis Petri tried to visit an affected neighborhood, with residents complaining they should have visited the area the previous night, according to a video shared on social media. — AFP



MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025

# Boursa Kuwait celebrates women's achievements on Int'l Women's Day

Bourse rings the bell for eighth consecutive year for women's empowerment, inclusion and equity



KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait joins more than 100 stock exchanges around the world in ringing the bell for women's empowerment for the eighth consecutive year on March 8, 2025



Dalal Jafaar Behbehani



Dalal Al-Dousari



Lujain Al-Wazzan



Badriya Al-Humaidhi



Haya Boodai

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait joined more than 100 stock exchanges around the world in ringing the bell for women's empowerment for the eighth consecutive year in commemoration of International Women's Day, reaffirming its commitment to women's empowerment and inclusivity.

The Bourse also hosted an event under the theme "Ring the Bell for Women: Empowerment, Inclusion, and Equity," which brought together distinguished female leaders from Kuwait's financial and business sectors who have excelled in their fields and continue to serve as role models in leadership and success. The event commenced with a welcome address by Boursa Kuwait Board member Dalal Jafaar Behbehani, followed by a panel discussion entitled "Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and Shapes the Future".

Moderated by Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, the session featured Boubyan Capital's Chief Executive Officer Badriya Al-Humaidhi, Chief Operating Officer of Al-Wazzan Educational Company Lujain Al-Wazzan and Haya Boodai, Board Member and Chair of the Cultural Committee at the Kuwait Economic Society.

The event concluded with female leaders from various Kuwaiti investment firms ringing the bell in celebration of women's strength, influence and ability to shape the broader economic landscape, showcasing the vital role stock exchanges can play in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Boursa Kuwait Board Member Dalal Jafaar Behbehani commented on the occasion, saying: "At Boursa Kuwait, we believe that recognizing women's contributions begins with fairness and equity—an ongoing commitment that extends beyond this annual celebration. Empowering women is essential to economic prosperity and sustainable growth, and investing in them fuels innovation, fostering a diverse society

capable of tackling present and future challenges."

She added, "For the eighth consecutive year, Boursa Kuwait joins over 100 stock exchanges worldwide in ringing the bell for women's empowerment, reaffirming its belief that active female participation is key to building strong, progressive societies. This initiative highlights the critical role of capital markets in driving sustainable development and underscores the seven 'Women's Empowerment Principles,' which offer practical guidance for listed companies and institutions to promote workplace and market equality and create opportunities for all without bias or discrimination."

"Through their active participation and leadership, Kuwaiti women have

Chief Executive Officer of Boubyan Capital, Badriya Al-Humaidhi, also spoke on the occasion and thanked Boursa Kuwait for organizing the event. "Women are a vital pillar of any thriving society, consistently demonstrating their ability to innovate and excel. I am grateful to Boursa Kuwait for the opportunity to share my humble experience with my sisters and colleagues and I hope it has contributed to their professional growth," she said.

"The concept of empowering and supporting women is not new to Kuwait, but one that is deeply rooted in our nation's history and present. Women have been an integral contributor to Kuwait's development at every stage. Today, we encourage the next generation of female leaders to equip

- Dalal Jafaar Behbehani: Through their active participation and leadership, Kuwaiti women have proven to be a driving force for progress and vital contributors to the shaping of our national economy

- Female leaders discuss their achievements and the challenges of the Kuwaiti capital market during engaging panel discussion

proven to be a driving force for progress, contributing to the growth of our national economy. Today, women represent approximately 51 percent of Kuwaiti employees in the public sector and 44 percent in the private sector—a testament to their exceptional capabilities across various industries. I invite you to celebrate this achievement for our beloved nation and recognize its ongoing efforts in this field, and I hope that this event serves as a springboard for the future, reinforcing the idea that true empowerment and equality begin with expanding opportunities, supporting female leadership, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and fairness," Behbehani said.

themselves with the knowledge and skills needed to elevate our country to even greater heights," said Lujain Al-Wazzan, Chief Operating Officer of Al-Wazzan Education Company.

Haya Boodai, Board Member and Chair of the Cultural Committee at the Kuwait Economic Society also commented, saying: "We gather today under the theme Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and Shapes the Future, with the hope of inspiring the next generation of female leaders to learn from our challenges and successes and continue the path that we have paved, empowering them to build on our experiences and take them to even greater heights to shape



a brighter future for Kuwait."

Dalal Al-Dousari, Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations at Gulf Bank, hailed the event, saying: "Today, we held an exceptional panel discussion entitled Women: A Success Story that Inspires Generations and Shapes the Future, which shed light on the achievements of some of the most inspiring women working in the Kuwaiti financial sector today. I would like to thank Boursa Kuwait for this wonderful initiative and I wish to express my deepest gratitude to our distinguished guests for enriching our discussions and sharing their motivational success stories."

Boursa Kuwait hosted this event in commemoration of International Women's Day, observed globally on March 8 each year. Held under the theme "Ring the Bell for All Women and Girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment", the event highlighted the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment and was organized in collaboration with the World Federation of Exchanges, UN Women, the UN Global Compact, the UN Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative and the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation.

The worldwide event addressed three key issues to accelerate women's empowerment, including the advancement of women's rights and challenging all forms of discrimination, promoting

gender equality and addressing systemic barriers to ensure inclusivity and empowerment as well as redefining power structures by ensuring inclusive access to education, employment, leadership, and decision-making spaces, and prioritizing opportunities for women to lead and innovate.

Boursa Kuwait is proud to be one of the first stock exchanges in the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Middle East to ring the bell for women's empowerment, a testament to its deep commitment to sustainable business practices, diversity and inclusion. The company has been a signatory of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Women's Empowerment Principles since 2019 and is a partner and supporter of the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchange (SSE) Initiative since 2017, where women's empowerment stands as a key pillar.

Boursa Kuwait's support of this initiative falls in line with its Corporate Sustainability (CS) strategy which stipulates ensuring initiatives apply and fall in line with the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) pillars, industry best practice standards and investor expectations, creating strong and sustainable partnerships that ultimately achieve success and allow Boursa Kuwait to leverage the capabilities and strengths of other companies or organizations that have experience in different fields, and integrating sustainability efforts with the company culture, to achieve longevity and an ongoing impact that is carried on and instilled in the day-to-day operations of the stock exchange.

As part of the strategy, Boursa Kuwait has launched many initiatives in partnership with local and international organizations, focusing on support for nongovernmental organizations and charity programs, financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women as well as environmental protection.



Business

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

# Dollar demand slips on trade war jitters

## US businesses edgy over potential impact of Trump tariffs

**KUWAIT:** The US ISM manufacturing survey fell to 50.3 in February, down from 50.9 and below the predicted 50.6, signaling the impact of tariff concerns on businesses. Employment entered contraction at 47.6, down from 50.3, while new orders dropped to 48.6 from 55.1. Adding to the Fed's concerns, the prices paid component surged to 62.4, significantly higher than 54.9 previously and well above the expected 56.0, indicating rising cost pressures in the sector.

**Services PMIs**

US economic data for February showed solid growth, driven by stronger-than-expected business activity. Both S&P Global and ISM service sector reports indicated continued expansion despite global challenges, including trade tensions under President Trump. The S&P Global Composite PMI rose to 51.6 (above the 50.4 forecast), signalling modest growth. The services sector led the improvement, with the S&P Global Services PMI at 51 and the ISM Services PMI at 53.5, both exceeding expectations. Key ISM subcomponents, including business activity (54.4), employment (53.9), and new orders (52.2), reflected strength. However, inflation remained a concern, as the ISM Services Prices index surged to 62.6, indicating rising costs amid global economic uncertainty with President Trump's economic policies.

**Non-farm employment change**

The US economy added 151K jobs in February 2025, up from a revised 125K in January but below the 160K forecast. Job gains were led by health care (+52K), financial activities (+21K), transportation and warehousing (+18K), and social assistance (+11K). Meanwhile, federal government employment fell by 10K, partly due to DOGE layoffs, with further impacts expected from federal spending cuts and tariffs. Retail trade lost 6K jobs, while employment remained mostly unchanged in sectors like construction, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and professional services. The US dollar index closed the week at 103.838.

**Economic conditions**

The eurozone economy grew by 0.2 percent in Q4 2024, slightly better than the previous estimate of 0.1 percent, matching Q3's growth. Household spending (+0.6 percent) was the main driver, alongside increases in government expenditure (+0.9 percent) and investment (+0.6 percent). However, exports and imports both fell slightly

**Rates - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0380	1.0380	1.0888	1.0832	1.0730	1.1000	1.0887
GBP	1.2583	1.2573	1.2944	1.2920	1.2800	1.3100	1.2920
JPY	150.48	146.94	151.31	148.03	145.00	149.00	146.50
CHF	0.9017	0.8765	0.9031	0.8795	0.8560	0.8900	0.8705

(-0.1 percent), and inventories dragged growth down by 0.2 percentage points. Germany (-0.2 percent) and France (-0.1 percent) saw GDP contractions, while Italy grew by 0.1 percent (revised up from 0 percent). Ireland showed a strong rebound (+3.6 percent vs a previously estimated -1.3 percent). Austria (-0.4 percent), Finland (-0.2 percent), and Malta (-0.7 percent) contracted, while Latvia stagnated. Meanwhile, Portugal (1.5 percent), Greece (0.9 percent), Spain (0.8 percent), Lithuania (0.8 percent), Estonia (0.7 percent), Slovenia (0.6 percent), Slovakia (0.5 percent), and Cyprus (0.3 percent) posted growth.

