



NEW PRIME MINISTER TASKED TO SPEARHEAD GOVERNMENT FORMATION

Amir names Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah as PM



Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

'Notify Assembly'

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assigned Monday Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Prime Minister.

His Highness the Amir, in an Amiri Order, assigned Sheikh Ahmad to form a government to submit the names of the ministers to appoint them.

His Highness the Amir instructed the Prime Minister to inform the National Assembly and the order take effect once published in the official gazette.

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Amir offers condolences to Oman over flood tragedy

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq over the victims of the floods that swept the Al-Mudaybi Region in Oman.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished a speedy recovery to the injured, expressed solace over the souls of the victims and hoped that the Omani people would overcome this natural disaster.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah sent on Monday a cable of condolences to the Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tareq over the victims of the floods that swept the Al-Mudaybi Region in Oman.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed on Sunday Kuwait's sympathy and solidarity with the Sultanate of Oman as a result of the heavy rains that swept the state of Al-Mudhaibi, leading to the death of 12 people and other who went missing.

In a statement, the ministry affirms its support for the brothers in Oman to overcome the difficult circumstances resulting from this crisis.

The ministry also extends its sincere condolences to the government and people of the Sultanate of Oman for this tragic incident.

Earlier, reports from Oman said 12 persons have died after their vehicles drifted away because of a severe flood in Oman's Al-Mudaybi.

Opinion

What divine victory is this?

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

THE mountain was in labor but it gave birth to a mouse. This applies to Iran's response to Israel's bombing of Tehran's consulate in Damascus. This happened after nearly 45 years of threats to "wipe Israel out of existence" and boasting of Iran's military capabilities.

There is no doubt that the capabilities of the Revolutionary Guard are very limited. It is merely a trumpet and nothing more, just much ado.

When the United States of America killed the commander of the Quds Force Qassim Suleimani with a missile from a drone, Tehran screamed and roared that it would not remain silent, but in the end, it swallowed the strike.

In retaliation to the bombing of the consulate and the killing of seven Revolutionary Guard leaders, Iran responded with 300 drones and missiles.

In the end, only seven missiles fell on two Israeli bases, causing some minor material damage. They killed a Palestinian girl and a cat. Therefore we beg to ask, where is the divine victory that the Tehran regime had rumbled the world with?

It was possible for the Iranian regime to save the billions it spent on building caricature military capabilities, with which it wanted to cover up the rampant corruption in all its institutions. It could have spent that money on the well-being of its people, about 75 percent of whom live below the poverty line. On the other hand, the leaders and officials live in the bliss of gardens they built from the people's livelihood, under the pretext of "serving the sacred project of the revolution," which was nothing but a coup against the Shah's regime, replacing it with another generalized one, and even with many shahs.

When the current regime adopted "exporting the revolution" in its constitution and raised bright slogans, especially with regard to its neighbors, it began to antagonize all the people of the region.

And when it began its interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon in 1982 via the so-called Hezbollah, it was adding fuel to the fire of hostility toward it in the Arab world and from the east to the west.

When the Revolutionary Guard cells and the intelligence services began carrying out their terrorist operations around the world, all the nations of the earth were drawn to antagonize their people. For this reason, Iraq became a rogue state whose evil cannot be guaranteed.

There was a possibility of avoiding all the losses incurred in the past decades, if it had adhered to international agreements regarding the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, did not help the Houthis in Yemen against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, did not spark sectarian strife in Bahrain, did not build sectarian gangs in Iraq, and did not intervene in Syria.

Instead, it opted for the challenging route, defying the entire world. This path only promised famine, poverty, and conflict, as it embroiled in a struggle against a system where decision-makers assert their dominance over the people of the earth.

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Day by Day

THE mistake that occurred in suspending parliamentary life in 1986 led to a worse alternative, as the state, or rather the government, at that time was not prepared to find a better alternative, so things remained, as the proverb says, 'in the stead of the deceased'.

People were happy about it, but the citizen did not gain anything from it, and only took advantage of it to spread and increase the influence of stakeholders, while criticism stopped, for a while.

The persecution of anyone who criticizes the state and its leaders prevailed, and that is why the country fell from a frying pan into the fire, while people awaited for the 'bad' to vanish in thin air, it only spread like wild fire and the state lost its strength of decision making. For now maybe it's good.

... Yet tomorrow is another day

Zahed Matar



The majestic Kuwait Towers stand tall against the backdrop of somber weather on Monday.

Photo by lehab Qurtal

Intermittent rainfall expected to persist until midday Tuesday

The Kuwait Meteorological Department reported that the country is currently experiencing scattered rains of light to moderate intensity, occasionally accompanied by thunderstorms. This weather pattern began on Monday morning and is expected to persist until midday on Tuesday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, the Director of the Department, Kuwait is being influenced by a surface depression coupled with humid air, along with another depression in the upper atmosphere. This combination is leading to the formation of low and medium clouds, interspersed with some cumulus clouds.

Al-Qarawi further explained that these conditions are conducive to scattered rain of light to moderate intensity, sometimes accompanied by thunder, along with active winds stirring up dust and reducing visibility, especially in exposed areas. Additionally, sea waves are expected to rise due to the windy conditions.

The depression is anticipated to dissipate by Tuesday afternoon, allowing high pressure to dominate and stabilize the weather. As a result, clouds and rain chances will gradually diminish, with daytime temperatures remaining warm and nights becoming mild.

Tashkent meeting vital for cooperation: GCC Sec Gen

Kuwait FM heads delegation to GCC, Central Asia meeting

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya headed Monday the delegation to second ministerial council between Gulf Cooperation Council and countries of Central Asia held in Uzbekistan's Tashkent.

The meeting handled topics of establishing future partnership that further boosts relations as per mutual work plan for strategic dialogue and cooperation for the period 2023-2027.

It also included exchanging perspectives on regional and international issues as well as mutual coordination on bilateral and multilateral fronts.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassem Al-Budaiwi said Monday that the second ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between GCC and Central Asia countries aims to

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MoFA photo
Kuwait's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya heads delegation to GCC, Central Asia meeting.

No plans to escalate conflict: Iran envoy

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Iranian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Mohammad Totonji says the military operation of the Islamic Republic of Iran targeting a number of military centers in Israel comes within the framework of the legitimate right of self-defense (inherent right of self-defense). This is in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and in response to the military attack (armed attack) by Israel of its country's embassy as it is a diplomatic center that enjoys immunity in accordance with international rules and conventions.



Totonji

In a press statement, the ambassador said the Zionist aggression is considered a violation of the United Nations Charter and international treaties, especially the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the New York Convention of 1973 on the prevention and prosecution of crimes against persons who enjoy international support, including diplomatic personnel.

He stressed that this was met with an immediate reaction and strong condemnation by most countries and the United Nations.

Ambassador Totonji explained that Iran, following the attack on its embassy, initiated a number of international diplomatic initiatives, including sending

an official memorandum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the Security Council, and demanding that an emergency and urgent meeting of the Security Council be held.

The meeting was held directly and they witnessed the condemnation of the Israeli aggression by most parties of the international community and a large number of regional and international organizations.

Ambassador Totonji expressed his regret at the lack of an appropriate response from some of the few countries, including America, England and France, as they disagreed with the issuance of the statement of condemnation by the Security Council.

He highlighted the inability of the Security Council, as the authority responsible for maintaining international peace and security, to issue a statement of condemnation in the media, which indicates double standards and does not accept any legal justification.

Ambassador Totonji said, "It is natural that such behavior in support of Israel has increased. It will increase the impudence and audacity of Israel's leaders in continuing their crimes in the region, including their crimes against the defenseless Palestinian people, as well as the continuation of their adventures in the region and the escalation of the atmosphere of war."

He stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran's resort to its defensive operations and the exercise of the right of legitimate defense indicates the responsible Iranian approach towards establishing regional and international peace and security at a time when

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Gov't refutes fuel price hike rumors

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Amer Al-Ajmi, Head of the Local Affairs Sector and government spokesperson, refuted claims made by a representative on Monday regarding an impending fuel price hike.

He clarified to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the government has not yet finalized a decision on increasing fuel prices. Al-Ajmi emphasized that the matter is still under discussion and examination within the Ministerial Committee for Economic Affairs, with no decision made thus far.

Earlier, MP-elect Shuaib Al-Muwaizri has appealed to the government to suspend the decision to increase fuel prices by 25 percent starting June 1, 2024.

Al-Muwaizri pointed out that the Economic Affairs Committee in the Cabinet recommended this increase on March 27 and the latter approved it on April 1. He said this decision means that the government is not concerned about improving the citizens' standard of living, which is the top priority of most MPs-elect including himself.

He is hoping the new government has a different attitude; that is, taking care of the citizens, especially those with low and limited income.

Meanwhile, the Constitutional Court recently received the first petition to nullify the 2024 National Assembly Election.

First Constituency candidate Attorney Nasser Al-Masrallah, who filed the petition, ranked 23rd in the recently concluded election with 443 votes.

According to reliable resources, a number of such petitions are expected to be filed soon; particularly by candidates who landed on the 11th spot in their respective constituencies.

Earlier, MP-elect Saud Al-Aisfour revealed that the coordinative meeting held Sunday at the Assembly building tackled the priorities for the upcoming parliamentary round. He said they discussed the agenda of the 2023 Assembly and the suggestions of the MPs-elect.

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Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen **Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah** held talks on Monday in his office with a security delegation from **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** concerning cooperation in security field between the two countries.

Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf also discussed enhancing joint partnership in other fields to boost cooperation between the two countries, Interior ministry statement added.

Sheikh Al-Nawaf adorned the joint security cooperation between the two country's interior ministries and the ongoing joint meetings on security and traffic cooperation. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: US President **Joe Biden** is set to host **Iraq's** leader this week for talks that come as tensions across the **Middle East** have soared over the war in **Gaza** and **Iran's** unprecedented weekend attack on **Israel** in retaliation for an Israeli military strike against an Iranian facility in **Syria**.

The sharp rise in security fears has raised further questions about the viability of the two-decade American military presence in **Iraq**, through which portions of **Iran's** Saturday drone and missile attack on **Israel** flew or were launched from. (AP)

MADRID: Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs **Jose Manuel Abres** said Monday that it is time to recognize the State of Palestine, affirming his country's support for peace in the **Middle East**.

This came in a statement during his interview with the Spanish Television saying that Spanish Prime Minister **Pedro Sanchez** continues his tour around European countries to accumulate support to the recognition of the State of **Palestine** and to promote peaceful solution for the area. (KUNA)

SYDNEY: Police in **Australia** say a man has been arrested after a bishop and three churchgoers were stabbed in **Sydney**. There are no life-threatening injuries.

It occurred during a televised service at the church on Monday evening, police said. The Orthodox Assyrian church streams services online. (AP)

Prayer Timings

Fajr	04:00	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	05:22	Maghrib ..	18:14
Zohr	11:48	Isha	19:34

Local

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Warm, clouds will decrease and chance of rain will decrease gradually with light variable wind to light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 08-40 km/h.

Weather

By Night: Mild and with light variable wind, with speeds of 08-20 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec		
Kuwait City	29	24	Kuwait Airport	29
			Abdaly	28
			Jahra	29
			Salmiyah	28
			Nuwaibib	28
			Wafra	30
				21
				18
				23
				24
				21
				21

Umrah travelers need meningitis, influenza vaccinations

Hajj pilgrims from Kuwait must meet health conditions set by Saudi gov't

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has approved the health requirements for those who will travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj, reports Al-Anba daily.

The guideline published by the daily stated that since the Hajj season for the year 2024 is fast approaching, travelers for Hajj and Umrah for the year 1445 AH (2024 AD) must fulfill certain health requirements as per the recommendations of the health authorities in Saudi Arabia and the health procedures followed in Kuwait as follows:

■ As per the recommendation of the Saudi Ministry of Health, Hajj travelers must be vaccinated against meningitis (ACW135Y).

■ They must be vaccinated against Covid-19 with vaccines approved by the Saudi Ministry of Health. It should be noted that all vaccines used in the State of Kuwait are on the list of vaccines approved by the Saudi Ministry of Health.

■ They must be vaccinated against seasonal influenza.

■ They should adhere to precautionary measures and follow the preventive instructions issued by the Saudi health authorities during the performance of Hajj rituals in order to preserve their health and safety.

■ They must comply with instructions for vaccinating pilgrims and the latter's contacts. Preventive centers must notify those wishing to perform Hajj to bring the civil identification card. It is recommended to obtain a letter from the Hajj caravan to which the pilgrim belongs when visiting the preventive health centers, so the pilgrims can obtain the required vaccinations.

■ Hajj health certificates are distributed by preventive health centers and the necessary data are filled out completely. Vaccination data in health certificates are valid only if approved by the public health sector or preventive health centers. Each certificate must have the pilgrims' vaccination stamp, as well as the preventive center's stamp, after completion of the required vaccinations. The preventive center doctor must sign and stamp every health certificate for pilgrims using his own official seal and the official seal for meningial vaccination.

■ The vaccination certificate must be filled completely, specifying the type of vaccine, name of the person who administered the vaccine, and the date of vaccination - day, month and year. Ensure that the date of vaccination is carefully written, without making any modification. In the event of amending the date, the doctor must sign again and place his stamp near the signature; or obtain a new certificate, if possible. All pilgrims' vaccinations are currently registered electronically in the preventive health centers.

■ The treating physician at the health center in the area where the pilgrim resides must conduct a medical examination on him and record his health condition and the medications used (if any) in the designated box on the certificate.

Pilgrims must be vaccinated with the following:

A. Meningococcal Conjugate ACW135Y: Vaccination must be done no less than 10 days before travel for those who have not obtained the meningococcal vaccine, or those who were vaccinated more than five years ago for the conjugate vaccine and three years for the unconjugated vaccine.

B. Seasonal influenza vaccine for the year 2023-2024: one dose no less than 10 days before travel.

The guideline stressed the need to prioritize influenza vaccination for pilgrims under these categories: elderly, pregnant women, children below five years old, those with chronic heart and blood diseases, those with chronic respiratory diseases, those with chronic kidney and liver dysfunctions, those with immunodeficiency diseases, those with tumor, cancer patients, organ transplant patients, diabetics, patients receiving continuous treatment with aspirin or cortisone, and patients receiving chemotherapy.

The pneumococcal vaccine (Pneumococcal 13 Valant) should be taken no less than 10 days before travel for those who have not been vaccinated with one dose. Priority for vaccination against pneumococcal should be given to pilgrims under the abovementioned categories.

Regarding vaccination against Covid-19, those wishing to perform Hajj must be fully vaccinated against Coronavirus (Covid-19).

On examining and vaccinating food handlers in Kuwaiti Hajj caravans, all workers in Hajj caravans, including food handlers, must be vaccinated with the previously mentioned vaccines in accordance with the aforementioned procedures

like (those applied on pilgrims). All food handlers working in Kuwaiti Hajj caravans must be referred for comprehensive medical and laboratory examinations to the Food Handlers Examination Department to ensure that they are free of infectious diseases in accordance with the applicable health procedures. There are additional vaccinations for food traders, taking into account the previous vaccination of those who worked in Hajj caravans in previous years as follows:

■ Typhoid vaccine - every two years

■ Paired meningial allograft - every five years

■ Tetanus shot - every three years

■ Seasonal influenza - annual

■ Covid-19 vaccine - annual

Preventive centers responsible for vaccinating pilgrims must submit weekly statistics to the Infectious Diseases Control Department by telephone and in writing; including the number of vaccinated people, those who completed the vaccinations, and stock of vaccinations for pilgrims according to the centers through the forms distributed by the Public Health Department with the approval of the head of the Public Health Services Department in the region.

The medical team of the Kuwaiti Hajj delegation, whose tasks include ensuring that all members of the delegation are examined and vaccinated in coordination with the Ministry of Endowments in the State of Kuwait, while ensuring that Kuwaiti Hajj caravans fulfill all the health requirements, especially those related to the place of residence, food safety and health care.

They should guarantee the availability of medical supplies and medicines for the medical team's doctors, along with the requirements for dealing with any medical emergency, as well as providing appropriate medical care for Kuwaiti pilgrims and adhering to the medical or health requirements specified by the official authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, especially during the performance of Hajj rituals, and immediately reporting diseases among Kuwaiti pilgrims as per the health regulations set by the Saudi authorities.

Ample supply of rifampicin/ciprofloxacin should be provided to the caravans, as it is recommended that they should be distributed as preventive treatment for pilgrims in the last two days before they leave the Holy Land in order to reduce the rate of carrying the microbe that causes meningitis

All doctors in the government and private sectors need to take into account the health procedures, such that primary health care doctors in the centers or any licensed doctor must fill out the section related to clinical medical data on the Hajj card with his signature, his own official seal, and the official seal of the entity to which he belongs.

As for vaccination data and seals, they are the responsibility of the public health sector and preventive centers, as stated in the first clause.

Doctors must also advise individuals who suffer from diseases that conflict with the minimum physical ability, including diseases that often prevent the pilgrim from performing the rituals; such as kidney failure, heart failure, chronic lung diseases, cirrhosis of the liver, dementia and other diseases hindering the performance of the rituals to postpone Hajj due to the risk of them suffering from health problems while performing the rituals.

It is also recommended not to take children below five years old due to the possibility of them being exposed to acute respiratory diseases that pose a threat to the child's health or other childhood diseases.

Pilgrims should be made aware of the importance of following health instructions to prevent diseases transmitted through droplets or contact; such as meningitis, influenza, Covid-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases, intestinal diseases and others, in addition to the precautionary health instructions circulated by the competent health authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They should wear a mask in public and crowded places, maintain cleanliness and wash hands with soap and water or disinfectant frequently, especially when touching the nose, eyes, mouth and surfaces contaminated with respiratory secretions. When they sneeze or cough, they must use tissues to cover the mouth and nose in order to avoid spreading diseases. They must consult a doctor if they feel symptoms of infectious respiratory diseases and avoid contact with people who exhibit symptoms of infectious respiratory diseases as much as possible.

The family members of pilgrims (contacts of pilgrims), who have not been vaccinated or were vaccinated more than five years ago, should be vaccinated with a single dose of conjugated meningial allograft (ACWY).

Kuwait smokers 88th globally, 8th in Arab world, says study

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Kuwait ranked 88th globally and eighth in the Arab world in the number of smokers compared to the population at 9.17 percent, reports Al-Seyassah daily based on a recent study conducted by the American platform Wisevoter that ranked 158 countries.

The study revealed some countries have alarmingly high smoking rates, with Nauru -- a small island nation located in the Pacific Ocean -- topping the list as nearly half of its population (48.5 percent) are smokers. Myanmar ranked second at 44.1 percent, third is Serbia at 39.8 percent, Papua New Guinea is fourth at 39.3 percent, followed by East Timor (39.2 percent), Bulgaria (39 percent),

Lebanon (38.2 percent), Indonesia (37.6 percent), Latvia (37 percent) and Croatia (36.9 percent).

In the Arab region, Lebanon ranked first (38.2 percent) and it is seventh in the world, Jordan is second in the region and 14th in the world at 34.8 percent, followed by Tunisia that ranked 48th in the world at 24.6 percent, Egypt ranked 50th at 24.3 percent, Algeria ranked 75th at 21 percent, Yemen ranked 80th at 20 percent, and Iraq ranked 86th at 18.5 percent.

Wisevoter pointed out that "despite the progress made in tobacco control efforts, smoking rates are still at significant levels. This raises public health concerns, especially given the diverse patterns observed in different countries."

'MoH keen on implementing quality control in labs'

Medical staff performance wins praise

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Director of Medical Laboratory Services Department at the Ministry of Health Dr. Remaa Al-Safi affirmed the implementation of quality control policies in medical laboratories according to international standards in all laboratories affiliated with the ministry.

This came in a press statement on the sidelines of a celebration held by the ministry on the occasion of International Medical Laboratory Day under the slogan (Let us be guardians of the quality of work and patient safety) on Monday.

Dr. Remaa pointed out that laboratories are included in external quality control systems that are internationally approved to compare the validity of test results in international reference laboratories, pointing out that laboratory workers place patient safety as a priority.

Al-Safi appreciated the role played by workers in medical laboratories in the ministry and private medical sector and the outstanding efforts they provide in serving patients, detecting diseases, and improving the laboratory services.

The General Assembly of the International Federation for Biomedical Laboratory Sciences approved at its global conference Norway in 1996, selecting April 15 as an annual international day for medical laboratories to raise global awareness of their vital role in diagnosing diseases.



KUNA photo
Ministry of Health counter in the mall celebrating the International Medical Laboratory Day.

Some top co-op officials face probe as panel discovers funds violations

Reports submitted by four co-ops under scrutiny

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The investigation committee in the Ministry of Social Affairs, in the realm of cooperative work, is poised to commence scrutiny of the recently submitted final reports. These reports, forwarded by committees tasked with reviewing the operations and financial accounts of four cooperative societies across various regions, are under examination, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Sources from within the ministry suggest that the committee may recommend the removal of one or more members from the boards of directors of these cooperatives and refer them to the Public Prosecution.

This recommendation stems from suspected administrative and serious financial violations detected by audit committees, which directly impacted the financial stability of the associations and compromised their fiscal standings. The committee is diligently reviewing the evidence to determine appropriate legal actions to safeguard the associations' interests.

Membership of the committee includes individuals from the Fatwa and Legislation Department. They meticulously verify any observed financial and administrative transgressions supported by evidence and documentation. Subsequently, individuals implicated during the audit process are summoned to provide statements.

Financial and administrative observers of the associations are also consulted to ascertain the veracity of the violations. Recommendations are then submitted to the Minister of Social Affairs for necessary legal actions, which may include retaining the report, imposing penalties on the board of directors, removing members, or dissolving the board and referring it to prosecution for severe financial and administrative infractions.

Prominent violations identified by the committee include failure to adhere to sound procurement policies and mismanagement leading to inflated expenses and purchases coupled with declining sales and revenues, impacting liquidity.

The committee maintains impartiality and integrity in its operations, prioritizing the protection of shareholders' funds and guiding the associations back to compliance. The ministry remains resolute in taking requisite legal measures to safeguard the integrity of the cooperative framework and uphold shareholder rights.

Previously, the Minister of Social Affairs, Family, and Childhood Affairs, Sheikh Firas Al-Malik, referred five former boards of directors of Mishref Cooperative Society (from 2019 to 2023) to the Public Prosecution based on the committee's recommendations.

Additionally, a previous board of Al-Rawdha and Hawalli Cooperative Society, which assumed management in 2022, will be transferred to the General Department of Investigations at the Ministry of Interior.

77 people perished in 3 mths road accidents

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: According to an officer of the Awareness Department at the General Traffic Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan, the number of deaths due to road accidents in the first three months of this year reached 77.

In a press statement issued yesterday, Lieutenant Colonel Bu Hassan explained that the department recorded 7,084 serious traffic accidents, and 15,600 minor accidents within a period of 90 days, and dealt with 41,210 different reports.

A total of 265 juveniles were also arrested and referred to the Juvenile Prosecution for driving vehicles without a license. They also referred 396 people to traffic custody and impounded 1,794 vehicles.

Deportation for Egyptian: The Egyptian resident who appeared in a video clip saying, "It is known that the entry visa to Kuwait is for Egyptians" has been deported. In the video, he said, "The cost of an entry visa has reached 400,000 to 500,000 Egyptian pounds for anyone who is self-employed. As for those who work for a company, it is free."