**Monetary policy**

The ECB cut its three key interest rates by 25 basis points, lowering the deposit facility rate to 2.50 percent, the main refinancing rate to 2.65 percent, and the marginal lending rate to 2.90 percent. This move reflects a reassessment of inflation and monetary policy transmission, making borrowing cheaper for businesses and households. Inflation is expected to average 2.3 percent in 2025, 1.9 percent in 2026, and 2.0 percent in 2027, with core inflation also nearing the 2 percent target. While domestic inflation remains high due to delayed wage and price adjustments, wage growth is slowing. Economic growth forecasts were revised down to 0.9 percent for 2025 and 1.2 percent for 2026, citing weak exports and investment. The ECB remains data-dependent, adjusting policy as needed to stabilize inflation around its 2 percent target without committing to a fixed rate path.

**FX update**

The euro surged above \$1.085, its highest level since November 5, and posted a 4.6 percent weekly gain, the strongest since March 2009. The rally was driven by Germany's fiscal reforms, the ECB's cautious stance on future rate cuts, and a weaker dollar amid concerns over Trump's trade war threats. Germany's major parties announced plans to reform the debt brake, allowing for increased defense spending and a €500 billion infrastructure initiative to stimulate growth. Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen proposed an €800 billion plan to boost defense spending which is highly expected to pass through parliament. The ECB's expected 25bps rate cut signaled a shift toward a less restrictive policy, with traders anticipating one or two more cuts this year. The EUR/USD currency pair closed the week at 1.0832.

**Australian economic conditions**

Australia's economy grew by 0.6 percent quarter-over-quarter in Q4 2024, accelerating from 0.3 percent in Q3 and surpassing the market expectation of 0.5 percent. This marks the 13th consecutive quarter of expansion and the fastest growth rate since Q4 2022, primarily driven by household spending, which rebounded 0.4 percent after being flat in Q3. Essential expenses such as rent and healthcare continued to rise, while private investment increased by 0.3 percent, supported by spending on engineering, electricity infrastructure, and mining. On the trade front, exports grew by 0.7 percent, while imports increased by 0.1 per-

cent, contributing 0.2 percentage points (ppts) to GDP. Government spending rose 0.7 percent, but at a slower rate than the 1.4 percent rise in Q3. Additionally, inventories added 0.1 ppts to GDP after three quarters of declines, and the household savings ratio rose to 3.8 percent from 3.6 percent. On an annual basis, GDP expanded 1.3 percent, exceeding the 1.2 percent forecast. The AUD/USD currency pair closed the week at 0.6305.

**Chinese exports**

China's exports grew by 2.3 percent year-on-year to \$540 billion in January-February 2025, falling short of the 5.0 percent forecast and slowing from December's 10.7 percent surge. The slowdown was attributed to rising trade tensions with the US and reduced activity during the Lunar New Year. Despite being the 10th consecutive period of growth, it was the weakest increase since April 2024. Exports rose for agricultural products (3.0 percent), mechanical and electronic goods (4.2 percent), home appliances (6.3 percent), integrated circuits (11.9 percent), and high-tech products (5.4 percent), while declining for steel (-3.9 percent), finished oil (-24.8 percent), and footwear (-18.3 percent). By region, exports increased to the US (2.3 percent), EU (10.6 percent), and ASEAN (5.7 percent) but declined to South Korea (-2.6 percent) and Australia (-4.8 percent). In 2024, China's total exports grew 5.9 percent to \$3.58 trillion. The USD/CNY currency pair closed the week at 7.2340.

**Japanese yen surges**

The Japanese yen strengthened past 148 per dollar, reaching a five-month high due to increased safe-haven demand amid escalating global trade tensions and uncertainty over US tariff policies. Concerns about the US economy led traders to move away from the dollar in favor of the yen and Swiss franc. Domestically, expectations of further interest rate hikes by the Bank of Japan (BOJ) supported the yen and Japanese bond yields. BoJ Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida indicated that rates could rise further if economic forecasts are met, signaling the early stages of Japan's exit from its ultra-loose monetary policy. However, he also noted that monetary conditions remain accommodative, with only limited reductions in Japanese government bond holdings. The USD/JPY currency pair closed the week at 148.03.

**Kuwait**

Kuwaiti dinar  
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30815.



شركة الصفاة للاستثمار  
AL SAFAT INVESTMENT COMPANY

### KUWAIT BOURSA WEEKLY REPORT

WEEK ENDED ON 6 MARCH 2025

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Market	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Premier Market	39,950	8,663.67	-0.3%	-0.3%	10.5%	761,892,798	268,214,672	46,049	17.8	1.6	81.3%
Main Market	9,209	7,544.88	2.9%	2.9%	9.2%	1,192,406,410	315,990,854	45,318	13.3	1.1	18.7%
All Share	49,158	8,119.35	0.2%	0.2%	10.3%	1,954,299,208	584,205,526	91,367	15.3	1.1	100%

Sector	M. Cap (KD ml)	Last Close	WTD %	MTD %	YTD %	Quantity Traded	Value Traded	No. of Trades	P/E	P/B	% of Total M. Cap
Banking	30,689	2,047.57	0.9%	0.9%	13.1%	316,595,989	140,007,630	19,612	20.2	1.5	62.43%
Basic Materials	519	919.83	-1.3%	-1.3%	0.9%	5,816,658	4,103,946	1,270	11.7	2.3	1.06%
Consumer Discretionary	1,620	2,365.58	1.8%	1.8%	11.4%	390,359,482	206,296,131	14,141	23.5	1.6	3.29%
Consumer Staples	312	1,028.16	-0.8%	-0.8%	3.0%	3,788,322	2,739,218	489	46.7	1.6	0.64%
Energy	273	1,343.42	-1.5%	-1.5%	13.0%	15,182,452	2,977,015	2,039	11.2	1.2	0.55%
Financial Services	5,379	1,544.96	-1.5%	-1.5%	2.3%	524,143,616	84,965,479	22,488	15.0	1.1	10.94%
Health Care	254	530.25	2.1%	2.1%	15.7%	12,783	9,239,844	19	26.8	1.6	0.52%
Industrials	2,550	752.59	-1.3%	-1.3%	4.0%	83,130,824	25,179,525	6,818	14.3	1.0	5.19%
Insurance	862	2,101.29	1.8%	1.8%	2.2%	2,948,768	469,649	371	9.9	1.1	1.75%
Real Estate	3,357	1,576.01	0.9%	0.9%	16.5%	534,718,526	91,366,014	17,016	16.5	0.9	6.83%
Technology	16	1,156.72	-28.4%	-28.4%	11.2%	28,791,679	5,187,743.01	2,225	NM	1.3	0.03%
Telecommunications	3,158	1,033.28	-3.3%	-3.3%	1.5%	39,499,125	19,450,264	4,326	11.3	1.3	6.42%
Utilities	169	405.26	-0.6%	-0.6%	2.0%	9,310,984	1,453,673	553	18.4	1.3	0.34%

**Top Gainers**

Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
SOOR	312	27.87%	14,101,471	4,341,700	2,353
OULAFUEL	549	25.34%	350,770,495	183,584,187	8,154
WARBACAP	318	17.34%	5,045,472	1,554,863	581
KBT	200	16.96%	284,682,783	54,472,323	5,057
CBK	848	14.60%	743,167	584,541	91

**Top Losers**

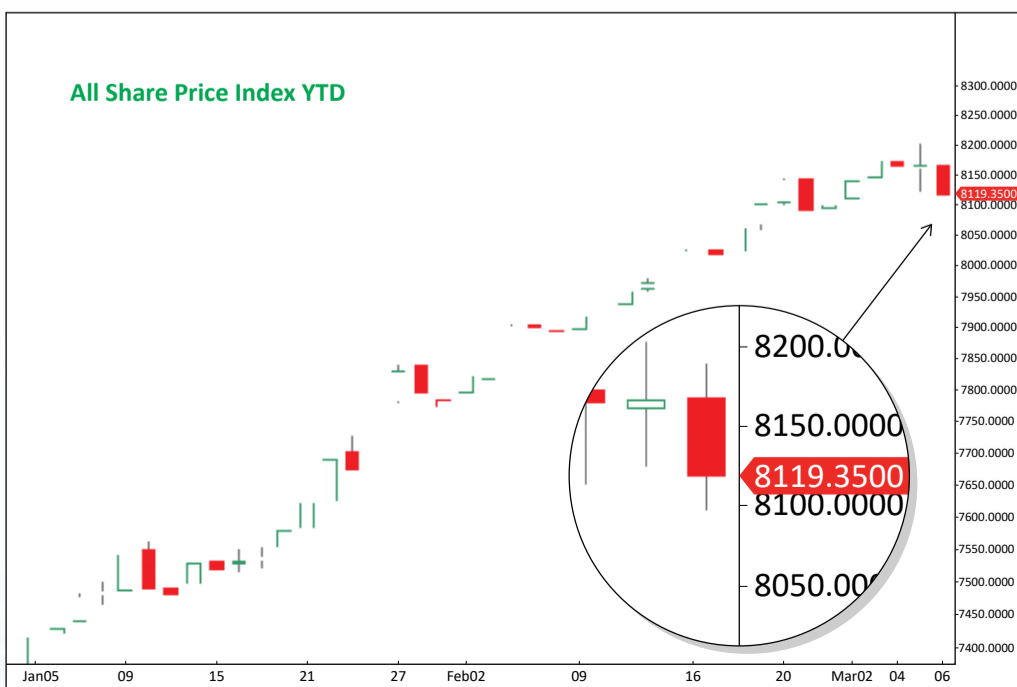
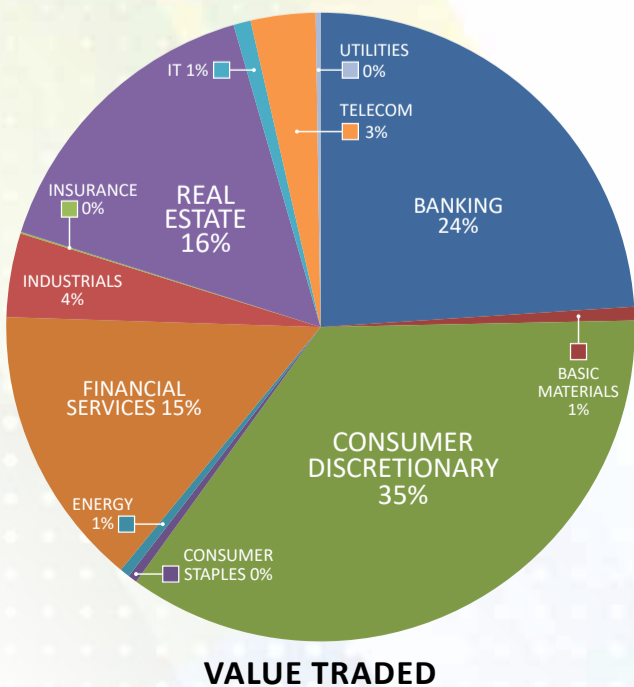
Stock	last Close	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
ASC	159	-28.38%	28,791,679	5,187,743	2,225
UNICAP	249	-14.14%	7,497,463	1,940,331	976
GIH	560	-13.71%	28,116	16,298	46
FTI	171	-12.76%	727,818	126,655	198
ALDEERA	383.0	-11.55%	3,997,795	1,714,799	581

**Top Volume**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
OULAFUEL	549	25.34%	350,770,495	183,584,187	8,154
KBT	200	16.96%	284,682,783	54,472,323	5,057
KPROJ	98	-1.01%	161,565,729	16,422,829	3,070
WARBABANK	227.0	-5.42%	72,971,676	17,145,401	3,242
KFH	801.0	0.00%	50,223,784	40,401,050	5,637

**Top Value**

Stock	Last	Change %	Volume	Value	Trades
OULAFUEL	549	25.34%	350,770,495	183,584,187	8,154
KBT	200	16.96%	284,682,783	54,472,323	5,057
KFH	801	0.00%	50,223,784	40,401,050	5,637
NBK	1,042	1.17%	29,826,074	30,926,201	3,243
WARBABANK	227	-5.42%	72,971,676	17,145,401	3,242



**Market Summary:**

- A slight drop in volume and value due to the long national holiday.
- The Premier Index retreated from the resistance level, while the Main Index is moving upwards.
- Technically, the All-Share Index closed at 8,119, with support levels at 8,081, 8,065, and 8,042, while resistance is at 8,121. The Premier Index closed at 8,663, with support levels at 8,599, 8,509, and 8,427, while resistance is at 8,682. The Main Index closed at 7,544, with support levels at 7,493, 7,452, and 7,410, while resistance is at 7,549.



## Business

# China-US trade war heats up as Beijing's tariffs set to take effect

## Retaliatory tariffs could hurt Trump's voter base, but allow room to hash out a trade deal

BEIJING: Trade tensions between the world's two leading economies are set to escalate on Monday, as Beijing begins levying tariffs on certain US agricultural goods in retaliation for President Donald Trump's latest hike on Chinese imports.

Since retaking office in January, Trump has unleashed a barrage of tariffs on major US trading partners, including China, Canada and Mexico, citing their failure to stop illegal immigration and flows of deadly fentanyl. After imposing a blanket 10 percent tariff on all Chinese goods in early February, Trump hiked the rate to 20 percent last week.

Beijing reacted quickly, its finance ministry accusing Washington of "undermining" the multilateral trading system and announcing fresh measures of its own. The moves will see fresh tariffs of 10 and 15 percent imposed on several US farm products, starting on Monday.

Chicken, wheat, corn and cotton from the United States will now be subject to the higher charge while soybeans, sorghum, beef, aquatic products, fruit, vegetables and dairy will face the slightly lower rate.

Analysts say Beijing's retaliatory tariffs are designed to hurt Trump's voter base while remaining restrained enough to allow room to hash out a trade deal. The increasing trade headwinds add to difficulties faced by Chinese leaders currently seeking to stabilize the country's wavering economy.

Sluggish consumer spending, a prolonged debt crisis in the vast property sector and high youth unemployment are among the issues now facing

policymakers. China's exports—which last year reached record highs—might not provide the same economic lifeline for Beijing as its trade war with Washington intensifies.

Experts say the full effects of the recent wave of tariffs have yet to be fully felt, though early signs already indicate a downturn in shipments. China's exports grew 2.3 percent year-on-year during the first two months of 2025, official data showed Friday, missing expectations and slowing significantly from the 10.7 percent growth recorded in December.

"As exports face downside risk with trade war looming, the fiscal policy needs to become more proactive," wrote Zhiwei Zhang, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management. The latest trade data came as Chinese officials congregated in Beijing for the country's largest annual political gathering, known as the "Two Sessions".

During a speech to delegates on Wednesday, Premier Li Qiang laid out the government's economic strategy for the year ahead, acknowledging "an increasingly complex and severe external environment".

Li also announced that the government's official growth target for the year ahead would be "around five percent"—the same as 2024. But many economists consider that goal to be ambitious, considering the hurdles facing China's economy.

"If fiscal spending starts to ramp up again soon then that could more than offset the near-term hit to growth from tariffs," wrote Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics.



BEIJING: A vendor shouts out his price for lettuce in a market in Beijing on March 9, 2025. — AFP

"However, given the wider headwinds... we still aren't convinced that fiscal support will be sufficient to deliver anything more than a short-lived boost," he added. — AFP

— AFP

## March 31 is last day to deposit, enter Gulf Bank's AIDanah KD 1 million draw

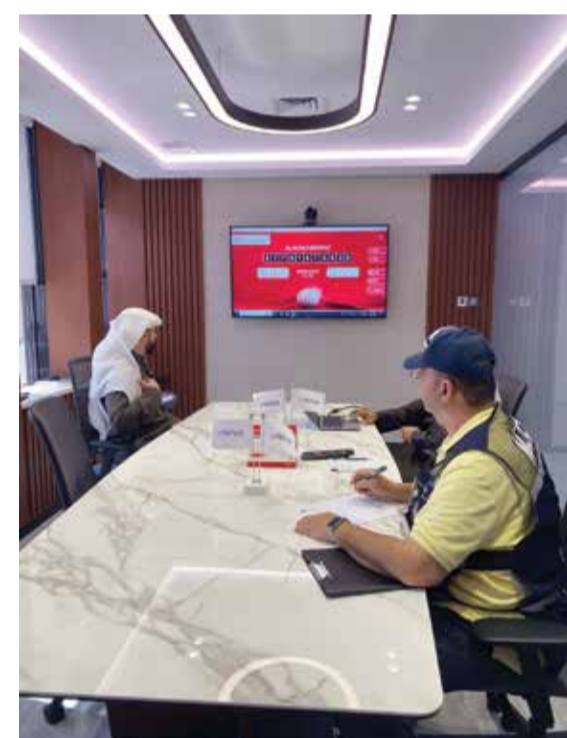
KUWAIT: As March comes to an end, so does the chance to enter Gulf Bank's AIDanah Millionaire semi-annual draw. March 31, 2025, is the last day for customers to deposit and secure their spot in the upcoming draw for a KD 1 million prize. The much-anticipated draw will take place on July 17, 2025, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ernst & Young.

Last month, Gulf Bank celebrated the winner of the AIDanah Millionaire grand prize in a spectacular event at Al-Khiran Mall. The KD 2 million grand prize—officially recognized by Guinness World Records as the world's largest bank-account-linked cash prize—was awarded to Gulf Bank customer Islam Mohamed Mahmoud Khattab. The 2025 AIDanah draw schedule offers multiple chances to win, featuring the grand prize of KD 2 million, the KD 1 million semi-annual prize, and two quarterly draws, each distributing KD 100,000 among 100 winners. Additionally, the monthly draw awards KD 1,000 to 10 lucky customers. In total, 282 winners will be rewarded through the AIDanah account this year.

AIDanah is one of Kuwait's most rewarding savings accounts, offering frequent prize draws and exclusive benefits. Gulf Bank recently increased the grand prize from KD 1.5 million to KD 2 million, earning a Guinness World Records title for the second time. Additionally, the quarterly draw has been enhanced, with the KD 100,000 prize now shared among 100 winners, rather than being awarded to a single customer. A standout feature of AIDanah is its unique loyalty program, which allows customers to carry over their chances of winning from one year to the next, increasing their potential rewards. To maximize their entries, customers must maintain a minimum deposit of KD 200 or increase their balance for more chances to win in the monthly, quarterly, and annual draws.

Meanwhile, Gulf Bank has announced the winners of the February monthly draw, with 10 customers each receiving KD 1,000. The winners are:

1. Ahmed Abdullah S Al-Enezi
2. Bassam Yaqoub Jassim Bo Al-Banat
3. Mohammed Ghloom Abbas Al-Bloushi
4. Ahmed AbdulMajeed Ismeal Moqadeam (minor)
5. Jarrah Naser Ibrahim Al-Sabah
6. Daniah Mubarak Abdullah Al-Mailam
7. Othman Ahmed Othman Al-Jeeran
8. Abdulaziz Mousa Ali Al-Majadi
9. Iqbal Hmoud Abdulaziz Al-Maqhawi
10. Adnan Mostafa Abd Al-Rasoul Al-Qallaf



AIDanah monthly draw under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



## Burgan Bank reveals winners of Kanz account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced Sunday the names of the Kanz account monthly draw winners, who will each take home a KD 2,000 cash prize. All Kanz customers who maintain a minimum balance of KD 200 for at least one week before the draw date are included in the draw, and their chances of winning increase with higher deposits.