He was arrested and referred to the deportation department for violating the laws. Earlier, the Security Media Department of the Ministry of Interior announced that the General Department of Residency Affairs Investigations arrested an Arab national for posting a video clip, which contained false and incorrect information and data and is considered interference in government procedures and measures, on social media.

Other Voices

Some points to ponder upon

By Ahmad alsarraf

There are matters, actions, or decisions that you would be surprised to see delayed issuance or implementation of, even though they are very necessary for everyone, completely inexpensive, no one will be harmed by their issuance, and make everyone's life, without exception, more comfortable and organized, and yet no one thinks about them, since the founding of modern Kuwait!



alsarraf

There are many simple matters, which we have previously written about many times, and which have been implemented in friendly and brotherly countries for many years, with our government insisting, for at least half a century, on refusing to implement them, despite all their advantages and benefits, and we repeat, for everyone. Without any cost, not even a penny, to any party, but it includes significant savings in time and money!

For reasons that are difficult to understand, digest or accept, the government does not want, at least twice a year, to rely on science regarding the sighting of the moon at the beginning of the lunar month, and thus build on it in determining the beginning or end of the month of fasting, and subsequently Eid al-Adha, and instead insists on seeing the Eid crescent with the naked eye to determine when the government holiday begins and when it ends, and this is something that we do not wish to delve into and call for abandoning, despite its illogicality, and the resort of all countries of the world, which follow the lunar calen-

dar, to accurate astronomical calculations, to know when their next religious occasions will be, to abandon, irrevocably, the idea of seeing with the naked eye.

In an unprecedented move, which may end up being wiped out next year, the Civil Service Commission, with prior approval from the Council of Ministers, approximately two weeks before the supposed Eid day, set the first Eid al-Fitr government holiday to be as of Tuesday April 9, 2024 with the official working hours resuming on Sunday, April 14, 2024, declaring the official holiday on 9, 10, 11, and 12, and everything else to be days of rest. As for the private nature, their holidays were to be determined by the authorities concerned with their affairs, taking into account the public interest.

The Ministry's decision was based on the fact that the Eid will not, in any case, be later than the ninth or tenth of April 2024. Therefore, it declared the holiday starting on the 9th, end on the 13th, and return to work on the 14th. Thus, it made everyone know, for the first time, ahead of time, when the holiday begins and when it ends.

Accordingly, the matter requires consolidating the administrative organization, and issuing the holiday decision a few months before the date of its implementation, so that every concerned party can arrange his travel and return in a correct manner, without waiting for the last hour to find out the day of the holiday, and thus the beginning of the holiday, and this becomes very vital for many, especially when we know the large number who depend on the holidays to see their families abroad, or return to see them at home.

□ □ □
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Kuwaiti firing near army camp held

'Wanted to hunt birds for falcon'

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: A citizen was referred to the Central Prison for opening fire near an army camp in Subhan, in addition to the possession of two shotguns, bullets and knives, reports Al-Rai daily.

Case files indicate that the citizen used a shotgun to hunt for birds in a reserve belonging to a special army camp in Subhan. The Army Operations Department received a report about the sound of gunfire at the camp gate. Camp patrols immediately searched the source of the sound, during which they noticed a vehicle, but the driver fled from the scene. The officers chased him but their efforts proved futile as they failed to arrest him.

The shooting scenario was repeated the next day in the same place. One of the patrols headed to the site and arrested the owner of the vehicle (SUV). Upon checking his data, the officers confirmed that he is a citizen. They also found two shotguns, knives and bullets when they searched the car. The police station in the area was notified and a case was registered.

A security source told the daily that dur-

ing interrogation, the citizen admitted to firing a shotgun with the intention of hunting birds to feed his falcon. He was then referred to the Central Prison as per the directive of the investigator, the source added.

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Kuwaiti blamed for theft: A citizen has filed a complaint at Maidan Hawalli Police Station, accusing a compatriot of stealing two iPhones, 10 international brand watches, an Apple earphone and two international brand bracelets from his home, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source confirmed the registration of Misdemeanor Case No. 159/2024 in view of the abovementioned complaint. The accused was summoned for interrogation, during which he denied stealing any of the items. He told the investigators that he visited the complainant once and did not steal anything.

The detective report concluded that the investigations did not prove the involvement of the accused in the theft, hence, the need for further investigations to identify and arrest the culprit.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Documentation methodology about good people of Kuwait

"THE honorable people of Kuwait, thanks to God Almighty, left behind a good legacy full of good and influential attitudes, which, if they indicate anything, indicate that, thanks be to God, they have beautiful qualities and good morals, and I know that my testimony regarding them is not hurtful because they are the honorable sons of my country whom I honor and appreciate and acknowledge their thanks, but I at the same time, do not find mentioning their virtues and deeds to be anything other than an obligatory duty and a necessary testimony in light of the good attitudes and beautiful deeds they left behind, in which their beautiful qualities and good innate character were numerous, as it is narrated in the noble Prophet's (PBUH) hadith: 'Remember the virtues of your dead,'" columnist **Dr. Abdul Mohsen Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.



Dr. Al-Kharafi

"Perhaps, through these simple lines, we can summarize the first six determinants of the methodology of writing and documenting about the good people of Kuwait, and that is among the ten determinants, some of which we will discuss in this first part of the article, and we will discuss the remaining four in the next article, God Almighty willing:

"First: Message and value -- In his methodology of writing about the exploits and lessons of the good people of Kuwait, the writer was keen to choose influential situations from which we can draw lessons and sermons, because they include authentic values and good qualities that this blessed generation possessed, which we present to the current and future generations so that we can draw inspiration from them. We hope that these good models represent high ideals and good role models from which we can all learn and live in their shadow, and from the roots we derive what the stems and leaves grow from.

"Second: Loyalty and returning the favor -- In line with the creation of loyalty that the good people of Kuwait established through their good attitudes, and through the deeds and lessons contained in those good attitudes; it has been proven beyond any doubt that the character of loyalty is rooted in this good, blessed generation, and as a matter of returning the favor and attributing the credit to its people, this documentary initiative came from the writer in order to document those good deeds, in continuation of the numerous writings he presented in the field of documentation about the people of his country.

"The honorable people of Kuwait and in memory of souls who made sacrifices and gave much without expecting thanks, praise or gratitude, people who wrote pioneering humanitarian stances on the pages of history that deserved praise and appreciation.

"Third: Focus on the achievements and lessons -- An article that contains one or more positions about the good people of Kuwait does not necessarily have to be accompanied by a translation of the person holding the position. The article may include a nice introductory overview of him, very brief and casual, but in most cases there is not enough space to mention his biography or a complete translation of him. It would cover all aspects of the personality in detail.

"Therefore, we seek an excuse to mention what we see as compatible from his biography and his personal interpretation of the context of the situation, which automatically makes us mention it and highlight it because it is linked in one way or another to the message or goal of the situation, so it comes in the context to support the value and message and help convey the lesson and sermon, given the limited space available to the writer in the newspaper through the window from which he views the honorable reader, which often does not allow him to write everything he wants, and this is what we compensate for with detailed writing in our books, praise and gratitude to be God.

"Fourth: Parity and neutrality -- One of the basics of documentary writings (as is the case with many other fields) is that the writer must clarify in his methodology the basis of selection through which the characters or situations that he will address through his writings will be chosen. The basic principle is that everyone is equal in opportunities, whoever applies the methodology.

"He will definitely have a place and a share in being one of those included in the general documentation work, without discrimination of anyone over the other, or diminishing the right of anyone who is entitled to it. Rather, it is the spirit of equality and justice that applies to everyone, and gives everyone his right.

"Fifth: Objectivity and avoiding exaggeration -- The more the writer is objective and honest, the closer he is to the hearts of his readers. Staying away from exaggerations prevents the writer from falling into criticism from his readers, especially since these situations and characters are not long-standing in Kuwaiti society. Some of them have reached and sometimes have already been repeated among people through novels, and a few of them through writing down, but in the end, a significant amount of this good heritage has already arrived and has been circulated among people.

"There is what was transmitted orally and narrated in meetings, forums, and various occasions (diwanias), including what was written down to be part of the history of this good country, regardless of the different writers and authors and the intentions and goals of each

them in the process of blogging. Even if these positions were not repeated and transmitted to subsequent generations, credibility and realism are the only way to reach everyone's hearts and convictions.

"Sixth: Focus on the Kuwaiti element -- It is natural to focus on documentary writings and social experiences affecting the people of the country, given that the writer has lived with them alone, without any embarrassment of fanaticism and regionalism.

"From this standpoint, we extend an invitation to the distinguished brothers of writers and authors specialized in the field of historical documentation in the various Gulf countries in particular and the Arab countries in general to generalize this valuable documentary experience in writing about their citizens, their positions and their good deeds.

"Perhaps this is a good year whose impact will extend to all countries in the Arab world, resulting in an independent literary product that represents a valuable new literary wealth in the field of historical documentation."

"It will be continued in the next article, God willing."

Also:

"Supporters of corruption exist across time and place, a fact lamentable yet undeniable. Conversely, advocates of integrity, truth, and justice persist as well," columnist **Dr. Muhammad Al-Duwaihees** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"Despite the pervasiveness of corruption and the considerable power wielded by injustice, the reign of these vices is not eternal. Those who champion truth, justice, integrity, and righteousness, resilient and resolute in their beliefs, are destined for victory, irrespective of the challenges they face.

"The steadfastness and confidence of justice's supporters, rooted in both themselves and a higher power, contrast starkly with the wavering and doubt plaguing the proponents of falsehood, injustice, and corruption. Noble values and lofty principles endure amidst the onslaught of corruption, injustice, and ignorance.

"Such ideals remain impervious to the assaults of those who lack understanding or appreciation of honor, integrity, and justice.

"The corrupt and their cohorts, driven by personal gain and material interests, remain blind to the intrinsic value of honor and dignity. They serve as mere pawns in the hands of the powerful and the manipulative, forsaking their own humanity in pursuit of wealth and influence.

"However, their reign, bolstered by organized mechanisms and allies, is not invincible. The power of corruption falters in the face of individuals of integrity and justice, ultimately succumbing before those of upright character and unwavering values.

"To the corrupt and opportunistic, there is no cause for celebration, for their dominion is fleeting, built upon transient interests and immediate gains. As conflicts of interest arise and hidden truths come to light, the facade of corruption crumbles, along with its proponents and supporters.

"Conversely, for the honest, truthful, and honorable, the future holds promise. It belongs to those who prioritize the welfare of their nation above personal gain, standing firm in their principles of humanity and patriotism.

"In the words of Omar bin Abdulaziz, as conveyed by Al-Hassan Al-Basri, true leadership lies not in the allegiance of the worldly or the religious, but in the trust of people of honor, whose integrity precludes any betrayal."

"It's common practice to hire domestic workers according to our specific needs, especially for tasks like house cleaning and kitchen management, particularly when the working mother isn't available or when the family and household are large," **Nafi'a Al-Zwaid** wrote for **Al-Anba** daily.

"While it's understandable for the wife to assist the worker, provide training, and supervise tasks due to cultural differences, it's concerning that some recruitment agencies in Asian countries are instructing workers to limit their responsibilities strictly to either cooking or cleaning, but not both.

"This directive seems to be a recent development, possibly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers are being trained to misrepresent their skills, with some claiming expertise only in cooking or cleaning. The rationale behind this seems to be to increase job opportunities by dividing tasks, ultimately resulting in more workers being sent to Kuwaiti households.

"This practice burdens families financially, especially those unable to afford multiple workers or those not needing the services of two workers simultaneously.

"This specialization of tasks places strain on Kuwaiti families and contribute to the growing number of female workers in households, exacerbating demographic concerns.

"Additionally, the exorbitant costs associated with recruiting workers further compound the issue. Despite labor authorities setting prices, the black market persists. Moreover, the six-month return policy offered by labor offices adds to the burden, as sponsors are left responsible for the worker's expenses after this period.

"This situation amounts to blackmail and conspiracy against Kuwaiti citizens and the nation as a whole, perpetuated by both labor agencies in Asian countries and recruitment offices in Kuwait. It's imperative that competent authorities address this issue to alleviate the strain caused by the influx of workers into Kuwaiti households, preserving the integrity of Kuwaiti families and society."

— Compiled by PFX Fernandes



The Ministry of Interior arrested six defendants who tried to bring in about 26,000 psychotropic pills and 20 kg of shabu.

1 ton drugs, 2.5m pills, liquor seized in 3 mths

Live sheep used in smuggling

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Ministry of Interior's Criminal Security Sector headed by Major General Hamid Al-Dawas and the Drug Control General Department led by Brigadier General Mohammad Qabazard have confiscated about a ton of narcotic substances since the beginning of 2024 -- 923 kilograms of hashish, 36 kilograms of marijuana, 14 kilograms of shabu, 15 kilograms of chemical substances and half kilogram of cocaine, reports Al-Anba daily quoting a reliable source.

The two departments also foiled attempts to smuggle about two and a half million narcotic pills and confiscated 14,280 bottles of different types of liquor.

The source revealed that the first drug confiscation this year happened on Jan 7, when 13 kilograms of drugs were found in the possession of 21 individuals; while February witnessed an increase in smuggling operations with 150 kilograms of

hashish confiscated on Feb 18 and 113 kilograms at the end of the month. The source said the most prominent of such cases were the smuggling of various drugs hidden in live sheep and confiscation of a huge quantity of drugs smuggled through the airport.

The source confirmed that the Criminal Security Sector continues to pursue drug dealers and smugglers.

On the other hand, public security officers arrested two young men for promoting narcotic pills in Taima with 100,000 Lyrica pills, powder and tools for manufacturing narcotic pills in their possession.

A security source reported that officers from the Public Security Sector who were patrolling the area noticed a car parked in a suspicious manner. When they approached the car, the driver and his companion tried to escape, but the officers chased them and they were arrested after intense resistance.

The officers searched the car, leading to the discovery of several bags filled with Lyrica pills -- estimated at 100,000 pills, in addition to some narcotic powder and tools for manufacturing narcotic pills.

In the initial investigation, the suspects admitted that they were promoting narcotic pills to young people and they were manufacturing the pills using narcotic powder.

Housemaid attempts suicide

Father, son perish in Salmi accident

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Tragedy struck on the Salmi Road towards Jahra when a four-wheeler carrying a young man born in 2008 and his father overturned, resulting in fatal consequences, reports Al-Anba daily.

The father, who was driving the vehicle with Gulf license plates, succumbed to his injuries shortly after he was admitted to the intensive care unit of the Jahra Hospital.

Security sources said the son died on the spot. The incident has been documented as a case of vehicular overturning, resulting in death and injury, under File No. 8/2024 at the Salmi Police Station.

Suicide attempted: An unidentified female domestic worker was rushed to the Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital after she allegedly attempted to commit suicide by consuming a quantity of medicine pills, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the sponsor who saw the worker in pathetic condition informed the authorities and was then rushed to the hospital.

Following observation, it was determined that the expatriate had ingested the pills with suicidal intent.

Consequently, a case of criminal suspicion was registered, and the expatriate will undergo investigation once her condition stabilizes.

Drug addict nabbed: The Jahra security personnel arrested a man in his twenties under suspicious circumstances at a checkpoint in the Al-Naem area, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The suspect was taken into custody after he showed signs of drug influence and was found in possession of hashish cigarettes and related paraphernalia during a routine search conducted by Jahra security patrols.

Subsequently, the man and the confiscated items were handed over to the Directorate-General for Drugs Control for further investigation and legal action.

'National unity vital'

Court sentences Juwaihil to 3 yrs for insulting tribe

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Miteb Al-Ardhi, sentenced Muhammad Al-Juwaihil to three-year imprisonment with hard labor and imposed a fine of KD 10,000 on charges of insulting the "Ajman Tribe".

The court also ordered a copy of the case file to be sent to the Public Prosecution to be filed under a new number in order to investigate the participants in the same discussion panel, reveal their information, and refer them to the court.

The Public Prosecution charged the accused with posting a statement on his social media account in which he mentioned phrases to disdain and despise a group of society, which is the Ajman tribe.

It stated that the accused published, through his X account, audio clips in which he said the phrases that would offend public morals and disdain a group of society, which is the Ajman tribe.

The prosecution also accused him of deliberately misusing a means of communications for committing the crime described in the first and second charges.

The court stated in the merits of its ruling that protecting national unity in all societies occupies a top priority that transcends other considerations. This requires concerted efforts and true national alignment to stand as an impenetrable barrier against anyone who deliberately spreads the seeds of strife and hostility among the components of society and undermines security and societal peace within the country.

The real danger that undermines the achievement of national unity and harmony among the people of one nation is undoubtedly the racial, tribal, and sectarian alignment that creates a state of hatred, disharmony, and division within society.

Man blamed in arson: The deputy public prosecutor ordered the registration of an arson case at Sulaibiya Police Station after a citizen employed at the Ministry of Interior reported that someone set fire to his 2003 vanette while it was parked in front of his house, reports Al-Anba daily.

The citizen accused a compatriot of deliberately setting fire to his vehicle, confirming he has evidence of the latter's involvement in the vehicle fire.

Coast Guard foils two bids to smuggle drugs

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior said that as a part of its efforts to combat drug dealers and smugglers, the General Department of Coast Guard was able, in two separate cases, to thwart an attempted smuggle to the country through the sea by six individuals.

In a statement on Monday, the ministry said that while the Coast Guard was monitoring the sea borders, they reported two boats entering Kuwait regional waters, where they were stopped and found with about 26,000 pills of psychotropic substances, 20 kg of meth and 158 of weed, in their possession, trying to smuggle it to the country.

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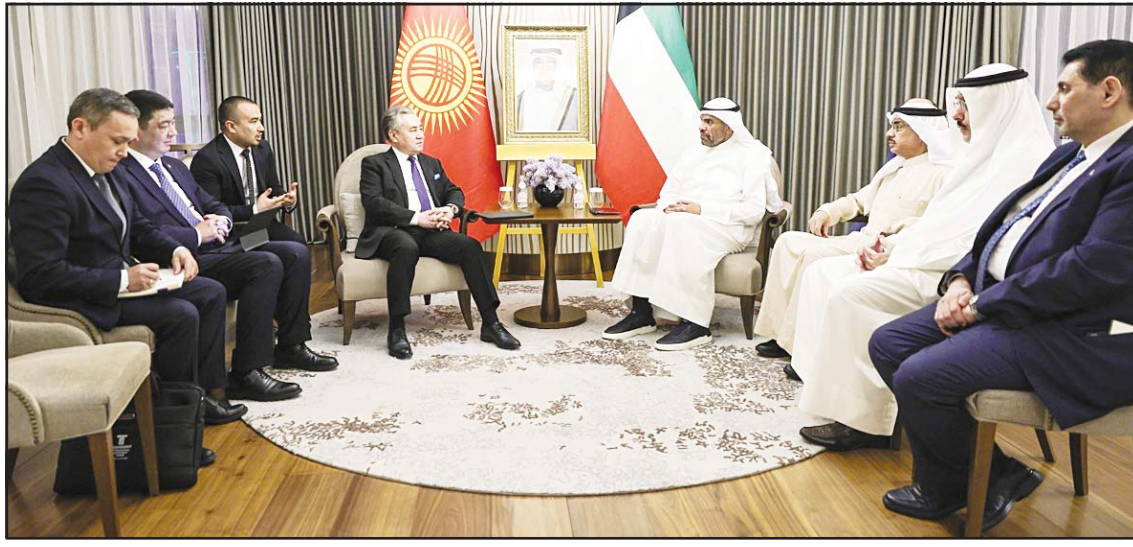
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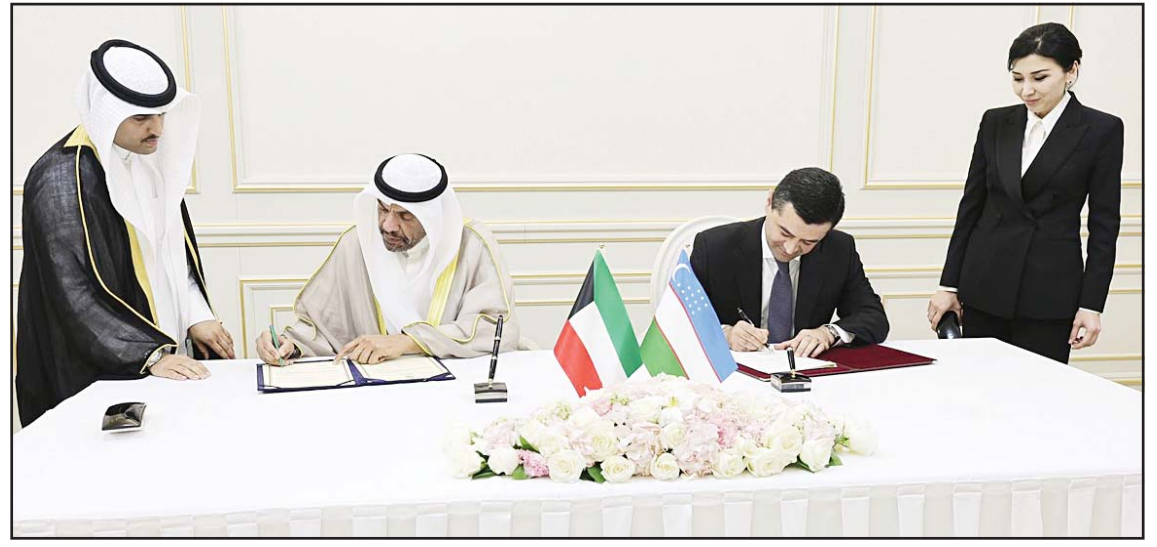
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Kuwaiti FM meets his Kyrgyz counterpart.



Kuwaiti and Uzbekistan FMs signing the cooperation program.

Report highlights Kuwait's unique position in Gulf energy dynamics

Urgent need for regional cooperation over water security

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The report by the British Bourse & Bazaar Foundation sheds light on Kuwait's unique position in the Gulf region as a significant importer of gas from non-Gulf sources, highlighting missed economic opportunities for regional countries like Iran and Qatar, reports Al-Anba daily.

Expanding the gas sector across the Gulf is seen as crucial for the region's energy transition, with the potential to pave the way for becoming a global center in the production and export of carbon-neutral hydrogen.

The report emphasizes the importance of cooperation among Gulf countries in energy transfer and water security to improve regional security and economic development. Strengthening cooperation in the energy, minerals, and water industries could lead to joint exploitation of resources, establishment of neutral regional zones, and creation of interconnected energy sources.

With abundant solar and wind energy resources

EPA, MoH in bid to combat Brucella risk

Crack down on unpasteurized dairy sales

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) is coordinating with the Ministry of Health to provide a direct line for the public to report farms selling unpasteurized dairy products to protect citizens and expatriates from Brucella, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

es in the region, there is a significant opportunity to exploit clean natural energy at the regional level and export it abroad, benefiting various industry sectors. The establishment of a strong and interconnected electricity network, facilitated by the Gulf Cooperation Council Electricity Interconnection Authority, further enhances the region's position to become a center for the production and export of clean energy.

The report also underscores the growing importance of mineral wealth in the Gulf, with recent discoveries of essential minerals for renewable

energy technologies. Joint investments in developing necessary infrastructure for mineral extraction and export logistics could position the Gulf region as a major influencer in the global transition to clean energy.