### The 20 lucky winners are:

- Hagar Moustafa Mahmoud
- Neamah Mohammad Alajmi
- Bader Essam Bader Alessa
- Ali Ahmad Alawadhi
- Nedal Alhalabi
- Latifah Abdulaziz Mohammad
- Mohammad Fraih Alshammari
- Amani Abdulsattar Saedan
- Sabah Jaballah Alrefaei
- Ahmad Mohammad Alali
- Hajar Alsayegh & Kamel Alsayegh
- Samir Mahmoud Zayed
- Hassan Abbas Ghareeb
- Abdullah Hasan Abdullah
- Asif Abbas Choughe
- Saad Sonitan Hudaib
- Mohammad Fayed Alzarban
- Eqbal Hamad Alayyar
- Mateo Elferekh
- Sabera Burhan Ravat

In addition to the monthly draw of Kanz account, Burgan Bank also offers a semi-annual KD 500,000 prize and a mega annual prize of KD 1,500,000. Kanz Account is accessible to any individual and can be opened in Kuwaiti dinar or in major currencies (USD, EURO, GBP) with a minimum KD 200 requirement for account opening.

More information on opening a Kanz account, the draws or any of the bank's products and services, is available at any of Burgan Bank branches, through the Call Center at 1804080 and Burgan Bank website [www.burgan.com](http://www.burgan.com).



The King Abdullah Economic City on the Red Sea coast near Jeddah.



An artist's rendition of the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC).

## King Abdullah Eco City: Crucial global trade route project

JEDDAH: Situated on the Red Sea near Jeddah International Center, the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) is an important project aimed at boosting global trade and diversify the Kingdom non-oil income. The KAEC strategic location made it a unique due to the fact that around 13 percent of global trade would go through it, making one of the main gates linking markets in China through the Belt and Road initiative to developing markets in the African continent.

The KAEC's initial seed was planted in 2006 by late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud as part

after global prices soared to a record \$12,000 per ton in December.

"The farmers have never had it so good," Patrick Adebola, executive director at the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria, told AFP. More than a dozen local firms have expressed interest in investing in or expanding their production this year, while the British government's development finance arm recently poured \$40.5 million into Nigerian agribusiness company Johnvents. Nigeria is the world's seventh biggest cocoa bean producer, producing more than 280,000 tons in 2023, according to the most recent data compiled by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization.

The government has set an ambitious produc-

tion target of 500,000 tons for the 2024-2025 season, which would move it into fourth place behind Ivory Coast, Ghana and Indonesia. Adebola doubts Nigeria can reach the target this season, but he believes it is feasible in the next few years as there is rising interest in rehabilitating old plantations or establishing new ones.

He said Nigerian growers are much more exposed to the highs and lows of the global cocoa market than their peers in Ivory Coast and Ghana as prices are regulated in those countries. Cocoa futures contracts in New York have fallen from their December record but they remain high at more than \$8,000 per ton. Cocoa prices typically ranged between \$2,000 and \$3,000

city's industrial valley hosts over 100 companies from across the globe, solidifying its status as a focal point for economy, investments, and major industries.

With Saudi Arabia preparing to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup, the KAEC would be home for a grand football stadium, which could hold 45,000 spectators, providing a unique experience. The KAEC is linked to the Haramain High Speed Railway, taking passengers to Holy sites in Makkah and Madina in addition to Jeddah and King Abdulaziz International Airport. The King Abdullah Economic City aims to become a smart city via its advance infrastructure using fiber optics and advance telecommunication in addition to other technological advancements.

On the industrial level, the KAEC established the very first full assembly for automotive parts in the Kingdom, attracting global vehicle companies. The Saudi leadership recently announced the KAEC's King Salman Automotive Cluster, which is deemed as an important component for diversifying the Kingdom's non-oil income. — KUNA

before the recent surge.

"Individuals are going into cocoa production at every level... to make sure they also enjoy the current price," said Comrade Adeola Adegoke, president of the Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria.

Ivory Coast is by far the world's top grower, producing more than two million tons of cocoa beans in 2023, followed by Ghana at 650,000 tons. But the two countries had poor harvests last year as crops were hit by bad weather and disease, causing a supply shortage that sent global prices to all-time highs. Nigeria's cocoa has largely been spared so far from the worst effects of climate change, but expanding the crop could carry environmental risks. — AFP

## Nigeria seeks to cash in on soaring cocoa prices

ABUJA: Booming cocoa prices are stirring interest in turning Nigeria into a bigger player in the sector, with hopes of challenging top producers Ivory Coast and Ghana, where crops have been ravaged by climate change and disease. Nigeria has struggled to diversify its oil-dependent economy but investors have taken another look at cocoa beans



MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025

## Architect's joy as London Eye still sparkling after 25 years



Visitors look out from a pod of the London Eye as they enjoy the view of the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known by the name of the clock's bell "Big Ben", and the Palace of Westminster, home to the Houses of Parliament. — AFP photos



Visitors look out from a pod of the London Eye as they enjoy the city panorama with the river Thames in central London.



The London Eye taken from inside one of the attraction's capsule in central London.



British architect of the London Eye Julia Barfield, poses for a portrait inside a London Eye capsule, in London.



Visitors take photographs of the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known by the name of the clock's bell "Big Ben", and the Palace of Westminster, home to the Houses of Parliament, as they enjoy a tour on the London Eye in central London.

Floating high above the London skyline aboard her most famous creation, architect Julia Barfield is still giddy that the London Eye ferris wheel has become a symbol of the city. The initial priority was finding a breathtaking way to see the British capital, she told AFP inside one of its 32 glass pods as it drifted against the backdrop of the Houses of Parliament.

Built to mark the turn of the millennium in 2000, it has since established itself as one of the country's most visited paid attractions. Each year around 3.5 million tourists take in its panoramic views on half-hour trips. Stamped on souvenirs, sketched by street artists and snapped in an endless stream of selfies, the Eye has become nearly as big a landmark as Big Ben. But its future wasn't always so assured.

Barfield said she and co-architect David Marks, her late husband, spent years scrambling to get funding for the ambitious project, while several nail-biting construction hitches threatened to derail their vision.

### 'How did they do that?'

Back at the turn of the millennium, when Londoners were talking about the Y2K computer bug scare and Britney Spears' "Baby One More Time" had been the year's best-selling single, the Eye was the largest ferris wheel in the world. It was originally meant to be a temporary, five-year installation, and had already been turned down in a competition seeking designs for a millennial landmark.

But the two architects rallied support and decided to build it anyway, rushing to complete the project in the years before the turn of the millennium. "I would never have predicted that it could be still here in 25 years, still taking people up to celebrate London - which is basically what the project was all about," Barfield told AFP.



An aerial view of the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known by the name of the clock's bell "Big Ben", and the Palace of Westminster, home to the Houses of Parliament, taken from inside a London Eye capsule in central London.

Similar observation wheels are now a fixture in cities around the world, but even today the Eye's cantilevered design stands out, wowing spectators on the South Bank where the 120-metre-wide wheel leans at an astonishing angle over the Thames. The architects had always hoped to build a feeling of excitement into the structure. Barfield said she wanted visitors to say: "Wow, how did they do that?" But the unusual design required a number of innovations, including special curved glass for the pods brought in from Venice.

At one point, parts were floated up the River Thames

and builders worked on the water to assemble the giant wheel. With techniques previously used to set up North Sea oil rigs, it was slowly hoisted upright - but the cables broke loose and the project had to be delayed.

Other technical problems meant the public had to wait a few months to try it out. But in March 2000 the Eye joined a wave of new buildings in the British capital to welcome the dawn of a new era - including the Millennium Dome, the Millennium Bridge and the Tate Modern gallery. "I don't know that it would have happened at any other time," Barfield said.



People queue for the London Eye in central London.

### 'All the city, but slowly'

Today, at £42 (\$53) for a standard on-the-day ticket, some argue the Eye is prohibitively expensive. But visitors fresh from taking a leisurely arc over the city told AFP the ride was well worth it. "It was impressive," said 13-year-old Peruvian tourist Leonardo Manuel, visiting Europe for the first time with his family. "Coming to London was one of my dreams. We could see all the city, but slowly - we could take a moment to see it." — AFP

## Eurovision chiefs promise 2025 show 'all about surprises'

Eurovision organizers promised Tuesday that the 2025 edition of the song contest will be all about surprises, with two months to go before show-time. The Swiss city of Basel is hosting this year's edition of the glitzy extravaganza, one of world's biggest annual live television events. The kitsch celebration is being staged at the St. Jakobshalle indoor arena, with the semi-finals on May 13 and 15, and the final on May 17.

Organizers are still configuring the set to cram in as many fans as possible - and are leaving people guessing as to whether a certain megastar will grace the stage. "Every year, the Eurovision song contest is a very special and unique experience," Eurovision 2025 co-executive producer Moritz Stadler told AFP. "Eurovision is only about surprises," he said.

"We started last May with only crazy ideas. We made crazy ideas concepts in December. And now since December, we really try to reach what we have imagined in those crazy ideas. So it's all about surprises." Singing "The Code", Swiss vocalist Nemo's 2024 Eurovision victory in Malmo, Sweden gave Switzerland the right to host



ESC 2025 executive producers Moritz Stadler (left) and Reto Peritz pose during a press conference, just over two months before the 2025 edition of the Eurovision Song Contest in Basel on March 4, 2025. — AFP photos

this year's edition. The Swiss won the inaugural song contest in 1956, then triumphed again when Canada's Celine Dion competed for the Alpine nation in 1988, launching her career internationally.