Addressing water scarcity in the Gulf region is another crucial aspect highlighted in the report. The establishment of a regional water interconnection network is seen as strategically necessary to provide fresh water to Gulf Cooperation Council countries, especially those heavily reliant on water desalination.

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Kuwait Foreign Minister meets his Tajik counterpart during the Ministerial Meeting between GCC and Central Asian countries in Tashkent.

Focus on bilateral ties

Kuwaiti FM meeting his Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan counterparts

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya met Sunday with Kyrgyzstan counterpart, Jeenbek Kulubayev.

The meeting came on the sidelines of the second meeting of the Ministerial Council between the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the countries of Central Asia, held in Tashkent, the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya met Sunday with Uzbekistan counterpart, Bakhtiyor Saidov.

The meeting came on the sidelines of the second meeting of the Ministerial Council between the countries of the

Gulf Cooperation Council and the countries of Central Asia, held in Tashkent, the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The meeting touched on bilateral ties between the two friendly countries and signed a cooperation program between the Kuwait Foreign Ministry and Uzbekistan Foreign Ministry.

Also, Abdullah Al-Yahya met on Monday with the Tajikistani Minister of Foreign Affairs Sirojiddin Muhridin, following the second ministerial meeting between GCC and Central Asian countries, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

During the meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to develop and enhance relations in various fields.

Project includes commercial complex

KPA 'engaged' in development of comprehensive logistics city

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) is currently engaged in the development of a comprehensive logistics city, featuring multi-floor warehouses designed for administrative, storage, and exhibition purposes.

The ambitious project also includes a commercial complex along with essential supporting services to bolster the coordination capabilities of logistics services within the country. Ultimately, this initiative aims to elevate Kuwait's logistical performance index on the global stage.

According to documents seen by Al-Qabas daily, this project, to be built in the Shuwaikh area, carries an estimated cost of approximately 200 million dinars and is slated for completion by the end of 2028.

The overarching objective of the project is to revamp the operations of the foreign trade sector and enhance the efficiency of seaport infrastructure, thereby streamlining import and export procedures across various goods categories.

This endeavor seeks to enhance the efficiency of services provided by the KPA, benefiting the numerous companies it interacts with.

The authority is keen to involve small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in its projects, emphasizing the empowerment of SME owners involved in import-export activities or logistical services provision.

Recognizing the pivotal role of storage areas in fostering commercial activities and increasing profits, the Ports Corporation underscores the significance of these facilities in driving revenue growth for the organization.

The objectives of the logistics city project include:

- Receiving commercial ships of larger sizes than they are now.
- Achieving faster handling services for containers and various types of goods.

- Developing the current capabilities to re-ship goods from Kuwait to other ports.
- Attracting a number of international companies to work in the country.

- Re-planning the available spaces to receive and handle containers and goods with better efficiency.
- Applying the best international standards for private ports in security

Ministry official visits Social Welfare Sector

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulaziz Sari recently visited the Social Welfare Sector to greet the wards on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr as part of the annual tradition of the ministry during Eid, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement on the sidelines of the visit, Sari affirmed the ministry's commitment, along with its officials, to greet the wards of the sector; including the elderly, juveniles and family nurseries. He said all workers are keen on spending time with the wards on every occasion.

He added: "We are one family -- the wards and workers in the ministry. From this standpoint and in accordance with the recommendations of Minister of Social Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Saud, we have always been keen to be present and greet them on Eid holiday."

On reasons for extending the debt payment campaign until April 20, he explained this is in accordance with the directive of the minister to give a chance to more government agencies, private institutions and cooperative societies to participate in the campaign; especially since many entities have expressed their desire to donate and their donations were delayed due to the documentary cycle.

Asked about the payment mechanism and limit for paying debts, Sari revealed no concept has been approved. He said a committee was formed whose members are from the ministries of Social Affairs, Justice and Endowments, as well as the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and Union of Charitable Societies and Charities. At the end of the campaign, the committee will meet to lay down the mechanism based on the total amount of donations, he added.

On the new projects of the sector, he revealed the sector is currently working on the relocation of the Juvenile Welfare Department to the new complex; indicating the current location will be used for the expansion of other departments.

- Increasing the organization's annual revenues.

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LOCAL



KRCS' volunteers at the social care home.

Al-Jarida photo

Volunteers visit care homes

KRCS reiterates commitment to serving social care homes

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society has reiterated its commitment to serving residents of social care homes during national and religious festivities, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Ahmed Al-Faqan, head of the Youth and Volunteers Unit at the Society, emphasized the importance of continuous visits by volunteers, describing them as a moral obligation aimed at providing emotional support to the elderly and individuals with special needs.

Al-Faqan highlighted the significance of volunteers' visits to care homes during Eid and other joyous occasions, emphasizing the message of solidarity and compassion conveyed to residents. He underscored the volunteers' dedication to making residents feel cherished and valued, akin to family members.

The Eid celebration organized by the Society, in collaboration with the Department of Public Activities and Information at the Ministry of Social Affairs, included residents of care homes affiliated with the Ministry.

Al-Faqan commended the efforts of volunteers and the Social Activities Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs in organizing the event, which involved distributing gifts and participating in the Eid festivities with the elderly and disabled.

Additionally, Al-Faqan noted that the Society is committed to organizing various community events coinciding with Eid and other occasions, with active participation from volunteers. This underscores the Society's ongoing commitment to serving the community and promoting social cohesion and inclusivity.

cooperation between both sides.

He added that the second reason is the unprecedented developments and state of uncertainty in many political, economic, security, and even social matters and issues that the international community is facing, which require intensifying communication and coordination in an effort to resolve these issues.

Al-Budaiwi explained that the joint cooperation action plan for the period 2023-2027 was approved during the meeting, which includes strengthening cooperation in various fields, such as political and security dialogue, economic, trade, and investment cooperation, as well as cooperation in the fields of education, health, culture, media, youth, and sports.

He also highlighted the direction of the GCC partnership with the countries of Central Asia, which includes ensuring joint success, establishing effective partnerships, enhancing exchange and communication between peoples, opening markets and elevating economic activities, working to save energy and its flow, and striving towards strengthening the digital economy.

What divine

Continued from Page 1

In reality, they are suffocating their own people, who revolted against them more than once. They were suppressed with the most severe forms of oppression. Therefore, they are working to export their problems abroad by igniting strife in the region.

In the recent operation, Israel was not alone, as proven by the practical response to the shooting down of drones and missiles before they entered Israeli airspace, but the truth must be revealed.

Instead of this theatrical strike agreed upon with the United States and Israel leading to an end to the Israeli war on Gaza, it increased the suffering of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. It also extended the life of Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which was on the brink of abyss.

Indeed, this operation revealed how Tehran serves to help Israel, not to erase it.

Amir names

Continued from Page 1

Born in 1952, Sheikh Ahmad did his primary studies in Sharqiya School and High School in Lebanon. He holds a bachelor degree in Business Administration, Finance (Banking and Investment) from University of Illinois, US, in 1976.

He worked at the Kuwait's Finance Center until 1978 and then transferred to the Central Bank of Kuwait where he worked until 1987.

Sheikh Ahmad was chairman of the board for Burgan Bank from 1987 till 1998, and in July 1999 he was appointed as Minister of Finance and Minister of Communications.

On February 14 2001, he was appointed as Minister of Communications while on July 14 2003, he was appointed as Minister of Communications, Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative Affairs.

Sheikh Ahmad was assigned as Minister of Communications and Minister of Health on June 15 June 2005.

He was appointed Minister of Oil on February 9, 2009, and Minister of Oil and Minister of Information on May 29, 2009.

On September 20, 2021, the government approved a draft decree to appoint Sheikh Ahmad as head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince.

Gov't refutes

Continued from Page 1

He added the priorities include the bills on improving the citizens' standard of living; as well as amending laws on elections, real estate financing, disabled affairs, establishment of a Kuwaiti company for petrochemical industries, and expansion of the authority of courts to rule on citizenship cases.

He also unveiled the plan to hold more meetings after the formation of the new government in order to know the latter's vision and suggestions regarding the legislative agenda, in addition to coordination on the formation of parliamentary committees.

Kuwait FM

Continued from Page 1

strengthen the foundation of cooperation between the two sides.

This came during his speech at the meeting, held in the Uzbekistan capital Tashkent, with the participation of the Cooperation Council and the Central Asian countries foreign ministers.

In his speech, Al-Budaiwi noted the multiple reasons for the importance of this meeting, as he stated that there are two main reasons that distinguish this joint ministerial meeting and make it among the most important and accurate meetings.

The first reason is that it is the first of its kind, following the historic summit hosted by Saudi Arabia in July 2023, which brought together the leaders of the GCC countries and the leaders of the Central Asian countries to establish the frameworks for future

'Caring for needy families one of priorities of society'

'Al-Najat' distributes aid to needy families in Ramadan

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Director of Aid Department at Al-Najat Charitable Society Mohammad Al-Khalidi has revealed that the society distributed financial aid to 125 deserving families during Ramadan, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Khalidi said the value of the assistance provided to families varied according to the number of family members. "We are keen on providing assistance to the most needy families, provided official documents proving the family's need are presented," he added.

He stated that caring for needy families in the country is one of the priorities of the society; which remains committed to providing a decent life for these families, while strengthening social solidarity as per the teachings of the true religion and maintaining societal security.

Ambassador Lewis hails historic 125th 'versary of UK-Kuwait ties

'Total volume of trade exchange estimated at GBP5 bln annually'

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: British Ambassador to Kuwait Belinda Lewis has affirmed the depth and strength of British-Kuwaiti relations, which she described as historic and advanced at all levels and various areas of cooperation; indicating the current year is considered a very special year as the two countries celebrate the 125th anniversary of their partnership with a number of activities reflective of the essence of bilateral relations, reports Al-Anba daily.

In an exclusive interview with the daily, Lewis said the total volume of trade exchange between the two countries is estimated at GBP5 billion annually. She revealed that the Kuwaiti investments in the United Kingdom are enormous -- among the oldest investments in the world as they started in February 1953 in London. She added this reflects the mutual trust between the two countries.

She stated that defense cooperation between the two countries is ancient, disclosing that 30 short-term training teams will visit Kuwait in 2024. She stressed that Kuwait, with its calm diplomacy and pioneering mediation, maintains its long-standing tradition of non-interference in the affairs of other countries and is interested in various affairs of the region, while praising the role it plays. She added Kuwaiti women play a vital role in the advancement and progress of their country; as they are more educated than other women in the region and have had many successes, with a distinguished presence at the level of leadership positions.

Exchange

She asserted: "We put great importance on cultural exchange between the two countries to provide a better basis for common understanding. Indeed, it is an important bridge of communication between the two friendly countries. The United Kingdom has a rich and diverse culture, as does Kuwait. Hence, we find that the partnership between the two countries has resulted in a common British-Kuwaiti culture; as British goods are present in the Kuwaiti markets and many Kuwaitis are studying in British universities and academic institutions. We have excellent relationship in many fields."

Asked about the Kuwaitis studying in her country, she revealed: "Academic cooperation between the two countries is historic. The United Kingdom is considered one of the favorite study and academic destinations for Kuwaitis. I have personally seen a number of Kuwaitis who are around 80 years old and they told me that they obtained bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from British universities in various specializations such as Medicine, Engineering, Economics and Cybersecurity. Thousands of Kuwaitis are currently studying in the United Kingdom in many academic and scientific fields. We are happy with this turnout and are keen on increasing their number. We welcome Kuwaiti investments in our country and encourage them to benefit from the distinctive and safe investment climate and great facilities, but I advise them to look at investment opportunities outside London, which have many investment opportunities, especially in the real estate sector. They must go to the United Kingdom and see the situation in person and meet the potential partners."

Wafa director Moheisen Atawneh told KUNA that for the first time since the Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza, 500 bags of flour were secured, as initial shipment to the northern regions.

Al-Atawneh stated that 30,000 bags of flour have been distributed to all governorates of the Strip.

Additionally, 500 bags of flour will be delivered daily to the northern governorates.

He also mentioned that during the holy month of Ramadan, more than 60,000 Iftar meals were distributed to displaced Palestinians.

Observers confirm Kuwait's robust support for the Palestinian people through frequent air bridge deliveries of relief, food, and medical supplies.

In 2024, we had 30 short-term training teams who came to Kuwait, some of whom were stationed in the region and most of whom came from the United Kingdom. I mean military cooperation between the two countries is fine and both sides are making the most of it."

She also expressed her happiness over the positive reactions regarding the Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which facilitated procedures and made them easier and time-saving, as the whole process does not take more than a few minutes. This was also reflected in the increase



Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev during the meeting with Kuwait's FM Al-Yahya.

KUNA photo

Uzbekistan president receives Kuwait's FM

Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on Monday, received Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, on the sidelines of the second ministerial meeting between GCC and Central Asian countries, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

During the meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to develop and enhance relations in various fields. (KUNA)

Dr Swaika highlights importance of reading in digital age

KTech-India strengthens academic & cultural cooperation with Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The opening of a special section for the State of India at Kuwait Technical College (KTech), featuring a collection of books and references donated by the Ambassador of the Republic of India to Kuwait, HE Dr. Adarsh Swaika, marks a significant step in cultural and academic cooperation between India and Kuwait, reports Al-Anba daily.

During the event, Ambassador Swaika highlighted the importance of books and reading in the digital age, emphasizing the value they bring to education and intellectual development.

He expressed his delight at the collaboration between the Indian Embassy and Kuwait Technical College, underscoring the shared commitment to promoting knowledge and learning.

Mishari Aiman Boodai, Chairman of the College's Board of Trustees, underscored the college's dedication to fostering academic relationships with sister countries' embassies.



Dr. Swaika addressing the audience.

He emphasized the role of such collaborations in enhancing the academic and cultural landscape, benefiting both students and society as a whole.

As a gesture of appreciation, the ambassador was honored at the conclusion of the ceremony. Additionally, a dialogue was initiated

between Ambassador Swaika and the faculty members of the college to explore opportunities for further cooperation in the future.

This exchange of ideas and insights sets the stage for fruitful collaboration between India and Kuwait in the field of education and beyond.



Kuwait Red Crescent Society's volunteers distribute aid in the northern areas of the Gaza Strip.

KUNA photo

Over 60,000 Iftar meals distributed during Ramadan

KRCS delivers flour shipment to Gaza's northern region

GAZA, April 15, (KUNA): Wafa Foundation for Development in Palestine announced on Sunday the arrival of the first relief aid shipment, carrying 500 bags of flour to Gaza's northern regions, with support from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

Wafa director Moheisen Atawneh told KUNA that for the first time since the Israeli occupation aggression on Gaza, 500 bags of flour were secured,

as initial shipment to the northern regions.

Al-Atawneh stated that 30,000 bags of flour have been distributed to all governorates of the Strip.

Additionally, 500 bags of flour will be delivered daily to the northern governorates.

He also mentioned that during the holy month of Ramadan, more than 60,000 Iftar meals were distributed to displaced Palestinians.

In addition to causing casualties among Palestinians in their search for bags of flour, the Israeli occupation obstructs aid delivery to the northern areas of the Gaza Strip by setting up military checkpoints and roadblocks along the main routes.

Observers confirm Kuwait's robust support for the Palestinian people through frequent air bridge deliveries of relief, food, and medical supplies.



Belinda Lewis

World News Roundup

Europe

More civilians die in Kyiv

Croatia election 'pits' PM against president

ZAGREB, Croatia, April 15, (AP): Croatia's upcoming parliamentary election, set for Wednesday, follows a campaign that was marked by heated exchanges between the country's two top officials, sparking a political crisis in the Balkan country that belongs to both the European Union and NATO.

The ballot will pit the ruling conservative Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) led by incumbent Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic against an alliance of centrist and left-wing parties informally led by populist President Zoran Milanović and his Social Democratic Party (SDP).

A lot is at stake in the race for Croatia's 151-seat parliament, not just in the country itself but for Europe as it grapples with the instability from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Milanović

If the HDZ stays in power, the country would maintain relative political stability and continue on the pro-Western course in supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia. A success for SDP could put it on track for victory in the European Parliament elections in June and the presidential election in December. It would shake the HDZ's long dominance of politics and potentially open space

for stronger pro-Russian influence in the country, akin to Hungary and Slovakia.

Joined

The HDZ has largely held power since Croatia gained independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. The Adriatic Sea nation became the newest member of the European Union in 2013, and joined Europe's passport-free travel area and the eurozone last year.

The president holds a largely ceremonial role in Croatia, while the prime minister exerts most of the political power.

After Milanovic scheduled the election and announced his surprise bid for prime minister, he began campaigning on behalf of the SDP. But Croatia's constitutional court judges stepped in, saying the move was unconstitutional.

They said that the president can't run for prime minister, take part in the upcoming parliamentary election or campaign in favor of any party, unless he first resigns.

Milanovic refused, openly ignoring the top court and continuing to campaign in favor of the left-wing alliance. He accused Plenkovic and the HDZ of rampant corruption and "massive theft" of state funds, referring to past and present scandals, some of which had ended up in the courts. Plenkovic denied the accusations.

Popular

The election has played out as the final episode in the long-running rivalry between Plenkovic and Milanovic. Milanovic's colorful use of insults against his opponents and critics has jarred many but he remains the most popular politician in surveys, seen as speaking openly and using plain words as opposed to the more reserved Plenkovic.

Milanovic has often voiced a pro-Russian stance during the war in Ukraine, opposing the training of Ukrainian soldiers in Croatia as well as sending weapons to Ukraine because, in his view, it only prolongs the war. He called Plenkovic an "ordinary coward" for allegedly preventing him from directly taking part in the election.

"It will be game over for Plenkovic" after Wednesday, Milanovic said, calling on voters to turn out in great numbers "to get rid of Plenkovic and his cartel."

Plenkovic, like Milanovic a former career diplomat, accused his rival of being irresponsible and of "pushing Croatia and the Croatian people into the 'Russian World.'" Plenkovic said Milanovic should not hold any public office, describing him as a "political waste that brought only negativity."

Also:

KYIV, Ukraine: More civilians died across Ukraine on Sunday as analysts warned that delays in U.S. military assistance would see Kyiv struggle to fight off Russian offensives.

One man was Sunday killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor's office said. Elsewhere, a 67-year-old woman was killed after shelling hit an apartment block in the Donetsk region, said Gov. Vadym Filashkin.

Officials in the Kharkiv region also said Sunday that they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day. Ten Russian Shahed-type drones were shot down over the Kharkiv region overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force said Sunday.

Meanwhile, shelling in the Russian-occupied Kherson region killed two civilians Sunday, said Moscow-installed leader Vladimir Saldo. Ukrainian drones were also reported in Russia's Krasnodar and Belgorod regions and over the Black Sea, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

The news came as the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, warned that delays in Western military assistance would increasingly hamper Ukraine's ability to push back Russian advances.

With the war in Ukraine entering its third year and a vital US aid package for Kyiv stuck in Congress, Russia has used its edge in firepower and personnel to step up attacks across eastern Ukraine. It has increasingly used satellite-guided gliding bombs - dropped from planes from a safe distance - to pummel Ukrainian forces beset by a shortage of troops and ammunition.

MOSCOW: The Russian military on Friday reported a successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the launch took place at the Kapustin Yar testing range in the south of the country as part of "state testing of prospective missile systems, as well as confirmation of the stability of missiles in service."

The test launched achieved its results "in full," the ministry added, and confirmed "high reliability of Russian missiles to ensure (Russia's) strategic security." The ministry didn't name the type of the missile that was test-launched.

Russia regularly carries out test launches of ICBMs and other missiles as it seeks to modernize its weapons. Meanwhile, rescue workers in Ukraine have pulled five puppies from underneath the rubble of a destroyed building, a video released by the country's emergency services Friday showed.



A woman poses for photos between rows of tulips at the Abbotsford Tulip Festival in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada, on April 14. (Xinhua)

Politics

Tax Day reveals major split in how rivals would govern

News orgs urge Biden & Trump to debate

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): Twelve news organizations on Sunday urged presumptive presidential nominees Joe Biden and Donald Trump to agree to debates, saying they were a "rich tradition" that have been part of every general election campaign since 1976.

While Trump, who did not participate in debates for the Republican nomination, has indicated a willingness to take on his 2020 rival, the Democratic president has not committed to debating him again.

Although invitations have not been formally issued, the news organizations said it was not too early for each campaign to say publicly that it will participate in the three presidential and one vice presidential forums set by the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates.

"If there is one thing Americans can agree on during this polarized time, it is that the stakes of this election are exceptionally high," the organizations said in a joint statement. "Amidst that backdrop, there is simply no substitute for the candidates debating with each other, and before the American people, their visions for the future of our nation."

ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox, PBS, NBC, NPR and The Associated Press all signed on to the letter.

Canceled

Biden and Trump debated twice in 2020. A third debate was canceled after Trump, then president, tested positive for COVID-19 and would not debate remotely.

Asked on March 8 whether he would commit to a debate with Trump, Biden said, "it depends on his behavior." The president was visibly miffed by his opponent in the freewheeling first 2020 debate, at one point saying, "will you shut up?"

Trump campaign managers Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita said in a letter this past week that "we have already indicated President Trump is willing to debate anytime, any place and anywhere - and the time to start these debates is now."

They cited the seven 1858 Illinois Senate debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, saying

"certainly today's America deserves as much."

The Republican National Committee voted in 2022 to no longer participate in forums sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates. The Trump campaign has not indicated it would adhere to that, but did have some conditions. The campaign managers said the commission selected a "demonstrably anti-Trump moderator" in then-Fox News host Chris Wallace in 2020 and wants assurances the commission debates are fair and impartial.

Timetable

The Trump campaign also wants the timetable moved up, saying that many Americans will have already voted by Sept 16, Oct 1 and Oct 9, the dates of the three debates set by the commission.

The Biden campaign declined comment on the news organizations' letter, pointing to the president's earlier statement. There was no immediate response from the Trump campaign.

But on Saturday, Trump held a rally in northeast Pennsylvania with two lecterns set up on the stage: one for him to give a speech, the other to symbolize what he said was Biden's refusal to debate him. The second lectern had a placard that read, "Anytime. Anywhere. Anyplace."

Midway through his campaign speech, Trump turned to his right and pointed to the second lectern.

"We have a little, look at this, it's for him," he said. "See the podium? I'm calling on Crooked Joe Biden to debate anytime, anywhere, any place. Right there. And we have to debate because our country is going in the wrong direction so badly and while it's a little bit typically early we have to debate. We have to explain to the American people what the hell is going on," Trump said.

C-SPAN, NewsNation and Univision also joined the letter calling for debates. Only one newspaper, USA Today, added its voice. The Washington Post declined a request to join.

Certainly the broadcasters could use the juice that debates may bring. Television news ratings are down significantly compared with the 2020

campaign, although there are other factors involved, such as cord-cutting and the pandemic, that increased interest in news four years ago.

There were no Democratic debates this presidential cycle, and Trump's refusal to participate in the GOP forums depressed interest in them.

Also:

WASHINGTON: Tax Day reveals a major split in how Joe Biden and Donald Trump would govern: The presidential candidates have conflicting ideas about how much to reveal about their own finances and the best ways to boost the economy through tax policy.