Dion's show-stopping star turn closed the Paris 2024 Olympics opening ceremony. But Stadler was tight-lipped about whether she might appear in Basel. "Celine Dion and the Eurovision Song Contest in Switzerland go together. That's clear. Now, will she be in Basel? Will she be in the show or not? There are plenty of possibilities and we're working on them," he said.



This aerial photograph taken in Basel on March 4, 2025 shows the St. Jakobshalle Arena which will host the 2025 edition of the Eurovision Song Contest in May.

### 'Pushing the walls'

The arena stage design is inspired by Switzerland's mountains and linguistic diversity, while the signature music for the show combines yodeling, a Basel drum corps, dulcimers and alphorns. The first wave of 42,000 tickets sold within 20 minutes, with 250,000 devices in the waiting queue. The team are still finalizing the arena layout, "pushing the walls" to fit as many people in as possible, said Stadler. "For us, it's extremely important that the Eurovision Song Contest remains the biggest entertainment show on Earth," he said. "This is what we

work for. This is what you will see on screen. This is how we will show Switzerland to the world, to all those 180 million-plus people."

### Carnival spirit

Beat Lauchli, the host city project leader, said Basel's location bordering France and Germany, its cultural traditions and medium size made it well-placed to welcome Eurovision and its colorful army of devotees. "People living in Basel have quite an open mind and are ready to welcome Eurovision fans," he told AFP.

Basel hosts one of Europe's best-known carnivals - starting this year on Monday - and Eurovision is hoping to draw on the carnival spirit, its creativity, and its sense of a place that does not take itself too seriously. The city has put 35 million Swiss francs (\$39 million) into hosting Eurovision and is currently on budget. Lauchli said Liverpool recouped about 60 million euros (\$63 million) from hosting the 2023 edition and Basel hopes to see similar returns.

Israel's participation in last year's event in Sweden attracted pro-Palestinian demonstrations and Lauchli said Basel would do "whatever we can so that everybody feels safe and secure with us". A survivor of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack will represent Israel in Basel. When Hamas militants killed over 370 people at the Nova music festival, Yuval Raphael survived by hiding under a pile of bodies. — AFP



# ELIE SAAB AND HERMES:

## Felt takes center stage at Paris Fashion Week

French brand Hermes put felt at the heart of its Fall-Winter collection at its Paris Women's Fashion Week show on Saturday in a beige-toned setting resembling a labyrinth. The label sent out models in fitted designs with sharp cuts, small belts accentuating the waist and jackets with padded shoulders, bucking the oversized trend seen on many other catwalks over the last week.

Felt appeared first in mica grey or slate grey, paired with leather at the purpose-built venue in central Paris that was shaped like a horseshoe and decked out in brown felt. The advantage of felt, which other brands like Marie Adam-Leenaert have also highlighted this Fashion Week, is "being able to work it like leather, cut it however you want", explained the house's designer, Nadege Vanhee. -The collection also featured short biker-style jackets and a bomber jacket.

At Vivienne Westwood on Saturday, creative director Andreas Kronthaler put British tailoring and the brand's trademark tweeds at the heart of the collection, declaring there was "nothing more sexy than a suit". The jackets in muted greens, greys and mauve were large to the point of oversized with broad shoulder pads, paired with long ties that dragged on the floor. The unisex show also featured male models in chunky pumps and over-the-knee heeled boots with heels, underlining the growing convergence between men's and women's fashion.

The appearance of several mountain outfits also pointed to the growing interest of luxury labels in the high-end ski apparel market. One of the other big trends of the last week -- fake fur -- was clearly on show at Saturday's show by Lebanon-based Elie Saab. French designer Ludovic de Saint Sernin unveiled what he called a more "mature" collection designed for both work and all-night dancing. "You can be as talented, strong, and serious as possible, but you can also be sexy while doing it," he said. — AFP



A model presents a creation by Elie Saab.

Models present a creation by Elie Saab.

Italian model Valeria Buldini presents a creation by Elie Saab.

A model presents a creation by

US model Alex Consani presents a creation by Hermes for the Womenswear Ready-to-wear Fall-Winter 2025/2026 collection as part of the Paris Fashion Week, in Paris. — AFP photos





## Thanima Kuwait holds iftar 'Sauhrudathanima 2025'

Thanima Kuwait hosted the annual iftar program 'Sauhrudathanima 2025' at the United Indian School, with a social message of brotherhood and tolerance. Civic leaders from various sections of the society and members of the Thanima Advisory Committee attended the event. The function, presided over by iftar program convener Geomon Joseph was welcomed by Thanima senior core member Babuji Bathery and Thanima general convener Jojimon

Thomas delivered the introductory speech. Father Dr Biju George and Vibeesh Thikkodi delivered the social message. Al-Amin Sullami delivered the Ramadan message. Considering the importance of Women's Day, Usha Dileep, convener of Women's wing of Thanima was honored for her comprehensive achievement of gaining the position of chief editor for the magazine of Asian Tug-of-War Federation. Awards were handed over to the Chil-

dren's Thanima members Arpita Ann Joji, Denzel Dominic, Emmanuel Joseph Geo, Noel Thomas Alex and Pranav Sivakumar, who are leaving Kuwait for higher studies in India. Binoy Abraham, joint convener of Thanima, expressed vote of thanks. Thanima advisory members; Mathew Varghese, Hamsa Payyannur and Afzal Khan were also present. Event was coordinated under the leadership of Jacob Varghese and Dominic Antony.



## KEA Fahaaheel unit holds blood donation camp

In a heartwarming display of solidarity and social responsibility, the Fahaaheel unit of the Kasaragod Expats Association (KEA) in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Blood Donors Kerala-Kuwait Chapter (BDK), organized a blood donation camp on February 28, 2025. The event, held at the Adan Blood Transfusion Center, was part of the celebrations marking Kuwait's national days, a momentous occasion for the people of Kuwait.

The blood donation camp was not just a medical activity, but was an initiative to strengthen community ties. It symbolized the spirit of giving and community solidarity, as residents from all walks of life came together for a noble cause - saving lives.

In total, 50 generous individuals donated blood, contributing to the critical need for blood in Kuwait's hospitals and healthcare system. The event not only helped save lives but also



helped raise awareness about the importance of regular blood donations, especially in times of emergencies.

The event kicked off with a formal inaugural session. Praveen Kumar, representing BDK, began the proceedings with a welcome note, emphasizing the significance of blood donation and its role in fostering a spirit of unity and cooperation among expatriates and citizens alike. The inauguration ceremony was led by Dr George P Alex, the president of IDAK, who spoke about the importance of such humanitarian efforts in bridging the gap between communities and promoting collective responsibility to-

wards the welfare of society. The session was presided over by Murali Vazhakkodan, the president of KEA Fahaaheel unit, who thanked all the volunteers and organizations for their tireless work in organizing the event. The formal part of the event was enriched by the words of appreciation from key figures in the community. Muhammed Kunhi CH, Aziz Thalankara, Rajan Thottathil of BDK, Srenivasan, Nalinakshan, Ashraf Kuchanam, Surendran Mungath, Sudhakaran Peria, and Sudheer Madikkai all took turns to congratulate the donors, the volunteers and the organizers for making the event a resounding success. The event

was a clear demonstration of efficient organization and teamwork. Volunteers from both KEA and BDK worked tirelessly to ensure that the camp ran smoothly. They assisted the donors at every step of the process - from registration to post-donation care. Their seamless support ensured that the blood donation camp was not only efficient but also comfortable for all participants.

As the camp concluded, a vote of thanks was delivered by Radhakrishnan Chemeni, who expressed gratitude to all the donors, volunteers, and organizers for their selfless contributions.

For those interested in organizing future blood donation camps or who may require blood during emergencies, BDK Kuwait is available to provide assistance. Organizations or patients in need can reach out to BDK Kuwait at the following contact numbers: 90041663, 96602365, 99811972.

## Radio Kuwait Urdu Service marks national days with special interview

In celebration of Kuwait's 64th National Day and 34th Liberation Day, Radio Kuwait Urdu Service hosted a special interview with internationally certified writer and record holder Mahammad Sami Shaik. The interview highlighted Mahammad Sami Shaik's extraordinary achievements, including publishing three books in just 300 days.

Conducted by RJ Nida Mirza and Razia Ashraf, the interview offered listeners an inspiring look at Mahammad Sami Shaik's literary journey. Engineer Barkat Khan provided technical support throughout the broadcast, while Aboobacker Payyoli coordinated the program to ensure its smooth execution.

The interview was held under the guidance of Sheikha Shejoun Al-Sabah (Director of Programs, Foreign Services) and Shejoun Al-Marshoud (Supervisor of Programs, Foreign Services), who praised Mahammad Sami Shaik's commitment to raising social awareness through his writing. Broadcasting on FM 93.3 and AM 963, the program allowed



audiences to celebrate Kuwait's national festivities and gain insight into the accomplishments of a promising young author.

Radio Kuwait Urdu Service remains dedicated to delivering quality programming that uplifts and informs, particularly by featuring emerging talents like Mahammad Sami Shaik. The success of this special interview underscores the station's commitment to cultural enrichment and fostering both local and international literary achievements.