Biden, the sitting Democratic president, plans to release his income tax returns on Monday, the IRS filing deadline. And on Tuesday, he is scheduled to deliver a speech in Scranton, Pennsylvania, about why the wealthy should pay more in taxes to reduce the federal deficit and help fund programs for the poor and middle class.

Biden is proud to say that he was largely without money for much of his decades-long career in public service, unlike Trump, who inherited hundreds of millions of dollars from his father and used his billionaire status to launch a TV show and later a presidential campaign.

"For 36 years, I was listed as the poorest man in Congress," Biden told donors in California in February. "Not a joke."

In 2015, Trump declared as part of his candidacy, "I'm really rich."

The Republican former president has argued that voters have no need to see his tax data and that past financial disclosures are more than sufficient. He maintains that keeping taxes low for the wealthy will supercharge investment and lead to more jobs, while tax hikes would crush an economy still recovering from inflation that hit a four-decade peak in 2022.

"Biden wants to give the IRS even more cash by proposing the largest tax hike on the American people in history when they are already being robbed by his record-high inflation crisis," said

Karoline Leavitt, press secretary for the Trump campaign.

than five decades after a World War II veteran was slain while working as a milkman in Florida, investigators say they've solved the case thanks to two people who came forward after the killer died.

Hiram "Ross" Grayam was delivering

milk in April 1968 and failed to return home after work. Deputies later found his body and his milk truck deep in the woods in the Vero Beach area, the Indian River County Sheriff's Office said in a news release. He had been shot several times.



Croatia's Prime Minister incumbent Andrej Plenkovic, (centre right), attends his party's rally in Zagreb, Croatia on April 14. Croatia this week holds a parliamentary election following a campaign that was marked by heated exchanges between the country's two top officials, creating a political crisis in the Balkan country, a European Union and NATO member state. (AP)



Bartlett



Shelly

America

NY shootout kills officer, suspect: A police officer and a sheriff's deputy in upstate New York were shot and killed Sunday night in an exchange of gunfire with a suspect, who also was killed, police said.

The shooting took place shortly after 8 pm in Liverpool, about 6 miles (9.6 kilometers) north of Syracuse.

The Syracuse Police Department and Onondaga County Sheriff's Office were tracking a vehicle that had eluded police earlier, Syracuse Police Chief Joseph Cecile said during a press conference.

Two Syracuse police officers unsuccessfully attempted to stop a suspicious vehicle but got the license plate and tracked it to an address on Darien Drive in Liverpool. They requested assistance from the sheriff's office after learning the suspect might be armed, Cecile said.

All three were pronounced dead at the hospital, Cecile said. Onondaga County Sheriff Toby Shelly said police planned to search the house as part of the ongoing investigation. (AP)

Four charged with murder: Four people were arrested and charged with murder and kidnapping over the weekend in connection with the disappearances of two Oklahoma women.

Veronica Butler, 27, and Jilian Kelley, 39, of Hugoton, Kansas, were driving through the Oklahoma panhandle to pick up Butler's children for a March 30 birthday party in Kansas but never showed up. Their vehicle was later found abandoned on a rural highway in Texas County, Oklahoma, about 11 miles (18 km) south of Elkhart, Kansas, on the Oklahoma-Kansas state line. The area is about 260 miles (418 km) northwest of Oklahoma City.

The Texas County Sheriff's Office requested help from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigations, which said its officers immediately suspected foul play, based on undisclosed evidence found in the vehicle. (AP)

Detectives solve 1968 case: More



Children prepare for rocket model launching in St Petersburg on April 14. A rocket model launch event was held here in celebration of Russia's Cosmonautics Day, which commemorates the first manned spaceflight on April 12, 1961 by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. (Xinhua)

The case went cold, and no arrests were made during the next 56 years.

"Through determination and the cooperation of witnesses, new leads emerged: Thomas J. Williams, now deceased, had confessed to Grayam's murder, his guilt echoing from beyond the grave," the sheriff's office said in a statement. (AP)

Officer killed in crash: A veteran police officer was killed when his cruiser was struck by another vehicle after he made a traffic stop in eastern Nebraska, authorities said Saturday.

The Nebraska State Patrol said in a news release that Ceresco Police Officer Ross Bartlett, 54, stopped a car about a mile south of Ceresco on Highway 77 about 7:30 p.m. Friday. Both vehicles were parked on the shoulder, and the driver and officer were both seated in their vehicles, when a pickup truck rear-ended the police cruiser, pushing it into the stopped car, the State Patrol statement said.

First responders arrived a few minutes later and found bystanders attempting to help Bartlett and the others involved in the crash. He flown to a hospital in Lincoln, where he was pronounced dead.

The driver of the car, a 27-year-old Lincoln man, suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries. The pickup driver, a 49-year-old man from the city of Crete, was not seriously hurt. (AP)

Subcontinent

Rains kill 36 in Pakistan

India PM uses tactics to subdue opponents

NEW DELHI, April 15, (AP): Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and his government are increasingly wielding strong-arm tactics to subdue political opponents and critics of the ruling Hindu-nationalist party ahead of the nationwide elections that begin this week.

A decade into power, and on the cusp of securing five more years, the Modi government is reversing India's decadeslong commitment to multiparty democracy and secularism.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has brought corruption charges against many officials from its main rival, the Congress Party, but few convictions. Dozens of politicians from other opposition parties are under investigation or in jail. And just last month, Modi's government froze the Congress party's bank accounts for what it said was non-payment of taxes.

The Modi administration says the country's investigating agencies are independent and that its democratic institutions are robust, pointing to high voter turnout in recent elections that have delivered Modi's party a clear mandate.

Yet civil liberties are under attack. Peaceful protests have been crushed with force. A once free and diverse press is threatened. Violence is on the rise against the Muslim minority. And the country's judiciary increasingly aligns with the executive branch.



Modi

Stake

To better understand how Modi is reshaping India and what is at stake in an election that begins Friday and runs through June 1, The Associated Press spoke with a lawyer, a journalist, and an opposition politician.

Mihir Desai has fought for the civil liberties and human rights of India's most disadvantaged communities, such as the poor and Muslims, for nearly four decades.

The 65-year-old lawyer from India's financial capital Mumbai is now working on one of his - and the country's - most high-profile cases: defending a dozen political activists, journalists and lawyers jailed in 2018 on accusations of plotting to overthrow the Modi government. The accusations, he says, are baseless - just one of the government's all-too-frequent and audacious efforts to silence critics.

One of the defendants in the case, a Jesuit priest and longtime civil rights activist, died at age 84 after about nine months in custody. The other defendants remain in jail, charged under anti-terror laws that rarely result in convictions.

"First authorities came up with a theory that they planned to kill Modi. Now they are being accused of being terrorist sympathizers," he said.

Hacked

According to digital forensics experts at US-based Arsenal Consulting, the Indian government hacked into the computers of some of the accused and planted files that were later used as evidence against them.

To Desai, this is proof that the Modi government has "weaponized" the country's once-independent investigative agencies.

He sees threats to Indian democracy all around him. Last year, the government removed the country's chief justice as one of three people who appoint commissioners overseeing elections; Modi and the opposition leader in parliament are the others. Now, one of Modi's cabinet ministers has a vote in the process, giving the ruling party a 2-1 majority.

"It's a death knell to free and fair elections," Desai said.

Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para, 35, was long seen as an ally in the Indian government's interests in Kashmir. He worked with young people in the majority-Muslim, semi-autonomous region and preached to them about the benefits of embracing India and its democratic institutions - versus seeking independence, or a merger with Pakistan.

Floods kill 33 in Afghanistan: Heavy flooding from seasonal rains in Afghanistan has killed at least 33 people and injured 27 others in three days, a Taliban spokesman said Sunday.

Abdullah Janan Saiq, the Taliban's spokesman for the State Ministry for Natural Disaster Management, said Sunday that flash floods hit the capital, Kabul, and several provinces.

He added more than 600 houses were either damaged or destroyed while around 200 livestock died.

The flooding also damaged around 800 hectares of agricultural land, and more than 85 kilometers (53 miles) of roads, Saiq said.

Western Farah, Herat, southern Zabul and Kandahar are among the provinces that suffered the most damage, he added.

Lightning, rains kill 36 in Pakistan: Lightning and heavy rains have killed at least 36 people, mostly farmers, across Pakistan in the past three days, officials said Monday, as authorities in the country's southwest declared a state of emergency.

Most of the deaths occurred when lightning struck farmers harvesting wheat and rains caused houses to collapse in eastern Punjab province, said Arfan Kathia, a spokesman for the provincial disaster management authority. He said more rains were expected this week.

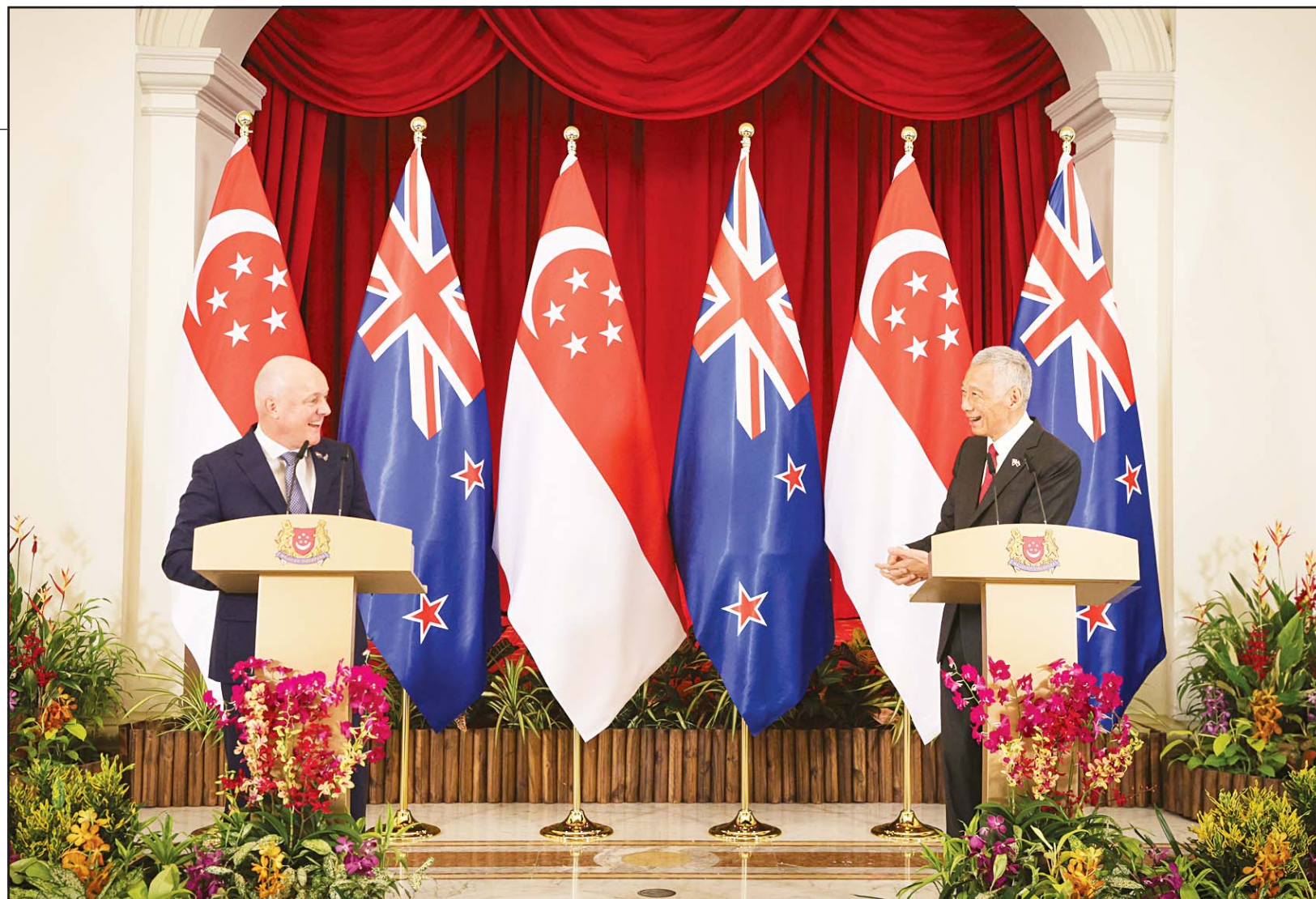
Rains, which also lashed the capital Islamabad, killed seven people in southwestern Baluchistan province over the weekend, and eight others died in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan. Authorities in Baluchistan declared a state of emergency.

Pakistan probes death of suspect: Pakistani authorities are investigating the shooting death of a man who had been acquitted of killing accused Indian spy Sarabjit Singh in a Lahore prison in 2013, a police official said Sunday.

Pakistan has previously accused India's intelligence agency of being involved in killings inside Pakistan, saying it had credible evidence linking two Indian agents to the deaths of two Pakistanis last year.

The man who died in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore on Sunday was Amir Tamba. He was a suspect in the death of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian national who was convicted of spying in Pakistan and handed a death sentence in 1991.

But Singh died in 2013 after inmates attacked him in a Lahore prison. His fate inflamed tensions between the two South Asian nuclear-armed rivals.



In this photo released by Singapore's Ministry of Communications and Information, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, (left), chats with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during a news conference at the Istana on April 15. Lee said on Monday that he will step down on May 15 after two decades at the helm, and hand power to his deputy Lawrence Wong. (AP)

Asia

Solomons' polls could impact China influence in S.Pacific

Singapore PM Lee to step down on May 15

SINGAPORE, April 15, (AP): Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said Monday that he will step down on May 15 after two decades at the helm, and hand power to his deputy Lawrence Wong.

Lee, 72, will formally advise the city-state's president to appoint Wong, who is currently deputy prime minister and finance minister, to succeed him, his office said in a brief statement. Wong, who has the unanimous support of lawmakers in the long-ruling People's Action Party, will be sworn in at the national palace later the same day, it said.

Lee has served as prime minister and head of the PAP since August 2004.

Lee announced last November that he would retire this year and has already named Wong as his designated successor. Lee originally planned to step down before turning 70, but those plans were shelved because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership

"For any country, a leadership transition is a significant moment. Lawrence and the 4G (fourth-generation) team have worked hard to gain the people's trust, notably during the pandemic," Lee said in a Facebook post on Monday. "I ask all Singaporeans to give Lawrence and his team your full support, and work with them to create a brighter future for Singapore."

Lee has said there is no reason to delay the political transition and that passing the baton to Wong before national elections due next year will allow the 51-year-old politician to win his own mandate and take the country forward.

Wong came to prominence while helping to coordinate Singapore's fight against COVID-19. He will be the city-state's fourth leader since its independence in 1965.

PAP, one of the world's longest-serving parties, retained its super majority with 83 out of 93 parliamentary seats in 2020 general elections. But that was its worst performance after losing some seats and support slipped.

Lee is the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew, who became Singapore's first prime minister and built the resource-poor city-state into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office. But Singapore has also been criticized for its tight government control, media censorship and use of oppressive laws and civil lawsuits against

broke. The country's power distribution company has begun the process of replacing the pole with a metallic one, the wildlife service said.

Conservationists have in the past raised alarm over the risk of wild animals being electrocuted by power lines.

In 2021, two giraffes were electrocuted



The Sydney Opera House is illuminated with a black ribbon on April 15, as part of the national day of mourning following the stabbing deaths of several people at a shopping mall on April 13. Australian police are examining why a lone assailant who stabbed several people to death in a busy Sydney shopping mall and injured more than a dozen others targeted women while avoiding men. (AP)

Australia police probe why suspect in Sydney mall stabbing targeted women

MELBOURNE, Australia, April 15, (AP): Australian police are examining why a lone assailant who stabbed six people to death in a busy Sydney shopping mall and injured more than a dozen others targeted women while avoiding men, a police commissioner said on Monday. The killer's father blamed his son's frustration at not having a girlfriend.

Police shot and killed the homeless assailant, Joel Cauchi, during his knife attack in the Westfield Bondi Junction mall on Saturday near world-famous Bondi Beach.

Police have ruled out terrorism and said the 40-year-old had a history of mental illness.

New South Wales state Police Commissioner Karen Webb said detectives would question Cauchi's family in a bid to determine his motive. CCTV footage from the mall showed Cauchi targeted women.

"The videos speak for themselves, don't they? And that's certainly a line of inquiry for us," Webb said.

"It's obvious to me, it's obvious to detectives that that seems to be an area of interest: that the offender had focused on women and avoided the men," Webb added.

The attacker's father Andrew Cauchi said he knew why his son,

who suffered from schizophrenia, had targeted women.

"Because he wanted a girlfriend and he's got no social skills and he was frustrated out of his brain," the visibly distraught 76-year-old told reporters outside his home in Toowoomba in Queensland state, an 870-kilometer (540-mile) drive across the New South Wales border from Sydney.

Strong quake hits PNG: A strong magnitude 6.5 earthquake struck Papua New Guinea on Monday, authorities said, but there was no tsunami alert or immediate reports of damage.

The quake struck the South Pacific Island nation 110 kilometers (68 miles) southeast of the West New Britain provincial capital Kimbe at a depth of 68 kilometers (42 miles) shortly before 7 am local time (21:00 GMT), the US Geological Survey said in a statement.

The US Tsunami Warning System said there was no tsunami alert.

Papua New Guinea sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," the arc of seismic faults around the Pacific Ocean where much of the world's earthquake and volcanic activity occurs.

There are also fears the electoral process could again ignite violence in a restive nation riven with inter-island and ethnic tensions, a perceived lack of sharing of resources, widespread poverty and high youth unemployment.

Voters from among 700,000 people spread over the more than 900 islands that comprise the Solomon Islands will elect 50 lawmakers from 334 candidates. Only 21 candidates are women and none of them is currently in office. The only two women in the current parliament won't contest the election.

The 50 newly elected lawmakers then decide which of them will become prime minister. No political party ever wins the 26-seat majority needed to form a government in a system derived from the former British colonial masters' Westminster system.

when they walked into low-lying electric power transmission lines at the Soysambu Conservancy in western Kenya. Conservationists at the time said experts' advice was ignored, leading to the deaths.

Also on Friday, President **William Ruto** announced the construction of a 100-kilometer (62-mile) electric fence in Lariak Forest in Laikipia county to prevent elephants from encroaching into neighboring farms. (AP)

Judge tosses out suit against Hifter: A US judge has tossed out a series of civil lawsuits against a Libyan military commander who used to live in Virginia and was accused of killing innocent civilians in that country's civil war.

At a court hearing Friday, US District Judge Leonie Brinkema said she had no jurisdiction to preside over a case alleging war crimes committed in Libya, even though the defendant, Khalifa Hifter, has US citizenship and lived for more than 20 years in the northern Virginia suburbs of the nation's capital as an exile from the regime of Muammar Gaddafi.

The ruling was a significant reversal of fortune for Hifter. In 2022, Brinkema entered a default judgment against Hifter after he refused to sit for scheduled depositions about his role in the fighting that has plagued the country over the last decade. (AP)



A Pakistani with his bike wades through a flooded road caused by heavy rain in Peshawar, Pakistan on April 15. Lightning and heavy rains have killed at least 36 people, mostly farmers, across Pakistan in the past three days, officials said Monday, as authorities in the country's southwest declared a state of emergency. (AP)



Matinyi



Ruto

Africa

58 dead in Tanzania floods: Floods have killed 58 people in Tanzania during the last two weeks, the government said, as heavy rains continue in the East African country.

The coastal region was hit hardest, with 126,831 people affected, according to the government.

Government spokesperson **Mobhare Matinyi** said on Sunday that essential supplies including food had been distributed to those affected.

Tanzania plans to construct 14 dams to prevent flooding in future, he added.

East Africa is experiencing heavy rains, with reported flooding in neighboring Kenya killing at least 13 people so far.

Infrastructure has also been damaged and those living in flood-prone areas are being urged to move.

The rains are expected to reach their peak towards the end of this month. (AP)

Congo landslide kills 15: A landslide in southwest Congo caused by heavy rains killed at least 15 people and left as many as 60 others missing, local officials said Sunday.

Seven people were found alive after the landslide Saturday near the port near the town of Idiofa.

"There's a hill above the port, and the rain caused the earth on the hill to collapse," a local deputy elected official, Dhedhe Mupasa, told reporters Sunday.

Interim provincial Gov Félicien Kiway told reporters a team was dispatched to help search for survivors and seven people were found alive and were hospitalized. A further 60 people were still missing, he said.

A local official said it was difficult to determine the exact number of people missing because the area was used as a marketplace every Saturday. The official described the area as a port where fishermen came to sell fish and buy soap. (AP)

Kenya buffaloes electrocuted: Eight wild buffaloes walked into low-lying power lines in western Kenya and were electrocuted, the national wildlife agency said Friday.

The incident happened at the Lake Nakuru National Park known for its diverse wildlife species, the Kenya Wildlife Service said.

The power lines were lying low on the ground after a wooden support pole

bonds

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (240) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.375%) and (6) months with Rate of Return (4.500%).

disharmony between education, market's needs aggravates joblessness in Arab region

Up to 27.6 percent of the youth in the Arab region are unemployed, amid defects in the educational and skill-enhancing systems. Dr. Ruba Jaradat, the regional director of the International Labor Organization, said in an interview with KUNA that the young citizens in the Arab countries account to more than 14 percent of the whole workforce, with mounting joblessness rates working 27.6 percent in 2023, four times higher than the unemployment among adults aged above 25 years. Insufficient teaching and skill-boosting systems in the Arab region contribute to the

rise of unemployment and deepen the gap between the graduates' skills and those required by the labor market, thus obstructing the youngsters' employment and weakening the economies. Shedding further light on the gap, she mentioned the educational institutions' failure to consider the employment market needs, leading to large numbers of youth whose skills do not match those that are warranted. Moreover, these institutions largely focus on conventional practices, with emphasis on public certificates, rather than practical

knowledge and the graduates lack of personal skills such as collective communication, critical thinking and coping capacities. Furthermore, they have not sufficiently coped with the demand rise for digital skills and rapid technological advancement, thus creating more complications for youth employment. She called for overhauling the educational systems and curricula in the Arab world and allowing employers to have a role in making the teaching curricula to ensure that the graduates enter the work market with sufficient capabilities. In her recipes, rigid memorization must be

shunned, the curricula must include teaching personal, digital and green skills. "In our assessment, the work horizons remain worrying in the region," amid the rise of unemployment among the women and youth, she added. On her part, Dr. Maysoun Shehab, the head of the educational department at UNESCO in Beirut, has affirmed that the compatibility of education with the market needs has proven effective in trimming joblessness. She proposed that education be largely shifted to the virtual world. (KUNA)

Market Movements

15-04-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts				
SAUDI	-	Tadawul	+41.44	12,708.34	DUBAI	-	DFM	-0.37	4,243.78
EGYPT	-	EGX 30	+1,112.72	29,616.47	JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	-290.75	39,232.80
PAKISTAN	-	KSE 100	+256.69	70,608.88	PHILIPPINES	-	PSEI	-96.96	6,562.43

Business

Gulf market indices plunge amid geopolitical tensions

Bursa Kuwait main indices decline, trading volume falls

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Most Gulf market indices closed in the red on Sunday, driven by escalating geopolitical tensions in the region, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Iran's air attack with dozens of drones and cruise missiles targeting sites in Israel on Saturday evening, in retaliation for the targeting of the Iranian consulate in Syria, contributed to the downturn.