## KALA Kuwait to host literature festival

Kerala Art Lovers Association (KALA) Kuwait has formed an organizing committee to conduct a literary and cultural festival in Kuwait in April. In this regard, a logo for the festival was shortlisted and finalized out of several logos that were received from the Kuwaiti expatriate community. The selected logo was designed by M A Sajeer, a KALA Kuwait member of Abbasiya central unit.

The meeting to form the organizing committee was held at Mangaf KALA Center and was presided over by its president. General secretary T V Hikmat outlined the details of the festival. R Naganathan, Jyothidas and Jawahar were elected as the patron of the organizing committee while Preman Illath was elected as the chairman. Vice chairmen are Sunil K Cherian, Dharmarajan Madappally and Shibu Philip. General convener of the event is Manikandan Vattamkulam and conveners are Thomas Selvan and Ashalatha Balakrishnan. Program committee convener - Sanal G, Finance - Manu, Stage & Sound - Nishanth, Volunteer & Food - Naveen, Registration - Jithin Prakash, Stationery - Justin (Abbasiya), Media & Publicity - Majith, Reception - Anoop Mangat, and as the session conveners, Story: Dilin, Poetry: Manoj Kumar, Novel: Joby Baby, Media: Sreejith, Artificial Intelligence: Ajith Pattamana were also selected. In addition, a 77-member executive committee consisting of the members of the central committee of KALA and the four regional presidents was also elected. The meeting was also attended by the secretary of the literary wing, Manikan-



dan Vattamkulam, and the secretary of the Fahaaheel region Sajin Murali. The KALA Kuwait Literature Festival (KKLF) will be held on April 24 and 25, 2025. Apart from Kuwait, renowned writers and speakers

from Kerala and from various other diaspora countries are expected to participate in the festival. Joint secretary Praseed Karunakaran welcomed the gathering and Preman Illath proposed a vote of thanks.

## Entries invited

The Kala Kuwait Literature Festival (KKLF) will be held in Kuwait on April 24 and 25 under the auspices of Kerala Art Lovers Association - Kala Kuwait. In connection with this, the MT Literary Award, in memory of the great Indian writer late M T Vasudevan Nair, will be presented to writers from the GCC countries. The award will be given to story collections published in Malayalam in the first edition between January 2022 and December 31, 2024. Three copies of the short story collection must be submitted before March 30 to Sudarsanan K K, Kalathil House, Andhakaranazhy P O, Patanakkad, Cherthala. Alappuzha - 688531, Phone: 0091 9446681286, 8547159349. The award consists of Rs 50,000 and a plaque. The award will be presented at the KKLF venue.

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## Sports

# Tatum dominates as Celtics hold off Lakers; James injury scare

## Golden State Warriors extend their unbeaten streak to four games with victory over Detroit Pistons

LOS ANGELES: Jayson Tatum scored 40 points as the Boston Celtics halted the Los Angeles Lakers' eight-game unbeaten streak with a statement 111-101 victory in their heavyweight NBA showdown at TD Garden on Saturday. The latest instalment of the most iconic rivalry in basketball was billed as a potential NBA finals preview, pitting the defending champion Celtics against a resurgent Lakers line-up led by LeBron James and Luka Doncic. But after a closely-fought first half where both sides went toe-to-toe before Boston edged into a four-point lead at the break, the game pivoted when the Celtics locked down the Lakers offense in a lopsided third quarter.

A disappointing loss for the Lakers was compounded by an injury to James, who left the game in the fourth quarter and did not return with what was described as a groin problem. Tatum, who finished with 40 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists, said the return of Jrue Holiday had been pivotal for the Celtics. "We missed Jrue," Tatum told ESPN. "It was his first game back in a while, and we're a totally different team when Jrue's out there. "There's so many things he does at both ends that we not always show up on the stat sheet. But much better when he's out there."

Tatum's fourth 40-point game of the season was backed by 31 points from Jaylen Brown, while veteran Al Horford finished with 14 points and Derrick White 10. The Lakers challenge meanwhile was led by Doncic, the Slovenian star who finished with 34 points including five three-pointers. James added 22 points before his departure in the fourth quarter.

After leading by four at half-time, the Celtics rapidly surged into a double-digit advantage, stanching the flow of Lakers' points with suffocating defense that forced a string of turnovers from the visitors.

### Warriors hold off Pistons

At the other end, Tatum kept the Celtics score ticking over with 10 points in the third quarter as Boston pulled clear, outscoring the Lakers 29-13 to lead 87-67 heading into the final quarter. Doncic found his range and threatened to spark a remarkable comeback as the Lakers got to within four points at 99-95, but Boston responded with back-to-back three-pointers that restored the Celtics 10-point cushion to effectively ice the game.

Boston improved to 46-18 to remain second in the Eastern Conference, 7.5 games behind leaders Cleveland. The Lakers meanwhile dropped down to third place in the Western Conference with a 41-22 record. Elsewhere on Saturday, the Golden State Warriors extended their unbeaten streak to four games with a pulsating 115-110 victory over the Detroit Pistons in a game that was briefly interrupted by a fire alarm at the Chase Center. Stephen Curry scored 31 points while new recruit Jimmy Butler added 26 with nine rebounds and five assists.

But it was the veteran Draymond Green who helped shepherd the Warriors to victory, draining a crucial 26-foot three-pointer with 35 seconds remaining that put Golden State into a 110-108 lead.

Curry then slammed the door with four straight free throws in the closing seconds as the Warriors improved to 36-28 in the Western Conference table. Detroit meanwhile dropped to 35-29 in the Eastern Conference standings.

In other games, Paolo Banchero scored 29 points as the Orlando Magic took down the in-form Milwaukee Bucks 111-109 on the road. Giannis Antetokounmpo scoring 37 points in vain for the hosts.

In Atlanta, Trae Young's 36 points helped the



BOSTON: Gabe Vincent #7 of the Los Angeles Lakers and Jaylen Brown #7 of the Boston Celtics collide as Luka Doncic #77 of the Los Angeles Lakers looks on during the second half at TD Garden on March 08, 2025 in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

Hawks edge the Indiana Pacers 120-118. In Houston, Dillon Brooks scored 27 points with Alperen Sengun

adding 20 as the Rockets pulverized the New Orleans Pelicans 146-117. — AFP

## Djokovic crashes out at Indian Wells, Alcaraz sails through

INDIAN WELLS: Five-time champion Novak Djokovic tumbled out of the Indian Wells ATP Masters on Saturday, falling in his first match to lucky loser Botic van de Zandschulp as two-time defending champ Carlos Alcaraz advanced.

"No excuses for a poor performance," 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic said after 37 unforced errors in a 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 defeat. "It doesn't feel great when you play this way on the court," he added. "But congratulations to my opponent—just a bad day in the office, I guess, for me."

Djokovic is just the latest in van de Zandschulp's string of superstar victims. He stunned Alcaraz at the US Open last year before beating Rafael Nadal in Davis Cup in what proved the Spanish great's last match.

"I think I kept my cool during the whole match," said van de Zandschulp. "I know if I go into the match and lose my cool, especially against the big players, it's going to be a really tough day. That's always one thing I'm trying to do well."

After 14 unforced errors in the first set, Djokovic cleaned things up in the second, grabbing a quick break on the way to a 3-0 lead. Djokovic pumped his fist after belting a forehand winner to the corner for his first break chance of the match and after consolidating the break nodded his head in satisfaction.

The rallies remained tense affairs and Djokovic's frustration was clear at times, but after he was broken when serving for the set he closed it out on his next service game. It was only a brief respite. Van de Zandschulp kept the pressure on both from the baseline and at the net and Djokovic's errors began to pile up again.

Van de Zandschulp took control with a break for 3-1, reeling off the last five games as Djokovic was unable to stop the bleeding. "The first three games, four games of the third set were quite close," Djokovic, seeded sixth, said. "Had my chances. Was just some awful mistakes."

Italian Matteo Arnaldi sprung another upset, beating seventh seed Andrey Rublev 6-4, 7-5. Djokovic and Rublev followed top seed Alexander Zverev and fourth seed Casper Ruud as second-round casualties.

### Alcaraz relaxed and ready

With Zverev out and world number one Jannik Sinner serving a three-month drugs ban, world number three Alcaraz is the highest seed left in the men's draw. Alcaraz, trying to join Djokovic and Roger Federer as the only men to win three straight Indian Wells titles, eased into his defence with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over France's Quentin Halys. He admitted he was feeling some nerves to start the match, but they evaporated amid a strong all-around performance.

One early break staked Alcaraz to the first set. He roared to a 4-0 lead in the second behind a formidable service display and wrapped up the win in 67 minutes. "I was nervous at the beginning of the match," he told a supportive crowd. "The first match is never easy so I was trying to be focused on my game."

"I just tried to be relaxed, as relaxed as I can. Can always be better, but I'm ready for the (next) round and excited." Women's world number one Aryna Sabalenka opened her campaign with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over rising US talent McCartney Kessler.

Madison Keys, who denied Sabalenka a third straight Australian Open title as she claimed her long awaited first Grand Slam in Melbourne, subdued hard-hitting Russian Anastasia Potapova 6-3, 6-0 in her first match since then.

Americans Taylor Fritz and Coco Gauff—seeded third in their respective draws, both advanced. Fritz, the 2022 men's champion, defeated Italian qualifier Matteo Gigante 7-5, 6-3. Gauff survived 21 double faults to claw out a 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4) victory over Japan's Moyuka Uchijima. — AFP

## France lose Dupont but 6 Nations title on cards after thrashing Ireland

DUBLIN: France will have to seal the Six Nations title without injured talisman Antoine Dupont but Saturday's devastating display in beating Ireland 42-27 is significant according to No 8 Gregory Alldritt as it showed they can triumph in "huge matches."

The manner of how French captain Dupont suffered a suspected cruciate ligament injury in a ruck in the first-half left both Alldritt and head coach Fabien Galthie seething. Both claimed the scrum-half widely considered to be the best player in the world was targeted by lock Tadhg Beirne, though, the referee Angus Gardner and the Irish interim head coach Simon Easterby begged to differ.

"When you return to the changing room and you see one of your best friends in that state it rips your guts up," said Alldritt. "It did, though, put fire in our bellies for the second-half." Whatever the disciplinary outcome as France have cited Beirne and prop Andrew Porter, who they also claim is responsible, the French have to beat the Scotland at home next Saturday to secure the crown.

They have had to make do without 28-year-old Dupont owing to injury before—for part of the pool stage of the 2023 Rugby World Cup. However, even with his return and wearing a protective mask they slipped to a traumatic quarter-final defeat at the Stade de France to South Africa.

This was one instance of what Alldritt referred to of the "huge matches" the French have lost since Galthie took over after the 2019 World Cup. Defeat at the hands of Ireland in 2023 and last year's Six Nations hammering by the same opponents in Marseille, where Dupont was absent as he pursued his ultimately successful dream of Olympic Sevens gold, would likely fall into the same category.

An error-strewn performance in the 26-25 defeat by England last month had posed question marks over whether for all their talent they choked when the pressure was on. This failure to deliver titles is reflected in just achieving the 2022 Grand Slam under Galthie, finishing second in the other four Six Nations campaigns.

"Before the game we were masters of our destiny," said Alldritt, who took over as skipper after



DUBLIN: France's full-back Thomas Ramos (C) is tackled during the Six Nations international rugby union match between Ireland and France at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin. France won the game 42-27. — AFP

Dupont's exit just before the half hour mark. "We were getting a little fed up to fall short from time to time in huge matches. "And I think today is a huge match," he added.

### 'Very humble'

Alldritt, who had an outstanding match beginning early on in preventing opposing No 8 Caelan Doris touching down, said he and his teammates were determined to set things right. "For us the players, there has been a lot of frustration because we have let slip several opportunities," he said.

"We were determined not to do the same thing this year. "It is not over, but we are where we wanted to be, at least after the England match (the defeat crushed their Grand Slam dream)." Galthie will have taken heart for the Scotland game at the character his team showed, with back-rower Oscar Jegou having to play in midfield owing to Pierre-Louis Barassi's head injury.

## Garcia sends Ryder Cup message to Luke with LIV victory

HONG KONG: Spanish veteran Sergio Garcia said he was hoping for a place in this year's Ryder Cup after shooting a sparkling seven-under 63 on Sunday to win LIV Golf Hong Kong by three strokes in front of huge crowds.

The 45-year-old missed the last edition in 2023 after joining the breakaway Saudi-backed circuit but has since made his peace with the DP World (European) Tour, which is allowing LIV players back if they pay their fines. He is outside the world's top 400 as LIV events do not carry ranking points, so will have to rely on being one of European captain Luke Donald's picks if he is to tee up against the United States in Bethpage in September.

"I think he's watching," Garcia said of Donald after a flawless tournament at Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling, where he shot rounds of 65, 64 and 63 to finish 18-under par on the par-70 championship course. "We've been in touch, so I know that he's keeping an eye."

Garcia's Ryder Cup record is unrivalled and he has earned more points than anyone in the event's history over 10 appearances for Team Europe. "The only thing I can do is keep playing good golf," he said. "I just want to help the European

team like I've tried to do every single time I've been a member of that team.

"Hopefully he will think I'm good enough for it." The Spaniard began the day in a three-way tie for the lead at 11-under par alongside England's Paul Casey and the big-hitting American Peter Uihlein. The 2017 US Masters champion got his round rolling with a sumptuous 45-foot putt for eagle at the par-five third.

He then opened up a four-shot cushion on a chasing pack brimming with major winners as he went on a stunning run of four birdies in a row from the eighth. He was never threatened from there and added a final birdie at the 16th. It was Garcia's second individual LIV title after he won at his favourite course, Valderrama, in 2024.

### Mickelson rolls back years

Garcia's last win on the US PGA Tour was at the Sanderson Farms Championship almost five years ago. He will go to Augusta National next month to play in his landmark 100th major at the US Masters. "Super excited about it," said Garcia, who had a double celebration on Sunday as his Fireballs took the LIV team title in Hong Kong. "It's a milestone that not a lot of people get to achieve, so I'm super proud, super happy, and I can't wait to go there and just enjoy it. "Whatever happens happens, but I'm just going to try to enjoy the week as much as possible and then hopefully my game will show up."

Second was South Africa's Dean Burmester, who shot the round of the day, an eight-under



HONG KONG: Fireballs GC player Sergio Garcia of Spain (R) celebrates his win with his caddy on day three of the LIV Golf tournament at the Fanling Golf Club in Hong Kong on March 9, 2025. — AFP

62, but still finished three strokes adrift of Garcia. The oldest player in the field, 54-year-old Phil Mickelson, showed he could still compete with the best as he rolled back the years to finish third on 14-under after a final round 64.

He credited a new strategy for his return to form. "I've had to find a different way to play this game to compete at this level, and in the off-season I made some adjustments," the six-time major winner said. "I'm not going to over-punch golf courses. I can shoot low scores another way. I've been figuring that out, and that's been a fun challenge for me." — AFP



Sports

# Dembele hits double as PSG win ahead of Liverpool return

## Parisians are now a huge 16 points clear at the top

PARIS: Ousmane Dembele scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain warmed up for the second leg of their Champions League last-16 tie against Liverpool by winning 4-1 away to Rennes in Ligue 1 with a much-changed team on Saturday.

Bradley Barcola and Goncalo Ramos had PSG 2-0 up in Brittany before Lilian Brassier pulled one back for Rennes, but Dembele netted twice in stoppage time to seal the victory for the visitors. The result allowed the Ligue 1 leaders to maintain their unbeaten record domestically this season.

The Parisians are now a huge 16 points clear at the top, with closest challengers Marseille losing 1-0 at home to Lens later on Saturday. Luis Enrique's PSG side were ultimately comfortable winners despite the coach making eight changes to his line-up in between the two legs of the Liverpool tie, with the return at Anfield coming up on Tuesday.

"We are in perfect condition to go and take on Liverpool. We have nothing to lose and we will give everything to try to qualify," for the quarter-finals, said Luis Enrique. "It was difficult but we put in a serious performance and it gives us lots of hope before going to Liverpool," the Spaniard added of his team's display.

### Marseille beaten

Barcola, Joao Neves and Willian Pacho were the only players to keep their places for PSG against Rennes following the 1-0 home loss to Liverpool in the first leg last Wednesday. Dembele was among the regular starters to be rested at kick-off, but he came off the bench just after the hour mark and the France forward's double strike moves him onto 20 league goals for the campaign.

The player who began his career at Rennes has now scored 28 times in all competitions this season, includ-

ing 23 goals in 18 appearances since mid-December. Rennes came into the game on a run of four wins in five outings to climb into mid-table after Habib Beye replaced Jorge Sampaoli as coach in late January.

However, PSG went ahead at Roazhon Park on 27 minutes as Desire Doue, another former Rennes player, quickly took a free-kick just inside the home half and released Barcola to run through and score his 18th of the season.

Teenage forward Mohamed Kader Meite almost equalised for Rennes before the break, heading off the crossbar from Adrien Truffert's cross. Barcola then turned provider as PSG doubled their lead five minutes after half-time, squaring for Ramos — one of those brought into the line-up — to net his 13th this season in all competitions.

Centre-back Brassier pulled one back for Rennes shortly after, heading in from close range after a corner had been flicked on. However, Luis Enrique then sent on the cavalry, with Dembele, Nuno Mendes, Vitinha, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Achraf Hakimi all coming off the bench for the latter stages.

PSG made sure of the points as Hakimi ran through on goal before unselfishly squaring for Dembele to make it 3-1 in the first minute of stoppage time. Dembele then fired in his second and PSG's fourth goal from the edge of the area in the 94th minute.

Marseille dominated from the off at home to Lens as they looked to cement their grip on second place. However, they were denied by an obstinate Lens side and by some inspired goalkeeping from the visitors' Mathew Ryan. The Australian tipped an Amine Gouiri shot onto the bar in the first half and saved from both Luis Henrique and Neal Maupay late on. Lens, who had lost their last four matches, then won the game in the 94th minute as Deiver Machado set up Neil El Aynaoui to deliver the sucker punch.



MARSEILLE: Marseille's Algerian forward #22 Ismael Bennacer (R) fights for the ball with Lens' French forward #22 Wesley Said (C) during the L1 first division football match between Marseille (OM) and Lens (RCL) at the Velodrome stadium in Marseille, southeastern France. — AFP

Elsewhere on Saturday, Lille were 1-0 winners at home to Montpellier in a game that fell in between the two legs of their Champions League last-16 tie against Borussia Dortmund. Jonathan David scored the only goal early in the second half, the Canadian

netting his 14th of the campaign in Ligue 1.

Lille are fifth in the table, behind Monaco in fourth on goal difference. They entertain Dortmund on Wednesday after drawing 1-1 in the first leg in Germany. — AFP

## Morris milestone as Sounders crush LAFC

MIAMI: The Seattle Sounders turned on the style as they thumped Western Conference rivals Los Angeles FC 5-2 in Major League Soccer on Saturday. The two clubs have been dominant forces in the West in recent years but Seattle, who beat LAFC in last year's Conference semi-finals, ran away with the game in the second half at Lumen Field.