The Bursa Kuwait saw declines across its main indices, with the Premier and General market indices dropping by 1.01% and 0.98% respectively.

Similarly, the main 50 and main indices experienced decreases of approximately 1.05% and 0.83% respectively. Trading volume reached 39.99 million dinars, involving 135.60 million shares across 10.99 thousand transactions.

The market value of the Bursa Kuwait decreased by about 403.8 million dinars, while in Saudi Arabia, the TASI main index declined by 0.30%, closing at 12,666.90

Kuwait ranks fourth in Gulf region

Gulf consulting market surpasses \$5 billion, defies global downturn

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: A recent report from Source Global Consulting revealed a notable growth of 13.2% in the consulting market across Gulf countries in 2023, surpassing \$5 billion for the first time, reports Al-Qabas daily.

This growth trend defies the global economic downturn and widespread employee layoffs observed in consulting firms worldwide.

The report highlighted Saudi Arabia as the largest consulting market in the Gulf region, experiencing an 18.2% growth rate and generating revenues exceeding \$3 billion in 2023. The UAE followed closely, securing second place with a growth of 15.2% and revenues of \$1.1 billion, while Qatar ranked third with a growth of 9.8% and revenues of \$445 million.

Kuwait claimed the fourth position in the Gulf consulting market, achieving a growth rate of 8.9% and revenues totaling \$315 million in 2023. Oman followed with a modest growth of 0.3%, generating revenues of \$156 million, while Bahrain trailed with a growth of 7.2% and revenues of \$146 million.

The report attributed the sustained demand for consulting services in the Gulf to significant public sector investments, particularly driven by the implementation of large-scale pro-

jects. Economic diversification initiatives across the region have also opened up new growth opportunities, leading to increased demand for external expertise among Gulf countries.

In addition to traditional sectors, such as financial services and public sector consulting, emerging areas like healthcare and pharmaceuticals have seen substantial growth. Healthcare consulting witnessed a robust 16% growth, while pharmaceutical consulting grew by 17% in the past year.

Moreover, the report highlighted the increasing emphasis on technology-related consulting, particularly in emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. Gulf countries, notably Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are striving to establish themselves as centers of excellence in these fields, driving demand for technology consulting services.

Looking ahead, as Gulf countries continue to implement ambitious economic diversification plans, reliance on consulting services is expected to increase further. With a growing confidence in consulting firms among regional companies and expectations of continued economic growth, the future appears promising for the consulting market in the Gulf countries.

points after initially dropping by over 1% at the start of trading and the Muscat Stock Exchange index narrowed its morning losses to end with a slight increase of 0.08% at 4700.59 points. However, the Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Bahrain stock exchanges remained closed.

Market sees 30.3% drop

Kuwait's residential real estate market faces decline

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: According to the Kuwait International Bank (KIB) report, the residential real estate market in Kuwait experienced a notable decline in 2023. The number of real estate transactions dropped to 3,039, with a total worth of 1.2 billion dinars. This marks a significant decrease of 30.3% compared to 2022, which saw 4,362 transactions valued at 1.9 billion dinars, as per Ministry of Justice real estate registration statistics, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The report identified several factors contributing to this decline. One prominent reason was the increase in the Central Bank's discount rate, leading to reduced economic feasibility in investing in income-generating residential properties and higher financing costs for construction, particularly due to rising labor wages.

Moreover, upcoming laws in Kuwait are expected to shift focus from the residential sector to other areas, aiming to liberate land and prevent land monopoly.

Measures include abolishing real estate agency, imposing annual fees on

large land holdings, and introducing utility fees for owners of multiple residential properties. These factors are anticipated to redirect capital towards the investment sector, particularly in operational investment housing, thereby increasing supply and reducing demand in the residential sector.

As a result, residential property prices saw a decline of 12%-15% compared to 2022, especially in areas farther from the Capital Governorate. However, areas closer to the capital experienced a slight decline in prices, except for distinguished locations where prices remained relatively stable.

In terms of private residential real estate, transactions notably decreased in Al-Ahmadi Governorate, particularly in the Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine region, which saw a decline due to reduced investment returns following the normalization of conditions post-pandemic.

In conclusion, the decline in residential real estate transactions indicates a corresponding decrease in prices, while transactions in other real estate segments also experienced a decline.

Al Habtoor Tower sets new standards in sustainability

Al Habtoor Group celebrates major milestone in construction of iconic Al Habtoor Tower

DUBAI, April 15: In a remarkable achievement, Al Habtoor Group announced it has reached a pivotal milestone in the construction of the much anticipated Al Habtoor Tower at the iconic Al Habtoor City – the completion of the piling phase. This achievement marks a significant leap in the construction journey of what is set to be one of the world's largest and most innovative sustainable landmark residential building.

Located in the prime area of Sheikh Zayed Road, on the picturesque banks of the Dubai Water Canal and in proximity to the Burj Khalifa and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Al Habtoor Tower is advancing rapidly with over 23 percent of the overall construction now complete. This progress underscores Al Habtoor Group's commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury and innovation, building on decades of experience and the successful development of iconic projects such as Burj Al Arab, Dubai International Airport Terminals, and the Armed Forces Officers Club in Abu Dhabi.

Despite the project's ambitious scale, encompassing a built-up area of 3,517,313 square foot over 87 floors, the construction has notably advanced ahead of schedule. In record time, the Group has completed all infrastructure work and foundation work, in addition to a large area of the 7 podiums, equivalent to 50,000 square metre of construction work – a feat that traditionally would require at least two and a half years.

Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor, Founding Chairman of Al Habtoor Group, stated, "I am proud to announce this major milestone in the construction of the Al Habtoor Tower. As Al Habtoor Group, we always deliver on time, bringing together the best teams to work in unity towards delivering this project. Our commitment to the highest quality, delivered in the fastest time, remains our top priority."

Al Habtoor continued, "What we have achieved is outstanding. Going forward, progress will be very visible to the untrained eye, with the plan to reach up to at least 35 floors by the end of this year."

The Al Habtoor Tower is not just a testament to Al Habtoor Group's innovative construction techniques but also to its dedication to environmental sustainability. The project has adopted pioneering construction methods, including the use of the highest steel grade and highest concrete grade for the first time in the United Arab Emirates, significantly reducing carbon emissions. The construction process also features a TOP & DOWN construction approach, saving a year in construction time and enabling the execution of 350,000 sqm of the built-up area in just 1000 days.

Under the visionary leadership of Khalaf Al Habtoor, the Group has consistently demonstrated its ability to meet and surpass strict delivery deadlines, ensuring that each project not only meets but also redefines industry benchmarks. The Al Habtoor Tower is no exception. It is a testament to the Group's meticulous planning, cutting-edge construction techniques, and the collective expertise of its team.

The completion of the Al Habtoor Tower within the ambitious timeline of 36



Al Habtoor Tower

months will be yet another milestone in Al Habtoor Group's illustrious journey, reinforcing its status as a trusted developer committed to excellence.

Al Habtoor Group's enduring legacy is built on a foundation of trust, quality, and a commitment to delivering the best. The Al Habtoor Tower is a continuation of this legacy, symbolising the Group's dedication to excellence and its role as a key player in shaping the skylines of Dubai and beyond.

About Al Habtoor Group:

Established by Chairman Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor in 1970, Al Habtoor

Group is considered one of the most successful and respected conglomerates in the UAE. Operating in the UAE and international markets, it proudly flies the UAE flag in numerous cities around the world, including London, Vienna, Budapest, Beirut, and Springfield in the state of Illinois, USA. The group employs thousands of highly qualified and skilled professionals. Al Habtoor Group has become synonymous with dynamic growth, demonstrating its commitment to developing its businesses in multiple sectors, including hospitality, automotive, real estate, education, insurance, and publishing.

Bitcoin's price saw upward trend end March '22, but collapsed during the yr

In times of geopolitical instability, Bitcoin has historically experienced significant volatility, as financial market investors shift their liquidity towards safer assets – including riskier crypto assets, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, when the price of Bitcoin was around \$39,000 – down from around \$44,500 just one week before the start of the war.

The downturn caused by the impending invasion of Ukraine has stoked risk aver-

sion and uncertainty among investors. By March 1, 2022, Bitcoin's price had almost fully recovered, reaching about \$44,000.

After peak volatility, Bitcoin's price saw an upward trend towards \$48,000 at the end of March 2022, but it steadily collapsed during the year – starting in 2023 at around \$16,600.

Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, when the price of Bitcoin was around \$28,000, and in contrast to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the price of Bitcoin fell less than 6% to approximately

\$26,500 over the next five days.

By October 25, 2023, Bitcoin's price had reached \$35,000, only to tumble nearly 5% by October 27, 2023, when Israel invaded Gaza. Bitcoin's price is in stark contrast to the price fluctuations of 2022, with Bitcoin surpassing \$40,000 by early December 2023, and going on to surpass \$73,000 for the first time on March 12.

In light of the retaliatory attack on Israel by Iran - the price of Bitcoin fell from its highest levels of \$67,000 just hours ago

to its current lowest levels of \$62,000 at the time of writing, according to what "Coin Market Cap" reported and viewed by "Arabian Business."

As geopolitical tension escalates, the sell-off in market risk assets is likely to continue, as liquidity seeks safer havens as a store of value.

However, interestingly, gold -- usually considered a safer store of value - saw a sharp decline in price, losing about \$100 per ounce over the past five hours.

Moreover, this decline may be indica-

tive of a more widespread sell-off as investors move away from multiple asset classes or recoup losses.

The coming months are likely to be the result of a panic response to the immediate global economic fallout, and now appear to be setting a bleak outlook for a bearish start to the summer.

The 2024 Bitcoin halving is less than a week away – with many miners preparing to halve their profits – the timing of this geopolitical event makes the coming crypto storm perfect.

Development staved off a recession

How immigrant workers in US have helped boost job growth

MIAMI, April 15, (AP): Having fled economic and political chaos in Venezuela, Luisana Silva now loads carpets for a South Carolina rug company. She earns enough to pay rent, buy groceries, gas up her car - and send money home to her parents.

Reaching the United States was a harrowing ordeal. Silva, 25, her husband and their then-7-year-old daughter braved the treacherous jungles of Panama's Darien Gap, traveled the length of Mexico, crossed the Rio Grande and then turned themselves in to the U.S. Border Patrol in Brownsville, Texas. Seeking asylum, they received a work permit last year and found jobs in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

"My plan is to help my family that much need the money and to grow economically here," Silva said.

Her story amounts to far more than one family's arduous quest for a better life. The millions of jobs that Silva and other new immigrant arrivals have been filling in the United States appear to solve a riddle that has confounded economists for at least a year:

How has the economy managed to prosper, adding hundreds of thousands of jobs, month after month, at a time when the Federal Reserve has aggressively raised interest rates to fight infla-

tion - normally a recipe for a recession? Increasingly, the answer appears to be immigrants - whether living in the United States legally or not. The influx of foreign-born adults vastly raised the supply of available workers after a U.S. labor shortage had left many companies unable to fill jobs.

More workers filling more jobs and spending more money has helped drive economic growth and create still-more job openings. The availability of immigrant workers eased the pressure on companies to sharply raise wages and to then pass on their higher labor costs to their customers via higher prices that feed inflation. Though U.S. inflation remains elevated, it has plummeted from its levels of two years ago.

"There's been something of a mystery - how are we continuing to get such extraordinary strong job growth with inflation still continuing to come down?" said Heidi Shierholz, president of the Economic Policy Institute and a former chief economist at the Labor Department. "The immigration numbers being higher than what we had thought - that really does pretty much solve that puzzle."

While helping fuel economic growth, immigrants also lie at the

Singapore, Denmark & US lead global business destinations: EIU

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Singapore, Denmark, and the United States have been identified as leading destinations for business, according to a ranking compiled by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), reports Al-Anba daily.

Priyanthi Roy, the Director of Country Forecasting and European Market Analyst at the EIU, emphasized Singapore's consistent position as the top global business destination for 16 consecutive years.

Roy highlighted Singapore's political stability and the government's

emphasis on supporting local private sector companies in adopting technological advancements as key factors driving its business appeal.

The report also highlighted countries that have shown significant improvement in the business climate, including Greece, Qatar, and India. Greece experienced the largest improvement in the EIU index due to pro-business reforms, while India was noted as a market with potential comparable to China.

The EIU's ranking evaluates the business attractiveness of 82 countries and

regions based on indicators such as inflation, cost of living, economic growth, and fiscal policies. It also provides insights into which economies are better positioned for growth and investment.

Following Singapore, Denmark and the United States secured the second and third positions, respectively. Denmark's strong macroeconomic fundamentals and advanced transportation and digital infrastructure contribute to its attractiveness for businesses. Similarly, the United States offers favorable market opportunities, particularly due to minimal restrictions on foreign

trade and investment.

The report forecasts that Singapore, Denmark, and the United States will maintain their favorable business environments over the next five years. Germany and Switzerland rank fourth and fifth, respectively, while Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Finland complete the top 10 list of ideal business locations.

Overall, the report emphasized that these leading economies offer stability and relatively slow but steady GDP growth rates, making them safe bets for investments.

working years - ages 25 to 54 - was dropping because so many of them had aged out of that category and were nearing or entering retirement. This group's numbers have shrunk by 770,000 since February 2020, just before COVID-19 slammed the economy.

Filling the gap has been a wave of immigrants. Over the past four years, the number of prime-age workers who either have a job or are looking for one has surged by 2.8 million.

Big banks warn of uncertain year ahead

Mixed financial performances reported in Q1

The survey has been conducted since 1980

Consumer sentiment dips slightly as outlook for inflation 'worsens' in US

WASHINGTON, April 15, (AP): Consumer sentiment about the U.S. economy has ticked down but remains near a recent high, with Americans' outlook largely unchanged this year.

The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index, released Friday in a preliminary version, slipped to 77.9 this month, down from March's figure of 79.4. Sentiment is about halfway between its all-time low, reached in June 2022 when inflation peaked, and its pre-pandemic averages. The survey has been conducted since 1980.

"Consumers are reserving judgment about the economy in light of the upcoming election, which, in the view of many consumers, could have a substantial impact on the trajectory of the economy," said Joanne Hsu, director of the consumer survey.

The index had dropped to 61.3 as recently as November before jumping in the following two months by the most in more than three decades. It has since moved mostly sideways.

Stronger consumer optimism can sometimes translate into more spending, which typically boosts the economy. Most economists expect consumer spending to remain healthy as long as the job market stays strong.

"Looking beyond the recent minor monthly volatility, sentiment remains on a rising trend," Oren Klachkin, an economist at Nationwide, said in a research note. "It's still a positive environment for the consumer."

Among the respondents to the survey, sentiment fell the most among Republicans. Among independents, it edged down, and it rose slightly among Democrats. Americans' economic views have become more driven by political partisanship in recent decades.

An increase in gas prices likely contributed to the decline in consumers' outlook, according to Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. The average national price of a gallon of gas has jumped about 7% from a month ago, according to AAA, to \$3.63 a gallon.

Americans' perceptions of future inflation also rose, probably reflecting still-high prices. Consumers expect inflation to be 3.1% a year from now, which would exceed the Federal Reserve's 2% target. Still, that would be below the current level of 3.5%.



Federal Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz visits Bosch Hydrogen Powertrain Systems (Chongqing) Co., Ltd. in Jiulongpo District of southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, April 14, 2024. Scholz arrived in Chongqing Municipality on Sunday to kick off his three-day official visit to China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Qiang. (Xinhua)

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): Big banks warned of an "uncertain" year ahead after mixed financial results during the first quarter in an environment of stubbornly high inflation and geopolitical clashes in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere.

JPMorgan reported a modest 6% rise in profits Friday while profits at Wells Fargo and Citigroup declined, though both topped Wall Street expectations.

"Many economic indicators continue to be favorable. However, looking ahead, we remain alert to a number of significant uncertain forces," JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon said, citing the wars in Gaza and Ukraine as well as other geopolitical pressures, high levels of government spending across the world and "persistent inflationary pressures."

Dimon used language Friday that was similar to what he told investors in his annual shareholder letter earlier this week. In that letter, Dimon warned that geopolitical events including the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war, as well as U.S. political polarization, could be creating an environment that "may very well be creating risks that could eclipse anything since World War II."

Dimon's shareholder letter on Monday seemed prophetic two days later when the U.S. released hotter-than-expected inflation data for March,

putting uncomfortably high consumer prices back at the top of agenda for policymakers, particularly President Joe Biden in his bid for a second term in the White House.

In call with reporters, Citigroup executives echoed Dimon's comments. Mark Mason, Citi's chief financial officer, said that while the bank still sees an economic soft landing - where inflation cools while keeping the economy growing - risks to the economy abound.

"The global economy seems to be resilient," Mason said, but that the bank remains concerned about inflation and what will happen as interest rates remain elevated for a longer period of time.

JPMorgan, the nation's largest bank, earned a profit of \$13.42 billion, or \$4.44 a share, compared with a profit of \$12.62 billion, or \$4.10 a share, in the same period a year earlier. JPMorgan's results were pulled lower by a \$725 million one-time charge for an assessment by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

While it topped analyst expectations, shares of JPMorgan fell more than 5% Friday after the bank released conservative full-year projections for net interest income. That forecast largely reflects the bank's expectation that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates later this year.

Most metrics of JPMorgan's business were solid for the quarter. While investment banking revenues were largely flat, the bank reported an uptick in activity. In its consumer bank, profits rose 6% and the bank set aside less money to cover potentially bad loans.

Scholz in Beijing for a visit

China, Germany aim for a steady progress in economic cooperation

By Che Yunlong, Chu Yi

BERLIN, April 15, (Xinhua): In January, German company Beumer Group settled in Taicang, Jiangsu Province, marking the arrival of the 500th German enterprise in this eastern Chinese city.

At the inauguration ceremony held in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Beumer CEO Rudolf Hausladen said the company has conducted very positive dialogues with Taicang and the local government is always responsive to their needs and supportive. "We are full of expectations for our development in the Chinese market, which possesses many growth opportunities," said Hausladen.

The strip and wire provider Kern-Liebers, one of the first German businesses settled in Taicang, recalled its entry in 1993 with an investment of 500,000 German marks, only six employees, and a 400-square-meter factory house. Now

it possesses 70,000 square meters of factories with an annual output value of 1.5 billion yuan (about 207.3 million U.S. dollars), accounting for the largest proportion of its global footprint. Thirty-one years on, the Chinese "hometown of German enterprises" has growingly been the epitome of the economic and trade cooperation between China and Germany, witnessing a more open Chinese market sharing development dividends with the world.

Joining hands

A report from the German Economic Institute shows that the total direct investment by German companies in China reached a record high of 11.9 billion euros (about 12.7 billion U.S. dollars) in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 4.3 percent. The value accounted for over 10 percent of Germany's total overseas investment, the highest level since 2014.

More than 5,000 German enterprises have taken root in China and the Chi-

nese market is of great significance to them, said Maximilian Butek, chief representative of the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce Shanghai.

Taicang is home to one-tenth of German companies in China, whose investments, totally valued at 6 billion U.S. dollars, account for almost half of all foreign capital in the city. High-tech enterprises in the fields of automotive core parts, industrial aircraft, as well as aerospace are the main industries deployed in Taicang.

Chiron Group, a century-old German machine tool manufacturer, invested and founded its sales office in Taicang in 2012, and has localized its entire value chain, ranging from production and research and development to sales and services. In the past decade, the company's business volume has quadrupled.

The diverse services and a supportive business environment provided by the local government have helped foreign companies develop in China, said

Willi Riester, chief technology officer of Chiron Machine Tool (Taicang) Co., Ltd. "We have a big trust in China and especially in Taicang to continue our business. Our forecast looks quite stable for 2024; we want to have around 20 to 30 percent growth," he said.

The average return on investments made by foreign companies in China is about 9 percent, a relatively high level across the globe. Therefore, China continues to be particularly attractive to foreign investment, said Huang Shouhong, director of the Research Office of China's State Council. German sportswear manufacturer Adidas saw a full-year revenue in Greater China of 3.19 billion euros in 2023, up 8.2 percent compared to a year earlier, according to its latest financial report.

Bjorn Gulden, CEO of Adidas, believes that China will steadily play an important strategic role in the future global development of the company,

noting that "needless to say, China is a very important market for us where we hope that we will grow, take market share and be successful."

Tight bonds

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the China-Germany comprehensive strategic partnership. Federal Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz is paying his second official visit to China since taking office. He arrived in southwestern Chongqing Municipality to kick off the three-day visit on Sunday.

Bilateral trade volume stood at 253.1 billion euros in 2023, in which China maintained its position as Germany's leading trading partner for the eighth consecutive year. Europe's largest economy has also been the foremost trading partner of the world's second-largest economy within the European Union for years. In 2022, China surpassed Japan to claim the title of Germany's largest trading partner in Asia.

EU tightens regulations on real estate investment schemes

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The allure of real estate investment schemes in the European Union, particularly through the offering of residence permits and tax benefits, has long attracted wealthy buyers. However, recent shifts in policy, largely influenced by changes in leftist governments, are tightening regulations on these golden visas, posing challenges for potential

investors, reports Al-Qabas daily.

Over the past decade, real estate investment schemes aimed at attracting wealthy investors from outside the EU have been instrumental in boosting housing markets. Yet, the pandemic-era boom, coupled with these investment schemes, has led to significant increases in house prices in some regions, sparking discontent among local residents.

Spain, following the lead of Portugal and other countries, recently announced limitations on its Golden Visa program. Originally introduced to address a surplus of unsold properties after the real estate collapse, the scheme failed to meet expectations due to bureaucratic hurdles and relatively high entry costs. Despite efforts to streamline the process, uptake remained minimal compared to property

purchases by British buyers alone.

Official data indicates that only a fraction of real estate transactions in Spain have been utilized for obtaining golden visas, prompting the decision to end the scheme, primarily driven by political considerations rather than economic factors.

Similarly, Greece has revised its golden visa program to address hous-

ing supply pressures, raising investment thresholds in certain areas. Opposition parties advocate for its abolition, citing concerns over short-term rentals and housing affordability.

The aftermath of Brexit has seen increased interest from UK buyers seeking to extend their stay through visa regimes. However, tighter measures and the closure of golden visa programs

across Europe may pose challenges for prospective buyers.

While these schemes inject capital into local economies and stimulate development, concerns over corruption, tax evasion, and money laundering persist. In response, countries like Montenegro and Cyprus have closed citizenship-by-investment programs or restricted liberal rules to comply with EU standards.

Initiative in line with its comprehensive social responsibility strategy

KIB shares Iftar meal with security guards as part of its Ramadan campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently organized an Iftar banquet for security guards of the Joint Banking Complex, as part of its annual Ramadan campaign that embodies the holy month's spirit and solidifies social cohesion in Kuwait. This initiative reflects appreciation for the tremendous efforts exerted by security personnel at work, reinforcing the Bank's commitment to the Kuwaiti society's ethical and humanitarian values, in line with its comprehensive corporate social responsibility strategy.

Speaking on the occasion, Basil Al-Suwaidan, General Manager of the Information Security, Privacy and Anti-Fraud Department at KIB, said: "This annual vital community initiative organized by the Bank embodies its institutional slogan, 'Bank for Life', while reaffirming its commitment to social responsibility principles towards all segments of society. It also enhances the concept of human relations and builds bridges of communication within the institution. Additionally, it expresses the Bank's appreciation for the important role played by security personnel in maintaining the safety and continuity of operations."

Al-Suwaidan also emphasized that social and humanitarian activities are among KIB's top priorities, as reflected in its Ramadan campaign. This campaign enhances the Bank's role in the field of social responsibility, and directly impacts the lives of its employees and customers, highlighting its commitment to promoting sustainable development and the values of solidarity and cooperation in Kuwaiti society.

It is worth mentioning that KIB's Ramadan campaign is part and par-



Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organizes an Iftar banquet for security guards of the Joint Banking Complex, as part of its annual Ramadan campaign that embodies the holy month's spirit and solidifies social cohesion in Kuwait.

cel of its strategic vision and leading role as a key partner in the community. It is also part of its ongoing efforts aimed at achieving the goals of its comprehensive corporate social responsibility program. These efforts include organizing various humanitarian initiatives that inspire sustainable positive change among all members of Kuwaiti society.

Program highlights religious and scholarly contributions

Radio Kuwait Urdu service organizes program for Ramadan transmission

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: A Special Program was organized by Radio Kuwait Urdu Service to celebrate the special Ramadan transmission in a spiritual style. A series of programs were arranged and broadcasted to mark these special days with full enthusiasm but Program Hayya Alal Falah was a series of Episodes which broadcasted Live every Saturday in the Month of Ramadan.

Programs Titled as (Hayya Alal Falah) which means Road to Eternal Success was broadcasted every Saturday in the month of Ramadan. Program Consisted on two parts where in first part students from different schools presented their Nasheeds, Hamd and Naats while in the other Segment Famous Islamic Scholars Maulana Faisal Aziz Madani, Maulana Muhammad Umar Falahi, Maulana Alauddin Ainul Haque Makki & Dr Mahfooz ur Rahman Madani took part and recorded the special shows.

Program

First segment of the program was consisted on the Nasheed and Naats by the student of different schools. RK Urdu Service paid special gratitude to Col. Anjum Masood, Sanober Farrukh, Mohammad Umar Falahi for encouraging their students who took part in the show and Majid Chaudhry for providing his school for the event.

Majid Chaudhry & Asad Baig played a pivotal role to make this program a success. Hafiz Hafeez ur Rehman, Maulana Siffat Alim & Nazia Umar from IMA recorded program for the RKF. M.

Programs were hosted by Radio Kuwait Urdu Service Announcers, Nida Mirza & Razia Ashraf whereas Aboobacker Payyoli was Coordinator of the Program, Anees Backer Sound Engineer and Barkat Khan was Editor of the show. The program was headed by Sheikh Shejoun Al Sabah (Director of Programs, Foreign Services) and Sheikh Shejoun Al Marshoud (Supervisor of Programs, Foreign Services). The presented ceremony was conducted by Faiza Siddique while Atif Siddique was the man behind social media coverage.

Radio Kuwait Urdu Service extend their warm wishes to every listener on the occasion of Eid.



Participants with the team of Radio Kuwait and other guests.



Dr Mahfooz ur Rehman and Sifat Alim receiving award.



Abu Baker Payoli awarding Majid Ali Choudhry.



Asad Baig presenting certificate to one of the participants.



Abu Baker presenting a token of memory to Hafiz Hafeez ur Rehman



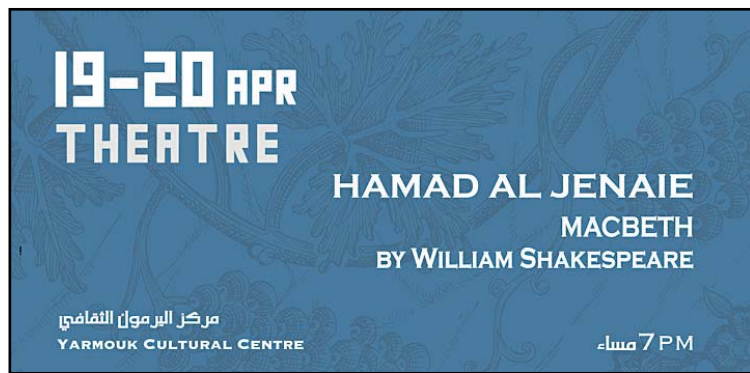
Anees Backer awarding one of the participants.



Col. Anjum Masood receiving memento from Nida Mirza.



Moulana Siffat Alim receiving a plaque.



DAI poster



The campaign visual

Al-Sabea monthly winner of 1kg gold

Kuwait Finance House reveals the winners of Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the AlRabeh draw with 20 customers winning cash prizes worth KD1,500 each for the 9th and 10th weeks of 2024. KFH announced Ahmad Al-Sabea as the monthly winner of 1 Kilo Gram of KFH Gold for the month of February 2024.

The winners of KD 1,500 are: Naser Al-Ateeq, Hussain Shehab, Maher Hassan, Nayef Al-Azmi, Abdullah Al-Enezi, Sultan Al-Ajmi, Hanan Abdulkareem, Mubarak Al-Jassar, Amal Humoud, Mohammad Thiab, Saleh Al-Ali, Salem Al-Abdali, Khaled Al-Dhafeeri, Nujoud Al-Duajj, Sameh Masoud, Manal Al-Mutairi, Mohammad Hujailan, Huda Al-Kandari, Asim Karel, Eman Al-Abdulrazzaq.

The AlRabeh campaign provides prizes and draws that offer customers several chances of winning "weekly, monthly and quarterly". The campaign crowns 536 winners throughout the year.

The draw took place under the supervision of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The campaign is part of KFH's ongoing efforts to offer exceptional products and services that meet customers' aspirations, enhance the Bank's leadership in the local and global markets, as well as reflect its excellence in offering innovative banking solutions as per the highest quality standards.

The Al-Rabeh account is a sal-

ary account available to customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Customers can open Al-Rabeh account in any of KFH branches in Kuwait, or through the Bank's online channels. The account can be opened in the Kuwaiti Dinar and is targeted for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts. Salary transfer is a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw provided that the transfer of salary to Al-Rabeh account is constant.

Regarding the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer is able to deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw. Ten draws take place on a weekly basis for the amount of K.D 1,500 for 10 winners each, 1 KG of KFH gold will be drawn monthly for one winner and K.D. 25,000 for one winner every quarter, reaching a total number of 536 winners during the year.

KFH is keen to further meet customers' requirements and aspirations and their increasing needs as well as offer innovative and modern services, therefore achieving customer satisfaction, which is one of the fundamentals at KFH. The Bank has achieved a qualitative shift in the level of financial services by utilizing technology.



Overseas NCP Kuwait Committee distributed Iftar kits to expatriate workers of different countries in Khaitan Camp. ONCP National Treasurer Mr. Biju Stephen, Kuwait Committee General Secretary Arul Raj, Vice President Sunny Miranda and Fahad distributed the kits.

Baldwin's 'Rust' gun supervisor to be sentenced for fatal shooting

SANTA FE, N.M., April 15. (AP) — A movie weapons supervisor is facing up to 18 months in prison for the fatal shooting of a cinematographer by Alec Baldwin on the set of the Western film "Rust," with her sentencing scheduled for Monday in a New Mexico state court.

Movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed was convicted in March by a jury on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in the death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and has been held for more than a month at a county jail on the outskirts of Santa Fe.

Baldwin, the lead actor and co-producer for "Rust," was pointing a gun at Hutchins when the revolver went off, killing Hutchins and wounding director Joel Souza.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty to an involuntary manslaughter charge and says he pulled back the gun's hammer, but not the trigger, before the gun went off. His trial is scheduled for July before the same judge, Mary Marlowe Sommer, who oversaw the trial of Gutierrez-Reed.

Gutierrez-Reed could also receive a \$5,000 fine. Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of "Rust" where it was expressly prohibited and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols. After a two-week trial, the jury deliberated for about three hours in reaching its verdict.

Defense attorneys for Gutierrez-Reed requested leniency in sentencing - including a possible conditional discharge that would avoid further jail time and leave an adjudication of guilt off her record if certain conditions are met.

Gutierrez-Reed was acquitted at trial of allegations she tampered with evidence in the "Rust" investigation. She also has pleaded not

guilty to a separate felony charge that she allegedly carried a gun into a bar in Santa Fe where firearms are prohibited.

Defense attorneys have highlighted Gutierrez-Reed's relatively young age "and the devastating effect a felony will have on her life going forward."

They say the 26-year-old will forever be affected negatively by intense publicity associated with her prosecution in parallel with an A-list actor, and has suffered from anxiety, fear and depression as a result.

Offender

Special prosecutor Kari Morrissey urged the judge to impose the maximum prison sentence and designate Gutierrez-Reed as a "serious violent offender" to limit her eligibility for a sentence reduction later, describing the defendant's behavior on the set of "Rust" as exceptionally reckless. She said Gutierrez-Reed has shown a lack of remorse, citing comments by Gutierrez-Reed in phone calls from jail that are monitored by authorities.

"Rust" assistant director and safety coordinator Dave Halls last year pleaded no contest to negligent handling of a firearm and completed a sentence of six months unsupervised probation. "Rust" props master Sarah Zachry, who shared some responsibilities over firearms on the set of "Rust," signed an agreement with prosecutors to avoid prosecution in return with her cooperation.

Written testimonials in favor of leniency included letters from Gutierrez-Reed's childhood friend and romantic partner Sean Kridelbaugh, who said Gutierrez-Reed cries constantly out of remorse in the shooting and that further incarceration would interfere with efforts to

care for a relative with cancer. Other friends and former colleagues urged the judge to emphasize rehabilitation over punishment in the sentencing.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: A judge in Texas is set to hear arguments Monday in rap star **Travis Scott's** request to be dismissed from a lawsuit over the deadly 2021 Astroworld festival in Houston.

Scott headlined the concert during which 10 people were killed as authorities and festival organizers responded to a massive crowd surge and tried to shut down the show.

Last week, the judge dismissed lawsuits against hip-hop guest performer **Drake** along with several other individuals and companies involved in the show.

Attorneys for Scott, whose real name is **Jacques Bermon Webster II** and is also known as "Cactus Jack," write in the motion to dismiss that he is a performer and had no role in providing security or crowd management for the festival.

"Performers are not expected to render special protection to the audience, nor to safeguard them from the rest of the crowd," the motion said. "Performing artists, even those who engage in certain promotional activities, have no inherent expertise or specialized knowledge in concert safety measures."

The motion said Scott followed instructions and ended the show after a performance by Drake by performing one final song because it was feared that an abrupt ending could have led to riots, panic and chaos in the crowd.

People

Variety



Nicole Scherzinger, winner of the best actress in a musical award for 'Sunset Boulevard', poses for photographers in the winner's room during the Olivier Awards on Sunday, April 14, 2024, in London. (AP)

Stage

Nicole Scherzinger shines at Broadway's Tony Awards

'Sunset Boulevard' sweeps Olivier Awards

LONDON, April 15, (AP) — A radical restaging of Hollywood film noir musical "Sunset Boulevard" was the big winner on Sunday at the London stage Olivier Awards, taking seven trophies including best musical revival and best actress for American star Nicole Scherzinger.

Soccer-themed state-of-the-nation drama "Dear England" was named best new play, while Sarah Snook and Mark Gatiss were among the acting winners.

Scherzinger was rewarded for her performance as fading silver screen star Norma Desmond in a flashy revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Boulevard," three decades after the musical's 1990s debut. Her co-star Tom Francis won the corresponding best actor prize as a struggling screenwriter fatefully drawn into Desmond's orbit.

Jamie Lloyd took the directing trophy for the technically innovative production, which melds live video with the onstage action and also won Oliviers for sound and lighting design. It's due to open in New York later this year, and Lloyd predicted it would "take Broadway by storm."

Scherzinger said that when she was growing up in Kentucky, "I always wanted to be a singer and do musicals."

"I dreamed of so many roles I wanted to do - and honestly this role, Norma Desmond, was not one of those roles," she said. "But God works in mysterious ways."

The prize for best new musical went to "Operation Mincemeat," a word-of-mouth hit based on an audacious real-life espionage operation that deceived the Nazis during World War II. The show began life in a tiny theater in 2019 and has moved to progressively larger venues, gathering accolades along the way.

"Stranger Things: The First Shadow," a dazzlingly staged prequel to the Netflix supernatural series, was named best new entertainment or comedy.

The Oliviers - the UK equivalent of Broadway's Tony Awards - are celebrating a bumper year for new shows in the West End, finally bouncing back from the COVID-19 pandemic. Several winners lamented the soaring cost of theater tickets, and cuts to arts education that are squeezing working-class talent out of theatrical careers and theater audiences.

"If you don't tell a kid to go and see a show ... they're not going to develop that habit, they're not go-

ing to get that experience," said "Dear England" playwright James Graham, who grew up in a small mining town. "So I am really worried."

But the mood was largely celebratory as "Ted Lasso" star Hannah Waddingham presided over an exuberant ceremony at London's Royal Albert Hall, opening the show by belting out "Anything Goes" alongside the London Community Gospel Choir. The show was peppered with performances from several of the nominated musicals, including "Guys and Dolls," "Hedestown" and homegrown hit "The Little Big Things."

The prizes, which recognize achievements in theater, opera and dance, were founded in 1976 and named for the late actor-director Laurence Olivier. Winners are chosen by voting groups of stage professionals and theatergoers.

Snook - the scheming Shiv Roy in "Succession" - beat a talented field including Sarah Jessica Parker and Sophie Okonedo to be named best actress in a play for "The Picture of Dorian Gray," an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's cautionary fable in which Snook plays more than two dozen characters.

Monologue

Backstage, the Emmy Award-winning Australian performer said the solo stage show was "so much harder" than doing TV.

"I've never done anything harder than this," said Snook, who said she'd asked herself "why am I doing a 60,000-word monologue with an 8-month-old baby?" She revealed she'd learned her lines for the play during filming of the final series of "Succession," at night while breastfeeding her daughter.

Gatiss - co-creator of the BBC TV series "Sherlock" - won the best actor trophy for playing theater great John Gielgud in "The Motive and the Cue," Jack Thorne's play about the struggle to mount a 1964 production of "Hamlet" with Richard Burton.

Gatiss recalled that Gielgud had considered awards ceremonies "vulgar."

"I'm very, very thrilled to be in such wonderfully vulgar company," he said.

Gatiss beat "Dear England" star Joseph Fiennes and Andrew Scott, who had been the favorite to win for the solo show "Vanya." The Anton Chekhov adaptation by

Simon Stephens took the prize for best revival.

Will Close was named best supporting actor in a play for his performance as footballer Harry Kane in "Dear England."

Haydn Gwynne, who died in October, was posthumously awarded the best supporting actress prize for her final stage role in "When Winston Went to War with the Wireless," about the early days of radio in Britain.

Awards for supporting performances in musicals were Amy Trigg for "The Little Big Things" and Jak Malone for "Operation Mincemeat."

The show ended with a tribute to the National Theatre, which turned 60 in 2023 - culminating in a star-studded cast singing the anthem "You'll Never Walk Alone."

Winners

- The winners of the 2024 Olivier Awards:
- **New Play:** "Dear England"
- **New Musical:** "Operation Mincemeat"
- **New Entertainment or Comedy:** "Stranger Things: The First Shadow"
- **Family Show:** "Dinosaur World Live"
- **Revival:** "Vanya"
- **Musical Revival:** "Sunset Boulevard"
- **Actress-Play:** Sarah Snook, "The Picture of Dorian Gray"
- **Actor-Play:** Mark Gatiss, "The Motive and the Cue"
- **Actress-Musical:** Nicole Scherzinger, "Sunset Boulevard"
- **Actor-Musical:** Tom Francis, "Sunset Boulevard"
- **Supporting Actor-Play:** Will Close, "Dear England"
- **Supporting Actress-Play:** Haydn Gwynne, "When Winston Went to War with the Wireless"
- **Supporting Actress-Musical:** Amy Trigg, "The Little Big Things"
- **Supporting Actor-Musical:** Jak Malone, "Operation Mincemeat"
- **Director:** Jamie Lloyd, "Sunset Boulevard"
- **Outstanding Musical Contribution:** Musical supervisor Alan Williams for "Sunset Boulevard"
- **Theater Choreography:** Arlene Phillips and James Cousins, "Guys and Dolls"
- **New Opera Production:** "Innocence," Royal Opera

Features

ARABIC TIMES

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024

LOS ANGELES: Alex Garland's provocative "Civil War" didn't only ignite the discourse. The film also inspired audiences to go to the cinemas this weekend where it surpassed expectations and earned \$25.7 million in ticket sales in North America, according to studio estimates Sunday.

It's the biggest R-rated opening of the year to date and a record for A24, the studio behind films like "Everything Everywhere All At Once" and "The Iron Claw." "Civil War" also unseated "Godzilla x Kong" from its perch atop the box office. The titan movie from Warner Bros. had held the No. 1 spot for the past two weekends.

"Civil War," starring **Kirsten Dunst**, **Wagner Moura** and **Cailee Spaeny** as front-line journalists in the near future covering a devastating conflict in the US and trying to make their way to Washington, D.C. The story, written by Garland, who is also the mind behind "Ex Machina" and "Annihilation," imagines a US in which California and Texas have united against a president who has disbanded the FBI and given himself a third term.

Though entirely fictional, "Civil War" has been inspiring debates since the first trailer that have extended beyond the musings of film critics and traditional reviews. This weekend, The New York Times ran two opinion pieces related to the movie, one by **Stephen Marche** and another by **Michelle Goldberg**. There were also pieces on CNN and Politico.

Going into the weekend, projections pegged the film to debut in the \$15 to \$24 million range. The studio said "Civil War" overperformed in markets "from LA to El Paso." The data analytics company EntTelligence reported that the film has attracted over 1.7 million patrons this weekend and that the top three markets were Los Angeles, New York and Dallas.

"The title alone is enough to spark a conversation in a year where the political discourse is top of mind," said **Paul Dergarabedian**, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "And they couldn't have picked a better date. This movie is perfectly timed in a month that is very quiet."

The film opened on 3,838 screens in the US and Canada, including IMAX. It's the most expensive movie that the studio has ever made, with a production

budget of \$50 million, which does not account for millions spent on marketing and promotion.

IMAX showings of "Civil War," which was playing on 400 of the large format screens, accounted for \$4.2 million, or 16.5% of the domestic total.

Reviews have been largely positive. It's currently at 83% on



Moura



Dunst

Rotten Tomatoes, with a 77% audience score. Its CinemaScore was a B-, which has sometimes indicated that word of mouth might not be strong going forward. But that might not be the case with "Civil War," which doesn't have a tremendous amount of competition over the next few weeks until "The Fall Guy" opens on May 3.

"You have to take all the metrics together, including the competitive landscape," Dergarabedian said. But it is a notable win for the studio, which doesn't always open films nationwide out of the gates. Before "Civil War," A24's biggest debut was the Ari Aster horror "Hereditary," which opened to \$13.6 million in 2018.

"This isn't destined to be a \$200 million global blockbuster. But it's a very high-profile win for A24," Dergarabedian said. "They're a studio that pushes the envelope. They're a brand associated with a certain level of quality and filmmaking expertise, pushing boundaries and taking risks. It's well-earned over the years." (AP)

People & Places

Film

Beyond blockbusters

Theater owners seek diverse movie lineup

LAS VEGAS, April 15, (AP): Movie theater owners are still feeling the high from "Barbenheimer." The counterprogramming of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" brought audiences to cinemas around the world, ultimately earning nearly \$2.5 billion in combined ticket sales. But, gathered in Las Vegas this week for the annual CinemaCon convention and trade show, they're also acutely aware that they need more than two movies to survive.

"It is not enough to rely solely on blockbusters," said Michael O'Leary, the president and CEO of the National Association of Theater Owners. "To have a truly successful filmed entertainment industry, a variety of movies that appeal to movie goers is critical."

That means, O'Leary said Tuesday, "a strong and vibrant market for movies with smaller or medium sized budgets."



Beyoncé

At CinemaCon, Hollywood studios, exhibitors and tech companies come together to preview what's next in moviegoing, from the films that they hope will get audiences to the theaters to the latest and greatest in snacks, seating and projection. On stage, the message is (by design) optimistic about the future of cinemas and the industry's capacity for evolution. Whether it's streaming, piracy, VHS or television, the leaders in the filmed entertainment industry are always quick to remind that their business has survived its share of existential crises: Someone is always forecasting its demise.

O'Leary made a plea to "our friends in the financial industry" to invest more capital into the system, calling it a "smart investment" that benefits "creatives, studios, exhibition, local communities and, most importantly, movie fans."

"We know that a movie that begins its journey with theatrical exclusivity is more successful in every subsequent ancillary platform," he added. "This should appeal to people who want as many film fans as possible to see their movies, but also to people that want to make money."

Success

Studios including Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, Paramount, Disney and Lionsgate will all take the big stage at Caesar's Palace to show new trailers or footage from their biggest upcoming films, from "Furiosa" to "Deadpool & Wolverine," sometimes with the help of movie stars, to stoke excitement in the people who will put these films in their theaters.

2023 was a rollercoaster year for movie theaters. The overall box office was up 20% from the previous year in the US, surpassing \$9 billion. But that's still \$2 billion shy of where the business was pre-pandemic. There were hits, like "Oppenheimer" and "Barbie," of course, and other notable successes from traditional studios, like "The Super Mario Bros. Movie," "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse," "Wonka" and "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3." There were surprises like "Five Nights at Freddy's" and "Cocaine Bear" and sleepers like "Anyone But You."

There were also moments of successful innovation, including Taylor Swift and Beyoncé's groundbreaking partnership with AMC Theaters to release their concert films, circumventing traditional studio middlemen. "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" made over \$260 million worldwide, making it the highest grossing concert film of all time. Toho studios also self-distributed its first film ever, with "Godzilla Minus One," which made over \$114 million worldwide even with a limited release in the US.

But there were flops and disappointments too, and some of the tried-and-true genres like superhero movies proved to no longer be the industry supporting tentpoles that they once were. Streamed entertainment continues to be a formidable competitor for eyes and dollars as everyone continues to recover from the pandemic. In 2024, theater owners and studios are also having to grapple with a changed and somewhat depleted pipeline of films following the work stoppage caused by the dual Hollywood strikes.

But O'Leary said that a "great reimagining" is underway.

"Inflection points like these are moments of opportunity," he added. "And this last year has shown me that the future of this industry—indeed, the state of this industry—is limitless."

Charles Rivkin, the chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association, talked about the importance of film productions in the US, which he said "bolster communities" and account for 2.74 million American jobs. He also made an impassioned plea to combat piracy, which he said costs theaters more than \$1 billion at the box office, and hopes to work with Congressional leaders to put for "site-blocking" legislation.

Rivkin closed by quoting best documentary winner and AP journalist Mstyslav Chernov's Oscars speech from earlier this year, in which he said that "Cinema forms memories and memories form history" while accepting the statuette for "20 Days in Mariupol."

Chernov's words, Rivkin said, "Reminded us of the power and impact of what we do."

Also:

CANNES: George Lucas will receive an honorary Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival next month, festival organizers announced Tuesday.

Lucas will be honored at the closing ceremony to the 77th French film festival on May 25. He joins a short list of those to receive honorary Palmes. Last year, Harrison Ford, a regular leading man for Lucas in "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones," was awarded one. Other recent recipients include Michael Douglas, Tom Cruise, Forest Whitaker and Jodie Foster.