Kalani Kossa-Rienzi, drafted out of college by Seattle and brought up from their reserve club Tacoma Defiance, opened the scoring in the 11th minute with a clinical finish after cutting in from the right. LAFC pulled level seven minutes before half-time through homegrown forward Nathan Ordez, who poked home from the close-range after a scramble.

But the Sounders got back in front through Paul Rothrock's thundering drive from outside of the box in the 57th minute and Jordan Morris made it 3-1 with his 87th goal for the club making him Seattle's all-time top scorer.

LAFC were ragged at the back and lacked punch in attack where former France international Olivier Giroud was once again ineffective. A smart finish from Cristian Roldan made it 4-1 in the 84th minute before the visitors restored some pride in stoppage time thanks to a determined solo run and finish from David Martinez.

But there was still time for the Sounders to add one more with Albert Rusnak turning in a low cross from Georgi Minoungou to complete the rout. For Seattle-born Morris, 30, a product of the Sounders youth system, it was a day to remember as he replaced Raul Ruidiaz at the top of the club's scoring charts.

"It means everything. I've talked about it for a long time, my drive on scoring goals, that's what I want to do, what I can bring to the team," he said. "Being a local guy here, growing up through the

academy, being a fan of the team, sitting up in the stands, knowing I wanted to be on this field someday and now to kind of put my name in the record books like that, the history books. It's a huge honor to do it in front of my family and something I will always remember," he added.

### Impressive Union

The Philadelphia Union continued their impressive start to the campaign under South African coach Bradley Carnell with a 2-0 win at the New Revolution making it three wins out of three. Zionist forward Tai Baribo made it six goals in three outings when he put the Union ahead in the 76th minute meeting an inswinging cross from Kai Wagner with a fine header at the back post.

Serbian midfielder Jovan Lukic made sure of the win with a blast from outside the box that flew in off the inside of the post. Cincinnati looked sharp as they beat Toronto 2-0 thanks to a Kevin Denkey penalty in the 73rd and then Japanese winger Yuya Kubo made sure of the points with a clinical finish to a fine break. — AFP



KUWAIT: Handball match in action.

## Kazma, Kuwait decide their matches against Fahaheel and Khaitan

KUWAIT: Kazma handball club defeated Al-Fahaheel 33-28 on Saturday, while Kuwait defeated Khaitan 34-27 in the preliminary handball league matches for the current season 2024-2025, which were postponed for Kuwait and Kazma clubs to participate in the 27th Asian Clubs Championship, which qualifies for the World Championship (Super Globe 2025) in November in the Qatari capital, Doha.

At Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex, Kazma achieved a difficult victory over Al-Fahaheel 33-28, as the first half was equal and ended in a draw (14-14). In the second half, Kazma regained its vitality and widened the goal difference to snatch an important victory. In the second match Kuwait defeated Khaitan with a score of (27-34).

Kuwait ended the first half with an uncomfortable lead (15-13). In the second half, the experience of Kuwait's players appeared, as they were able to widen the goal difference against Khaitan, to achieve a new victory for Kuwait, confirming its leadership of the league. With today's matches, the postponed matches for both Kuwait and Kazma ended, and the General Handball League matches will resume on March 21 for the 12th round, as Al-Sulaibikhat meets Al-Fahaheel and Al-Qurain meets Al-Nasr at the opening of the round. — KUNA

## Bayern get away with shock 3-2 defeat to Bochum

MUNICH: A 10-man Bayern Munich got away with a shock 3-2 home defeat to Bochum on Saturday after title chasers Bayer Leverkusen were beaten 2-0 by Werder Bremen. Despite the loss, just Bayern's second of the season, the Bavarians still hold an eight-point lead over defending champions Leverkusen with nine games to play.

Leverkusen's woes were deepened with an injury to star midfielder Florian Wirtz, who limped off after a rough challenge having played just 14 second-half minutes. With an eye on Tuesday's return leg in the Champions League last 16 against Leverkusen, Bayern coach Vincent Kompany named a heavily changed XI, including leaving striker Harry Kane on the bench.

Bayern midfielder Raphael Guerreiro's 14th minute goal, when the Portuguese hammered a loose ball into the net, had Bayern on track before Serge Gnabry missed a 21st-minute penalty. With Kane, who has converted his past 30 penalties in a row, sitting on the bench, Gnabry stepped up but hit the ball against the post.

Guerreiro however scored again with a rare header on the 28-minute mark, just three minutes before Bochum's Jakov Medic pulled one back with an unstoppable rocket. Bochum were given hope when Bayern's Joao Palhinha saw red for sinking his studs into Giorgos Masouras' ankle just before half-time.

Ibrahima Sissoko headed Bochum level six minutes into the second half and Matus Bero put the underdogs in front 71 minutes in, going the length of the field to knock in a Philipp Hofmann pass. Bochum's surprise victory, their first win in Munich since 1991, took them three points clear of the automatic relegation placings. "There are no excuses — we lost," Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said, adding "even with 10 men, we should at least have the expectation



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Austrian midfielder #27 Konrad Laimer and Bochum's Macedonian midfielder #17 Agon Elezi vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Bayern Munich and VfL Bochum in Munich. — AFP

of avoiding defeat," Harry Kane told reporters Bayern "had a chance to go 11 points clear, (but) we can't dwell on it", adding the loss would put "fire in our belly" ahead of Tuesday's trip to Leverkusen.

### Leverkusen fail to take advantage

Leverkusen were down after just seven minutes when Romano Schmid tapped in from close range. With Leverkusen failing to click, coach Xabi Alonso brought Wirtz from the bench at halftime, but the Germany midfielder was brutally fouled eight minutes

afterwards and limped from the field and left the arena on crutches. Any injury to Wirtz, the club's talisman and best player this season, would be a serious blow to Alonso's side, particularly ahead of Tuesday's Champions League match against Bayern, who hold a 3-0 lead from the first leg. "We'll have to wait and see," Alonso said after the match, adding "we don't have any results yet." Bremen's Mitchell Weiser, who fouled the Germany midfielder, apologized after the match, saying "I hope it's not that bad—I'm lucky it wasn't a red card." — AFP

### Clinics & Hospitals

#### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134

Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

#### Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300

### Change of Name

I, Desireddy Amaravathi (old name) Passport No. M8391261, w/o Desireddy Ramanaidu, r/o Gaddamvaripalli, Udayamanikyam post, Yerravaripalem Mandal, Tirupati district, Andhra Pradesh, I changed my name to Desireddy Amaravathin (new name) w/o Desireddy Ramanaidu.

(07-03-2025)

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## Salah fires Liverpool 16 points clear, Forest beat Man City

LONDON: Premier League leaders Liverpool needed two Mohamed Salah penalties to beat bottom-of-the-table Southampton 3-1 on Saturday, while Nottingham Forest took a giant step towards the Champions League with a 1-0 win over Manchester City. Liverpool stretched their lead at the top to a massive 16 points, despite a lethargic first 45 minutes.

Fresh from a smash-and-grab 1-0 Champions League victory over Paris Saint-Germain, Liverpool boss Arne Slot made just three changes. However, the Dutchman was forced into making three half-time alterations to kickstart the champions-elect.

"The manager was like going for us – but that's something you need sometimes. Because first half, the game was sloppy," said Salah. Southampton have taken just nine points from 28 games all season, but stunned Anfield when Will Smallbone fired the visitors in front in first-half stoppage time.

Alisson Becker was Liverpool's hero at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday but the Brazilian and Virgil van Dijk got in each other's way to allow Smallbone to roll into an unguarded net. Slot turned to Harvey Elliott, Alexis MacAllister and Andy Robertson at the break, and the changes had the desired effect with two goals in three minutes before the hour mark.

Darwin Nunez levelled with a sharp near-post finish from Luis Diaz's cross. Nunez was then upended inside the area and Salah converted from the spot. The



NOTTINGHAM: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder #17 Kevin De Bruyne ( R ) shoots but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Nottingham Forest and Manchester City at The City Ground in Nottingham, central England. — AFP

Egyptian slotted home a second penalty two minutes from time to take his tally for the season to 32 goals.

Second-placed Arsenal have two games in hand on the leaders, the first of which comes away to Manchester United on Sunday. But it appears a matter of when not if Liverpool will clinch just their second league title in 35 years.

Forest pulled four points clear of City in third thanks to Callum Hudson-Odoi's late winner at the City Ground. The former Chelsea winger fired past Ederson on 83

minutes from Morgan Gibbs-White's pass to spark jubilant scenes of celebration as Forest beat the English champions for the first time since 1997. Two-time European champions, Forest have not experienced the continent's top competition since 1980.

But they are closing in on the Champions League with a top-five finish almost certain to be enough thanks to the strong performance of English teams in Europe this season. "We are not here to joke", Hudson-Odoi posted on social media. "Goal, MOTM (man-of-the-match), three points!" — AFP

### Fahaheel in quarters of CP Cup after beating Al-Shabab

KUWAIT: Al-Fahaheel qualified for the quarter-finals of His Highness the Crown Prince Football Cup after defeating Al-Shabab 2-0 in the round of 16. Al-Fahaheel translated its control over most of the match into a deserved victory that secured its place in the last eight of the tournament.

Omar Ali scored for Al-Fahaheel

in the 66th minute and Vitor da Silva in the 75th minute to take their team to the last eight. Kuwait, Khaitan, Kazma, Salmiya and Al-Fahaheel have so far qualified for the last eight, awaiting the matches results of Al-Jahra against Al-Jazeera, Al-Qadisiya against Al-Nasr and Al-Arabi against Al-Sahel. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Al-Fahaheel and Al-Shabab players in action. — KUNA

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