"The Festival de Cannes has always held a special place in my heart," Lucas said in a statement. "I was surprised and elated when my first film, 'THX-1138,' was selected to be shown in a new program for first time directors called the Directors' Fortnight. Since then, I have returned to the festival on many occasions in a variety of capacities as a writer, director and producer. I am truly honored by this special recognition which means a great deal to me."

LOS ANGELES: The 97th Academy Awards will be held March 2, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences announced Wednesday.

That moves the annual ceremony up about a week. This year's Oscars were held on March 10. The telecast, which culminated in the best picture win for Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer," was watched by an estimated 19.5 million people, up about 4% from the year prior.



Models wear creations from Joao Pimenta collection during the Sao Paulo Fashion Week in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Sunday, April 14. (AP)



Fashion

Promoting diversity or posing threats?

The rise of AI models in fashion

CHICAGO, April 15, (AP): London-based model Alexandrah has a twin, but not in the way you'd expect: Her counterpart is made of pixels instead of flesh and blood.

The virtual twin was generated by artificial intelligence and has already appeared as a stand-in for the real-life Alexandrah in a photo shoot. Alexandrah, who goes by her first name professionally, in turn receives credit and compensation whenever the AI version of herself gets used - just like a human model.

Alexandrah says she and her alter-ego mirror each other "even down to the baby hairs." And it is yet another example of how AI is transforming creative industries - and the way humans may or may not be compensated.

Proponents say the growing use of AI in fashion modeling showcases diversity in all shapes and sizes, allowing consumers to make more tailored purchase decisions that in turn reduces fashion waste from product returns. And digital modeling saves money for companies and creates opportunities for people who want to work with the technology.

But critics raise concerns that digital models may push human models - and other professionals like makeup artists and photographers - out of a job. Unsuspecting consumers could also be fooled into thinking AI models are real, and companies could claim credit for fulfilling diversity commitments without employing actual humans.

"Fashion is exclusive, with limited opportunities for people of color to break in," said Sara Ziff, a former fashion model and founder of the Model Alliance, a nonprofit aiming to advance workers' rights in the fashion industry. "I think the use of AI to distort racial representation and marginalize actual models of color reveals this troubling gap between the industry's declared intentions and their real actions."

Women of color in particular have long faced higher barriers to entry in modeling and AI could upend some of the gains they've made. Data suggests that women are more likely to work in

occupations in which the technology could be applied, and are more at risk of displacement than men.

In March 2023, iconic denim brand Levi Strauss & Co. announced that it would be testing AI-generated models produced by Amsterdam-based company Lalaland.ai to add a wider range of body types and underrepresented demographics on its website. But after receiving widespread backlash, Levi clarified that it was not pulling back on its plans for live photo shoots, the use of live models or its commitment to working with diverse models.

"We do not see this (AI) pilot as a means to advance diversity or as a substitute for the real action that must be taken to deliver on our diversity, equity and inclusion goals and it should not have been portrayed as such," Levi said in its statement at the time.

The company last month said that it has no plans to scale the AI program.

The Associated Press reached out to several other retailers to ask whether they use AI fashion models. Target, Kohl's and fast-fashion giant Shein declined to comment; Temu did not respond to a request for comment.

Products

Meanwhile, spokespeople for Neiman Marcus, H&M, Walmart and Macy's said their respective companies do not use AI models, although Walmart clarified that "suppliers may have a different approach to photography they provide for their products but we don't have that information."

Nonetheless, companies that generate AI models are finding a demand for the technology, including Lalaland.ai, which was co-founded by Michael Musandu after he was feeling frustrated by the absence of clothing models who looked like him.

"One model does not represent everyone that's actually shopping and buying a product," he said. "As a person of color, I felt this painfully myself."

Musandu says his product is meant to supplement traditional photo shoots,

not replace them. Instead of seeing one model, shoppers could see nine to 12 models using different size filters, which would enrich their shopping experience and help reduce product returns and fashion waste.

The technology is actually creating new jobs, since Lalaland.ai pays humans to train its algorithms, Musandu said.

And if brands "are serious about inclusion efforts, they will continue to hire these models of color," he added.

London-based model Alexandrah, who is Black, says her digital counterpart has helped her distinguish herself in the fashion industry. In fact, the real-life Alexandrah has even stood in for a Black computer-generated model named Shudu, created by Cameron Wilson, a former fashion photographer turned CEO of The Digital, a U.K.-based digital modeling agency.

Wilson, who is white and uses they/them pronouns, designed Shudu in 2017, described on Instagram as the "The World's First Digital Supermodel." But critics at the time accused Wilson of cultural appropriation and digital Blackface.

Wilson took the experience as a lesson and transformed The Digital to make sure Shudu - who has been booked by Louis Vuitton and BMW - didn't take away opportunities but instead opened possibilities for women of color. Alexandrah, for instance, has modeled in-person as Shudu for Vogue Australia, and writer Ama Aduba came up with Shudu's backstory and portrays her voice for interviews.

Alexandrah said she is "extremely proud" of her work with The Digital, which created her own AI twin: "It's something that even when we are no longer here, the future generations can look back at and be like, 'These are the pioneers.'"

But for Yve Edmond, a New York City area-based model who works with major retailers to check the fit of clothing before it's sold to consumers, the rise of AI in fashion modeling feels more insidious.

in Rich Creek, Virginia, surrounded by people who loved him.

"He was so proud to be a journalist. That was his life," Hylton said. "He loved The

Associated Press. He loved the people of the AP. He was so grateful to have had all the adventures that he had."

Herrick also covered the trial of two



Doja Cat performs during the first weekend of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club on Sunday, April 14, in Indio, Calif. (AP)



Grande



Herrick

Variety

LONDON: More than 250 survivors of the bombing that killed 22 people at a 2017 Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, are taking legal action against Britain's domestic intelligence agency, lawyers said.

Lawyers from three law firms said Sunday they have submitted a group claim on behalf of more than 250 clients to the UK's investigatory powers tribunal. They said they could not provide further details because it was an ongoing legal matter.

Suicide bomber Salman Abedi set up a knapsack bomb in Manchester Arena at the end of Grande's concert on May 22, 2017, as thousands of young fans were leaving. More than 100 people were injured, many of them children and teenagers. Abedi died in the explosion.

An official inquiry reported last year that Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI5, didn't act swiftly enough on key information and missed a significant opportunity to prevent the bombing, the deadliest extremist attack in the UK in recent years.

Abedi had been a "subject of interest" to MI5 officials in 2014, but his case was closed shortly after because he was deemed to be low risk. (AP)

RICH CREEK, Va.: Gene Herrick, a retired Associated Press photographer who covered the Korean War and is known for his iconic images of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and the trial of the killers of Emmett Till in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement, died Friday. He was 97.

In 1956, Herrick photographed Rosa Parks being fingerprinted after refusing to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. That same year, Herrick captured an image of King smiling while being kissed by Coretta Scott King on the courthouse steps after being found guilty of conspiracy to boycott the city's buses.

In a 2020 interview with The Associated Press, Herrick said it was rare to get a photo of King smiling.

"I knew he was going to be let out of jail that morning," Herrick said. "And all these people were out there on the steps waiting for him, including his wife, who reached out and gave him a big kiss."

Herrick's longtime companion Kitty Hylton said he died at a nursing home



Michelle Visage, (left), and Richard E Grant, (right), pose with Natasha Hodgson, (from second left), Felix Hagan, Zoe Roberts, David Cumming, Claire Marie Hall, and Jak Malone, winners of the mastercard best new musical award for "Operation Mincemeat", pose for photographers in the winner's room during the Olivier Awards on Sunday, April 14, in London. (AP) - Details Page 11

white men in the killing of the 14-year-old Till, a Black youth who was abducted, tortured and lynched in Mississippi after being accused of flirting with a white woman. The two men were found not guilty in 1955 by an all-white jury, and admitted to the murder a year later in an interview with Look Magazine.

Herrick was particularly proud of his Korean War coverage. "Good journalists want to go where the action is, wherever it is," he said for an AP article in 2018. (AP)

MADRID: Capitalizing on an impressive moment in Spanish-language music, Uruguayan singer-songwriter Jorge Drexler is embarking on his first tour of Europe.

"Even Don Quixote didn't get as far as urban Spanish-speaking music is getting today in the world. You can go everywhere and you will find music that was written in Spanish," he told The Associated Press in an interview. "I'm happy to see that (Spanish) opens doors to places that I never thought that we could get before."

His award-winning latest album, "Tinta y tiempo" ("Ink and time"), earned him four of his 13 Latin Grammy Awards, part of a haul that includes an Oscar.

On his tour Drexler will perform live for the first time "Derrumbe," a song about the loss of love that he rescued from his notes. The song was included in the 2021 TV show "Todo va a estar bien." (AP)

The Conversation

Matching cancer patients with effective treatments

Precision medicine shows high success in cancer treatment

By Diana Azzam

Florida International University

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

Despite many efforts to find better, more effective ways to treat cancer, it remains a leading cause of death by disease among children in the US.

Cancer patients are also getting younger. Cancer diagnoses among those under 50 has risen by about 80% worldwide over the past 30 years. As of 2023, cancer is the second-leading cause of death both in the US and around the world. While death rates from cancer have decreased over the past few decades, about 1 in 3 patients in the US and 1 in 2 patients worldwide still die from cancer.

Despite advances in standard cancer treatments, many cancer patients still face uncertain outcomes when these treatments prove ineffective. Depending on the stage and location of the cancer and the patient's medical history, most cancer types are treated with a mix of radiation, surgery and drugs. But if those standard treatments fail, patients and doctors enter a trial-and-error maze where effective treatments become difficult to predict because of limited information on the patient's cancer.

My mission as a cancer researcher is to build a personalized guide of the most effective drugs for every cancer patient. My team and I do this by testing different medications on a patient's own cancer cells before administering treatment, tailoring therapies that are most likely to selectively kill tumors while minimizing toxic effects.

In our newly published results of the first clinical trial combining drug sensitivity testing with DNA testing to identify effective treatments in children with cancer, an approach called functional precision medicine, we found this approach can help match patients with more FDA-approved treatment options and significantly improve outcomes.

Even though two people with the same cancer might get the same medicine, they can have very different outcomes. Because each patient's tumor is unique, it can be challenging to know which treatment works best.

Mutations

To solve this problem, doctors analyze DNA mutations in the patient's tumor, blood or saliva to match cancer medicines to patients. This approach is called precision medicine. However, the relationship between cancer DNA and how effective medicines will be against them is very complex. Matching medications to patients based on a single mutation overlooks other genetic and nongenetic mechanisms that influence how cells respond to drugs.

How to best match medicines to patients through DNA is still a major challenge. Overall, only 10% of cancer patients experience a clinical benefit from treatments matched to tumor DNA mutations.

Functional precision medicine

takes a different approach to personalizing treatments. My team and I take a sample of a patient's cancer cells from a biopsy, grow the cells in the lab and expose them to over 100 drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration. In this process, called drug sensitivity testing, we look for the medications that kill the cancer cells.

Providing functional precision medicine to cancer patients in real life is very challenging. Off-label use of drugs and financial restrictions are key barriers. The health of cancer patients can also deteriorate rapidly, and physicians may be hesitant to try new methods.

But this is starting to change. Two teams in Europe recently showed that functional precision medicine could match effective treatments to about 55% of adult patients with blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma that did not respond to standard treatments.

Most recently, my team's clinical trial focused on childhood cancer patients whose cancer came back or didn't respond to treatment. We applied our functional precision medicine approach to 25 patients with different types of cancer.

Our trial showed that we could provide treatment options for almost all patients in less than two weeks. My colleague Arlet Maria Acanda de la Rocha was instrumental in helping return drug sensitivity data to patients as fast as possible. We were able to provide test results within 10 days of receiving a sample, compared with the roughly 30 days that standard genomic testing results that focus on identifying specific cancer mutations typically take to process.

Benefit

Most importantly, our study showed that 83% of cancer patients who received treatments guided by our approach had clinical benefit, including improved response and survival.

Functional precision medicine opens new paths to understanding how cancer drugs can be better matched to patients. Although doctors can read any patient's DNA today, interpreting the results to understand how a patient will respond to cancer treatment is much more challenging. Combining drug sensitivity testing with DNA analysis can help personalize cancer treatments for each patient.

I, along with colleague Noah E. Berlow, have started to add artificial intelligence to our functional precision medicine program. AI enables us to analyze each patient's data to better match them with tailored treatments and drug combinations. AI also allows us to understand the complex relationships between DNA mutations within tumors and how different treatments will affect them.

My team and I have started two clinical trials to expand the results of our previous studies on providing treatment recommendations through functional precision medicine. We're recruiting a larger cohort of adults and children with cancers that have come back or are resistant to treatment.

The more data we have, the easier it will become to understand how to best treat cancer and ultimately help more patients access personalized cancer treatments. (AP)

BEIJING, April 15, (Xinhua): China's communication and navigation technology test satellites, Tiandu-1 and Tiandu-2, have successfully carried out experiments on new technologies such as highly reliable Earth-Moon transmission and routing, according to Science and Technology Daily on Monday.

The telemetric data showed that the test project could effectively improve the accuracy of spacecraft in determining the lunar orbit.

The two satellites were sent into space together with the Queqiao-2 relay satellite on March 20. They entered their target circumlunar orbits on March 29 and separated on April 3.

On April 8, Tiandu-1 started flying in formation with Tiandu-2, remaining at a distance of about 200 kilometers. The two satellites operate in normal communication, stable attitude and energy balance.

They laid an important foundation for carrying out a series of communication technology test missions, according to the report, noting that Tiandu-2 has captured and sent back Earth-Moon group images.

Queqiao-2, Tiandu-1, and Tiandu-2 all use a highly elliptical lunar frozen orbit as their target orbits. This kind of orbit is stable, ensuring the spacecraft travels with minimum trajectory deviation.

Also:

JIUQUAN: China on Monday launched a Long March-2D carrier rocket, placing a remote sensing satellite into space.

The rocket blasted off at 12:12 p.m. (Beijing Time) from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China and sent the Gaojing-3 01 satellite into the preset orbit.

The satellite will provide commercial remote sensing data services for emerging scenarios such as digital agriculture, urban information modeling and live 3D, as well as traditional fields including land surveying and mapping, disaster prevention and mitigation, and maritime monitoring.

China launches new remote sensing satellite

China's Tiandu satellites conduct tests in Earth-Moon transmission & routing



A Long March-2D carrier rocket carrying Gaojing-3 01 satellite blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China, April 15, 2024. China on Monday launched a Long March-2D carrier rocket, placing a remote sensing satellite into space. (Xinhua)

Australian researchers describe new findings

Giant ancient kangaroo species discovered

CANBERRA, April 15, (Xinhua): South Australian researchers have discovered three new ancient species of giant kangaroos.

In a study published on Monday, the team from Flinders University described the three new species based on fossils found in Australia and New Guinea.

All three species belong to the extinct genus *Protemnodon*, also called giant kangaroos, which lived on mainland Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea from approximately 5 million years ago to 40,000 years ago.

The lead researcher, Isaac Kerr from the College of Science and Engineering at Flinders University, visited the collections of 14 museums in four

countries to study and 3D scan 800 *Protemnodon* specimens collected from all over Australia and New Guinea to distinguish between the different species of giant kangaroo.

He found that different species adapted to live in different environments and even hopped in different ways.

One species that was discovered during the research, the *Protemnodon viator*, weighed up to 170 kilograms, making it twice as big as the largest male red kangaroos that still roam Australia.

"Living kangaroos are already such remarkable animals, so it's amazing to think what these peculiar giant kangaroos could have been getting up to," Kerr said in a media release.

Two more species, the *Protemnodon mamkurra* and *Protemnodon dawsonae*, were discovered while revisiting the work of earlier researchers dating back to the 19th century.

Kerr said the study dispelled previous beliefs that all *Protemnodon* were quadrupedal.

"Our study suggests that this is true of only three or four species of *Protemnodon*, which may have moved something like a quokka or potoroo, that is bounding on four legs at times, and hopping on two legs at others," he said.

According to the study, previous research has been hampered by *Protemnodon* fossils being found as individual bones without the rest of the animal.

What does science say about functional beverage ingredients?

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): Functional beverages - or drinks promoted as offering mental or physical benefits beyond hydration - are growing in popularity around the world. Hundreds of companies have jumped into the market, hoping to get some buzz with trendy and sometimes unfamiliar ingredients.

Here are some of the latest ones found in functional beverages and what scientists say about them.

Adaptogens

■ What are they? Plants and mushrooms that may help your body respond to stress, anxiety and fatigue or enhance feelings of well-being. Examples include American and Asian ginseng (an herb), ashwagandha (an evergreen shrub), eleuthero (a shrub), *Rhodiola rosea* (a flowering plant) and chaga (a mushroom).

■ What does the science say? The Cleveland Clinic says adaptogens are

known to trigger chemical reactions that can return the body to a more balanced state. Side effects from adaptogens are rare but depend on the plant. Studies show that adaptogens work best for a short duration (less than six months) because the body can build a resistance to them, making them ineffective over time.

Nootropics

■ What are they? Also known as "smart drugs," nootropics are substances that can improve human thinking, learning and memory. Among the most common nootropics are caffeine, L-theanine (an amino acid found in tea), creatine (an amino acid naturally found in meat and fish), *Bacopa monnieri* (an herb), *Ginkgo biloba* (a tree) and lion's mane (a mushroom). Some adaptogens may also have nootropic properties, like ashwagandha.

■ What does the science say? In a study last year in the journal *Plants*, researchers

said that most plant-based nootropics are not immediately effective after a single dose and must be taken for an extended period before any measurable improvement occurs. One problem in research on these natural substances has been standardizing the form they are taken in and the dosage, the study said. Side effects are rare and usually mild, but users should consider their overall health and whether nootropics could affect any other medications before ingesting them.

Probiotics and prebiotics

■ What are they? Probiotics are foods or supplements that contain live microorganisms intended to maintain or improve the "good" bacteria in a person's gut or other parts of the body. They are naturally found in fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, kombucha and sauerkraut. Prebiotics are food for the bacteria and other organisms that live in the gut. Prebiotics

can be found in whole grains, bananas, greens, onions, garlic, soybeans and artichokes.

■ What does the science say? The Cleveland Clinic says probiotics, in theory, work alongside the beneficial microbes in the human body to fight off harmful bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites. Researchers know that unhealthy microbiomes can contribute to chronic diseases like irritable bowel syndrome. They may also influence mood, pain tolerance and fatigue. The Cleveland Clinic and the Mayo Clinic say there is a lot of active research into the microbiome and the impact of probiotics and prebiotics, but not enough evidence to draw solid conclusions about their effectiveness. Side effects are rare except for people with weak immune systems, whose bodies might not be able to fight off a probiotic that inadvertently contains harmful microbes.

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Salt leads Kolkata to win over Lucknow

Sharma ton goes in vain as Chennai beats Mumbai in IPL

Thunder 'rout' Mavs 135-86 to take No. 1 seed in West



San Antonio Spurs guard David Duke, Jr., (right), drives the ball against Detroit Pistons guards Buddy Boeheim (center), and Jared Rhoden (left), during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, April 14, 2024, in San Antonio. (AP)

Pacers fly past Hawks

OKLAHOMA CITY, April 15, (AP): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 15 points in one half of action, and Oklahoma City rolled past Dallas 135-86 in the season finale to clinch the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference playoffs on Sunday.

Oklahoma City finished with the same 57-25 record as the Denver Nuggets but own the tiebreaker. The Thunder hadn't finished as the top seed since the 2012-13 season. Aaron Wiggins scored 14 points and Chet Holmgren had 13 points and nine rebounds for the Thunder, who won their fifth straight to close the regular season.

The Thunder entered the day in a three-way tie with the Nuggets and Timberwolves for the best record in the Western Conference. It was the first time in NBA history that three teams entered the final day of the season tied for a conference lead.

Pacers 157, Hawks 115

In Indianapolis, Myles Turner had 31 points and Pascal Siakam scored 28 as Indiana beat Atlanta and avoided falling into the play-in tournament.

Indiana secured at least the No. 6 seed in the Eastern Conference with a dominant regular-season finale. The Pacers shot 65% and made 19 of 36 3-pointers.

BASKETBALL

The 157 points matched the Pacers' highest-scoring game since they joined the NBA in 1976. The record was set earlier this season in their 157-152 win in the In-Season Tournament on Nov. 21.

Knicks 120, Bulls 119, OT

In New York, Jalen Brunson capped one of the best regular seasons in franchise history with his 11th 40-point game, carrying New York into the No. 2 seed in the Eastern Conference with an overtime victory over Chicago.

The Knicks finished 50-32, their best season since going 54-28 and also earning a No. 2 seed in 2012-13. They moved past Milwaukee after the Bucks lost earlier Sunday in Orlando, and will await the winner of the play-in game between Philadelphia and Miami on Wednesday.

Nuggets 126, Grizzlies 111

In Memphis, Jamal Murray scored 21 points, Nikola Jokic had 15 points and 15 rebounds, and defending champion Denver secured the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference with a victory over Memphis.

The Nuggets (57-25) matched a franchise high for wins and finished with the same record as Oklahoma City, but the Thunder took the top spot in the West because of a head-to-head tiebreaker. Minnesota's loss to Phoenix dropped the Timberwolves into third, one game behind Denver.

Denver entered the game in a three-way tie with Minnesota and Oklahoma City. It was the first time such a logjam had existed on the final day of the season with three teams having a chance at the No. 1 seed. The Thunder locked up the top spot by routing Dallas.

Suns 125, Timberwolves 106

In Minneapolis, Bradley Beal scored 36 points on 6-for-6 shooting from 3-point range and Phoenix beat Minnesota to stay out of the play-in tournament and set up a rematch in the first round of the NBA playoffs.

Devin Booker added 23 points and Grayson Allen had 20 points for the Suns (49-33). They built a 22-point lead by the end of the first quarter and never let the deficit drop into single digits after that.

Phoenix finished the regular season on a 10-4 surge and seized the No. 6 seed when New Orleans lost. After entering the final day in a three-way tie for the Western Conference lead with Denver and Oklahoma City, Minnesota took the No. 3 seed when the Nuggets and Thunder each won.

Lakers 124, Pelicans 108

In New Orleans, LeBron James had 28 points, 17 assists, 11 rebounds and five steals, and Los Angeles claimed the eighth seed in the Western Conference with a victory over New Orleans that dropped the Pelicans out of a coveted top-six seeding.

Anthony Davis had 30 points and 11 rebounds against the team that made him the first overall NBA draft choice in 2012 to help set up a rematch on Tuesday night in the same arena in the conference play-in. But Davis asked out of the game in the final minutes and walked gingerly back to the locker room.

James' triple-double was his fifth this season and his playmaking helped spearhead a dominant performance in the paint, where Los Angeles outscored New Orleans 68-42.

Heat 118, Raptors 103

In Miami, Thomas Bryant scored 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 18 points and Miami tuned up for a trip to the play-in tournament by beating Toronto.

Bam Adebayo and Tyler Herro each scored 17 for Miami, while Jimmy Butler scored 15, Caleb Martin 12 and Delon Wright 11 for the Heat.

Wright also had five steals for Miami, which ended 46-36 - good enough for only the No. 8 spot in the East. The Heat will go to Philadelphia to open the play-in tournament on Wednesday, with the winner securing the No. 7 seed.

The loser of the Miami-Philadelphia game will play host to either Atlanta or Chicago on Friday to determine the

No. 8 seed and who'll face No. 1 seed Boston in Round 1.

Warriors 123, Jazz 116

In San Francisco, Klay Thompson scored 25 points with six 3-pointers, Andrew Wiggins added 19 points, and Golden State beat Utah in the regular-season finale and wound up with the 10th spot in the Western Conference.

With the Lakers winning at New Orleans and the Kings beating Portland at home, Golden State will head to Sacramento on Tuesday as the No. 10 seed to face the ninth-seeded Kings in the Play-In Tournament. The Warriors won a thrilling first-round playoff series against their Northern California rival in Game 7 last year.

Golden State only could have moved up as high as eighth if it won and both the Kings and Lakers lost.

Kings 121, Trail Blazers 82

In Sacramento, De'Aaron Fox scored 24 points and Sacramento assured themselves of at least one more home game by beating Portland in the teams' regular-season finale.

Sacramento will head into the play-in tournament on Tuesday night, hosting Golden State in the ninth versus 10th-place game in the Western Conference. The New Orleans Pelicans will face the Los Angeles Lakers in the No. 7 versus No. 8 matchup.

After snapping an NBA-record long 16-year playoff drought last season, the Kings were in good position to finish in the top six and return to the postseason this year before losing five of six games headed into the season finale. Now they must get in through the play-in tournament without key injured players Malik Monk and Kevin Huerter.

Hornets 120, Cavaliers 110

In Cleveland, Nick Smith Jr. scored a season-high 24 points and Steve Clifford won his coaching farewell as Charlotte rallied to beat playoff-bound Cleveland.

Max Strus had 14 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists for his first career triple-double for Cleveland, which rested All-Star shooting guard Donovan Mitchell, point guard Darius Garland and sixth man Caris LeVert.

The Cavaliers will have home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs, but left the floor without knowing their opponent. They lost 12 of their final 19 regular-season games to finish 48-34.

Georges Niang scored 16 points, Jar-

rett Allen posted 14 points and seven rebounds, and Evan Mobley had 14 points for Cleveland. Niang became the first Cavaliers player to appear in all 82 games since LeBron James in 2017-2018.

76ers 107, Nets 86

In Philadelphia, after eight straight wins to end the regular season, Philadelphia is set for their first play-in tournament after a win over Brooklyn.

The Sixers won their eighth straight game and appeared to fall just shy of earning the No. 6 seed in the Eastern Conference, meaning they are set to host the Miami Heat in the play-in tournament Wednesday in Philadelphia.

The 76ers expect to have Embiid, the two-time NBA scoring champion, in the lineup for the postseason.

Magic 113, Bucks 88

In Orlando, Paolo Banchero had 26 points and 11 rebounds, Jonathan Isaac had 10 points, eight rebounds and three blocks in his second start of the season and Orlando avoided a play-in spot with a win over Milwaukee, which left them in fifth place in the Eastern Conference.

Chris Middleton and Bobby Portis scored 17 points each for the Bucks. Damian Lillard scored 16 points on 2 for 14 shooting for Milwaukee, whose playoff position was pending results of other season finales.

Isaac started at center in place of Wendell Carter Jr., who had back spasms but played 14 minutes off the bench. Isaac played 26 minutes, one short of his season high.

Rockets 116, Clippers 105

In Los Angeles, Cam Whitmore scored 21 points and Houston beat playoff-bound Los Angeles to salvage a .500 season.

Amen Thompson had a triple-double of 18 points, 11 rebounds and a career-high 10 assists for the already eliminated Rockets, who finished 41-41 after losing six of their last nine games.

The Pacific Division champion and fourth-seeded Clippers are headed to the playoffs, where they'll meet Luka Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks in the first round next weekend.

Spurs 123, Pistons 95

In San Antonio, Sandro Mamukelashvili had 18 points and San Antonio routed Detroit to close disappointing seasons for both franchises.

Blake Wesley added 17 points for San Antonio. Zach Collins had 17 points and nine rebounds before injuring his shoulder early in the second half.

San Antonio was without Victor Wembanyama, the No. 1 pick in the draft and expected Rookie of the Year. Detroit was without Cade Cunningham, the top pick in 2021.

Celtics 132, Wizards 122

In Boston, Payton Pritchard scored a career-high 38 points and the NBA-best Boston Celtics rested their entire starting lineup in a 132-122 victory over the Washington Wizards.

Svi Mykhailiuk added 26 points and Sam Hauser 16 for Boston, which sat Jayson Tatum, Jaylen Brown, Kristaps Porzingis, Derrick White and Jrue Holiday along with top reserve Al Horford.

Pritchard added 12 assists with nine rebounds. In last year's final regular-season game, the 6-foot-1 Pritchard had a triple-double with 30 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists, joining Larry Bird and John Havlicek as the only Celtics with at least 30 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists in a game.

MUMBAI, April 15, (AP): Rohit Sharma's eighth Twenty20 century overall went in vain as Chennai Super Kings beat Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League on Sunday.

Sharma scored 105 not out off 63 balls but couldn't help his side reach the 207-run target, with Chennai winning by 20 runs.

MS Dhoni's 20 not out off the last four balls of Chennai's innings was the difference as the visitors scored 206-4 in 20 overs. Mumbai could only reply with 186-6.

Earlier, Phil Salt's 89 not out off 47 balls powered Kolkata Knight Riders to an eight-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants at Eden Gardens.

With their respective wins, both Chennai and Kolkata are now equal on eight points. Kolkata has four wins from five games and is second in the points' table with a superior net run-rate. Chennai has four wins from six games and is third.

Put into bat, Chennai lost opener Ajinkya Rahane early for five runs. Skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and Sachin Ravindra (21) added 52 off 37 balls for the second wicket.

Gaikwad scored a second successive half-century, finishing with 69 off 40 balls, including five sixes and five fours. While he anchored the innings, Shivam Dube lit up the Wankhede with an attacking 66 not out off 38 balls. They added 90 runs off only 45 balls for the third wicket with Mumbai skipper Hardik Pandya dismissing Gaikwad in the 16th over.

CRICKET

Dube hit 10 fours and two sixes to propel Chennai's score, but seemed to be losing steam at the death. Jasprit Bumrah finished wicketless but gave away only 27 runs in four overs.

Dhoni then walked out to bat in the final over, perhaps for the last time at this ground, and smacked three consecutive sixes off Pandya. His finish helped Chennai cross 200 and set up the game.

Mumbai got off to a speedy start with Sharma and Ishan Kishan putting on 70 runs in just 7.1 overs.

Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana then pegged them back with a double breakthrough in the 8th over - first Kishan was caught at midwicket and then Suryakumar Yadav was caught at third man for a two-ball duck.

Sharma and Tilak Varma rebuilt the innings with 60 off 38 balls for the third wicket. Mumbai was back in the chase, when Pathirana struck again to send back Varma.

Chennai then put on the brakes with some clever bowling and field plac-



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Travis Head plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Sunrisers Hyderabad in Bengaluru, India, Monday, April 15, 2024. (AP)

ing. Sharma, who had reached 50 off 33 balls, was starved of the strike and only faced another 30 balls despite being unbeaten at the end.

He did manage to double his score, reaching 100 off 61 balls, but Mumbai kept losing wickets at the other end.

Sharma hit 11 fours and five sixes, but his efforts went in vain. Pathirana finished with 4-28 from four overs. It was Mumbai's fourth loss in six games this season.

In Kolkata, Phil Salt smashed 14 fours and three sixes in his whirlwind knock as Kolkata won with 4.2 overs to spare. It finished on 162-2 in 15.4 overs, replying to Lucknow's 161-7.

It was a second consecutive loss for the Super Giants who are now fifth with six points from as many games.

Salt's second half-century of the season powered Kolkata's chase from the very start, despite losing in-form Sunil Narine cheaply.

Left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan did the early damage for Lucknow, dismissing Narine as well as 18-year-old batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi (7).

The double breakthrough didn't impede Salt who helped Kolkata to a powerful start of 42-2 in 3.1 overs.

Salt and skipper Shreyas Iyer then put on 120 runs for the unbroken third wicket off only 76 balls.

Salt reached 50 off 26, including eight fours and two sixes, and then accelerated even more. One of the sixes was spilt over the boundary at deep square leg in the seventh over, giving the batter a second chance as well as bonus runs.

Bid to rekindle interest in vGames

Paris prepares for 100-day countdown to the Olympics

PARIS, April 15, (AP): In Paris' outskirts, a bright-eyed young girl is eager for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to end.

That's because the swimming club where 10-year-old Lyla Kebbi trains will inherit an Olympic pool. It will be dismantled after the Games and trucked from the Olympic race venue in Paris' high-rise business district to Sevran, a Paris-area town with less glitter and wealth. There, the pieces will be bolted back together and - voila! - Kebbi and her swim team will have a new Olympic-sized pool to splash around in.

"It's incredible!" she says. "I hope it's going to bring us luck," adds her mother, Nora.

In 100 days as of Wednesday, the Paris Olympics will kick off with a wildly ambitious waterborne opening ceremony. But the first Games in a century in France's capital won't be judged for spectacle alone. Another yardstick will be their impact on disadvantaged Paris suburbs, away from the city-center landmarks that are hosting much of the action.

By promising socially positive and also less polluting and less wasteful Olympics, the city synonymous with romance is also setting itself the high bar of making future Games generally more desirable.

Critics question their value for a world grappling with climate warming and other emergencies. Potential host cities became so Games-averse that Paris and Los Angeles were the only remaining candidates in 2017 when the International Olympic Committee selected them for 2024 and 2028, respectively.

After scandals and the \$13 billion cost of the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Games in 2021, unfulfilled promises of beneficial change for host Rio de Janeiro in 2016 and the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi tarnished by Russian doping and President Vladimir Putin's subsequent land grabs in Ukraine, the Switzerland-based IOC has mountains of skepticism to dispel.

Virtuous Summer Games in Paris could help the long-term survival of the IOC's mega-event.

The idea that the July 26-Aug. 11 Games and Aug. 28-Sept. 8 Paralympics should benefit disadvantaged communities in the Seine-Saint-Denis region northeast of Paris was built from the outset into the city's plans.

Seine-Saint-Denis is mainland France's poorest region. Thanks to generations of immigration, it is also vibrantly diverse, counting 130 nationalities and more than 170 languages spoken by its 1.6 million inhabitants. For Seine-Saint-Denis kids facing racial discrimination and other barriers, sports are sometimes a route out.

World Cup winner Kylian Mbappé honed his silky soccer skills as a boy in the Seine-Saint-Denis town of Bondy.

Once heavily industrialized, Seine-Saint-Denis became grim and scary in parts after many jobs were lost. Rioting rocked its streets in 2005 and again last year. Members of an Islamic extremist cell that killed 130 people in the French capital in 2015 hid after the carnage in an apartment in the town of Saint-Denis and were killed in a shoot-out with heavily armed SWAT teams. That drama unfolded just a 15-minute walk from the Olympic stadium that will host track and field and rugby and the closing ceremonies.

Concretely, the Games will leave a legacy of new and refurbished sports infrastructure in Seine-Saint-Denis, although critics say the investment still isn't enough to catch it up with better equipped, more prosperous regions.

Mamitiana Rabarijaona grew up close to the Olympic stadium, built originally for the 1998 soccer World Cup. He says it didn't provide much of a boost for Seine-Saint-Denis residents. He believes the Olympics will be "a big party" and he will be among 45,000 volunteers who'll be helping. But he is not expecting Olympic-related investments to magically erase Seine-Saint-Denis' many difficulties.

OLYMPICS

"It's like lifting the carpet and brushing the dust underneath," he said. "It doesn't make it go away."

Seine-Saint-Denis got the new Olympic village that will become housing and offices when the 10,500 Olympians and 4,400 Paralympians have left. It also is home to the Games' only purpose-built competition venue, an aquatics center for diving, water polo and artistic swimming events. Other competition venues already existed, were previously planned or will be temporary.

"We really were driven by the ambition of sobriety and above all not to build sports facilities that aren't needed and which will have no reason to exist after the Games," Marie Barsacq, the organizing committee's legacy director, said in an interview.

The hand-me-down 50-meter pool for Sevran was a significant upgrade. The Seine-Saint-Denis town of 51,000 people was whacked by factory closures in the 1990s. Its existing 25-meter pool is nearly 50 years old.

Other Seine-Saint-Denis towns are also getting new or renovated pools - particularly welcome for the region's children, because only half of them can swim.



Golden State Warriors' Trayce Jackson-Davis (32) puts up a shot over Utah Jazz's Omer Yurtseven (77) in the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco on Sunday, April 14, 2024. (AP)

Mongolia play Indonesia

Kuwait ice hockey team begins World Cup journey against Malaysia



Khaled Al-Mutairi, Vice President of the Winter Games Club.

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Today marks the beginning of Kuwait ice hockey team's journey in the Men's World Cup (2024) fourth level, as they take on the Malaysian national team at the Bayan Ice Rink at 6:00pm.

The Kuwait-Malaysia matchup will be preceded by a game be-

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tween Mongolia and Indonesia at 2:00 pm. The official opening ceremony of the tournament, under the patronage of Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs, Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and Minister of State for Communications Affairs Daoud Marafi, will

commence at 5: 00 pm. Marafi will participate in the opening ceremony alongside Baraem Kuwait Hockey School, and the event will



Players preparing for their opening match.

also feature a parade of participating teams.

Over the course of four days, the tournament will unfold under the comprehensive technical, arbitration, and organizational supervision of the International Federation of the Game. It holds significant importance as the victorious team earns qualification to the third level in this global tournament.

Preparation for the tournament saw the Kuwaiti national team undergo a rigorous training camp in Dubai, supplemented by intense preparations and friendly matches against professional teams during the UAE camp.

Khaled Al-Mutairi, Vice President of the Winter Games Club, highlighted the tireless efforts

of the tournament's organizing committee, led by Fuhaid Al-Ajmi, in completing all logistical arrangements with professionalism, garnering approval from the overseeing International Federation.

Al-Mutairi emphasized the Winter Games Club's commitment to preparing the hockey team to the highest standards through comprehensive training camps and challenging friendly matches. He acknowledged the formidable competition from other Asian teams and called upon the Kuwaiti public to rally behind Al-Azraq in their global quest, especially considering the special provisions made for families by the organizing committee.

Canada edge US in nail-bitter for gold

Danielle Serdachny scores in OT

UTICA, April 15, (AP): Danielle Serdachny converted a rebound in front 5:16 into overtime for a power-play goal and Canada beat the United States 6-5 in a breathtaking women's world hockey championship gold medal game.

Canada won its tournament-leading 13th gold medal and did so on U.S. soil in central New York, a year after the Americans won their 10th tournament outside of Toronto.

Canadian captain Marie-Philip Poulin scored twice, Julia Gosling also scored, while Erin Ambrose and Emily Clark had shots bank into the net off U.S. defenseman Caroline Harvey. Ann-Renee Desbiens finished with 19 saves, including kicking out her left skate to stop Harvey's wrap-around attempt 2:40 into the overtime.

Harvey and Laila Edwards had a goal and assist for the Americans who finished the tournament 6-1. Hilary Knight, Megan Keller and Alex Carpenter also scored for the U.S.

Serdachny's goal came with 2 seconds left in a too-many-players penalty issued to the U.S. Erin Ambrose's

ICE HOCKEY

shot from the left circle was stopped by Aerin Frankel, but Serdachny swept the loose puck into the net.

Frankel, who set the single tournament record with four shutouts, finished with 24 saves.

The neighboring nations and women's global powers showed once again why their rivalry is regarded as the fiercest and most intense in sports.

This marked the 10th time in 36 world championship meetings the teams played beyond regulation, and first in a gold-medal game since Poulin sealed a 3-2 OT victory in 2021. It also marked the highest-scoring game between the U.S. and Canada in any meeting since the Americans' 7-5 win in the 2015 world championship gold-medal game.

The rivalry is so tight, both teams are 18-18 in world championship meetings, with Canada now holding a 104-103 edge in goals scored.

They went from a low-scoring, but fast-paced and riveting preliminary round meeting on Monday, which the Americans won 1-0 on Kirsten Simms' overtime goal, to an offensive eruption.

The game was a breathtaking, back-and-forth affair in which neither team was capable of maintaining any momentum or holding more than a one-goal advantage.

Just when it appeared Canada had taken control with Poulin's second goal, which she took four whacks at the puck from in close before tapping it in with 7:41 remaining, Harvey scored 2:39 later. Lacey Eden set up the goal from behind the net, where she fed Harvey for a one-timer from the left circle.

Canada's Ella Shelton made a key stop with 3:21 left in regulation, when Edwards' shot from the right of the net deflected off someone in front. The puck was dribbling toward the open left side, before Shelton reached out with her stick to deflect it just wide.

Canada opened the scoring 6:32 in when Ambrose's shot from the right point. Edwards tied it less than two minutes later with a shot from the left circle, beating Desbiens high on the short side on a delayed penalty after Taylor Heise as tripped by Jocelyne Larocque at the blue line.

After Canada went up 2-1 on Gosling's goal 3:08 into the second period, the Americans responded to take the lead with Keller and Carpenter scoring less than six minutes apart.

Then it was the Canadians' turn to tie it, with Poulin driving up the left wing, faking a pass into the middle and beating Frankel with a rising shot that went in off the crossbar. The goal was just the Canadian captain's first of the tournament, as she was coming off an injury that led her to miss the final



Team Canada players pose with their gold medals and the championship Cup after beating the United States in the final at the IIHF Women's World Hockey Championships in Utica. (AP)

Friction arises between players

Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club on brink of final spots

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff



Al-Qadisiya player is well defended by Kazma player.

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club are on the brink of securing spots in the Basketball League final following their recent victories. Al-Qadisiya triumphed over Kazma 85-81, while Kuwait Club overcame Al-Arabi 104-100 in the first round of playoff matches in the tournament's semi-finals.

The semi-finals employ a playoff format consisting of three matches, with the team winning two matches advancing to the final. The final itself will follow the same format but with five matches.

In the initial encounter, both teams remained evenly matched throughout, showcasing an enthralling display of sportsmanship with Al-Qadisiya leading at the end of the first quarter 27-19, the second 40-35, and the third 62-57 before ultimately clinching victory.

BASKETBALL

Kuwait Club, the defending champion, faced a formidable challenge from Al-Arabi in the second match. Despite Al-Arabi's impressive performance, Kuwait Club's experience proved decisive in securing victory. Led by Haitian player Cady LaLanne's prowess under the basket and contributions from Marcus Hunt, Hamad Adnan, and Alexander Al-Ghais, Kuwait Club led 23-13 at the end of the first quarter and 47-43 at halftime.

The third quarter saw both teams exchanging leads, highlighted by stand-out performances from Ali Al-Hadhud of Al-Arabi and Tony Carr of Kuwait Club. Al-Arabi maintained a narrow lead of 73-71 by the end of the quarter. The intensity peaked in the final quarter before Kuwait Club ultimately emerged victorious.

However, the match concluded on a contentious note as friction arose between Kuwait Club player Hamad Adnan and Al-Arabi's Hassan Bormeh. Interventions from both teams' management prevented the situation from escalating further.

Inter, Milan draw ahead of potential 'title-deciding' derby for Nerazzurri

MILAN, April 15, (AP): Inter Milan will need to win the derby against AC Milan in the next round to secure the Serie A title with five games to spare after both teams drew their games.

Milan fought back from 3-1 down but could only draw 3-3 at relegation-threatened Sassuolo in an early match. That meant that if Inter had beaten struggling Cagliari at home, a draw would have then sufficed at Milan on April 22 to win a 20th league title and earn a second star on the team shirts.

However, Inter was held to a 2-2 draw by Cagliari.

A star is awarded for every 10 Serie A titles. Milan, like Inter, has won the Italian league 19 times.

Roma's match at Udinese was suspended with about 19 minutes remaining after defender Evan Ndicka collapsed.

At Sassuolo, Milan got off to the worst possible start as it found itself 2-0 down inside 10 minutes following goals from Andrea Pinamonti and Armand Laurienté.

Samuel Chukwueze thought he had pulled one back for Milan in the 17th minute but it was ruled out for a tight offside decision as a portion of his shoulder was caught out.

Milan did get back into the match three minutes later in stunning fashion. Rafael Leão cut inside the left of the area and beat two defenders before firing between the legs of another and into the far bottom corner.

Laurienté doubled his tally and restored Sassuolo's two-goal lead early in the second half when he was left unmarked and had the time and space to control a cross and drive it past standing Milan goalkeeper Marco Sportiello.

Luka Jović reduced the deficit in the 59th and Chukwueze thought he had equalized four minutes later but it was again ruled out for offside.

Milan did level six minutes from time. A corner was nodded on by Olivier Giroud and the ball was then

chested towards Noah Okafor, who slotted home from point-blank range with one of his first touches after coming on as a substitute.

Sassuolo, which is second-to-last in the standings, inched to within a point of safety.

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Inter was without the suspended Lautaro Martínez but nevertheless seemed on course for an important win before Nicolas Viola's late equalizer for Cagliari, shortly after coming off the bench.

Cagliari forward Eldor Shomurodov had canceled out Marcus Thuram's opener for Inter but Hakan Çalhanoğlu restored the Nerazzurri's lead from the spot in the 74th after handball by visiting defender Yerry Mina.

Walid Cheddira scored two goals against his parent club to help relegation-threatened Frosinone draw 2-2 against Napoli.



Leverkusen fans run on the pitch after Bayer Leverkusen won the German Bundesliga title beating Werder Bremen in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

Bayern Munich's 11-year reign ended

Leverkusen win maiden Bundesliga title

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, April 15, (AP): It's "Neverkusen" no more.

Coached by Xabi Alonso, Bayer Leverkusen won the Bundesliga title for the first time to end Bayern Munich's 11-year reign as champion.

In the end, it wasn't even close - Leverkusen leads second-place Bayern by 16 points after stretching its German record unbeaten run to 43 games

across all competitions this season.

Florian Wirtz scored a hat trick as Leverkusen routed Werder Bremen 5-0 and the game ended with a pitch invasion Sunday to secure the club's first-ever German league title with five games remaining.

"It's indescribable ... I don't think it's possible, or I personally can't even realize it yet," Wirtz told broadcaster

DAZN.

"I need a little more time in the locker room to really get my head around what we've achieved. But yeah, so far it's just been nice to party outside with the fans and also have a bit of a party in the locker room."

Fans had already stormed onto the field when Leverkusen scored its fourth goal with seven minutes to go, and the final minutes were filled in thick red smoke from supporters' pyrotechnics while players on Leverkusen's bench clapped along to songs, danced and hugged one another.

The fifth goal in the 90th brought more fans onto the field - hundreds this time - and the referee ended the game amid confusion and jubilation. Thousands of supporters crowded the field waving flags, flares and cardboard copies of the Bundesliga trophy.

Leverkusen finally shed its reputation as perennial runner-up after five second-place finishes in the league and one in the Champions League.

Alonso, who took over as coach when Leverkusen was in the relegation zone in October 2022, reflected on ending Bayern's dominance.

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"Perhaps it's healthy for the Bundesliga, also for German football, for another team to win," said Alonso, who won three Bundesliga titles with Bayern as a player from 2015-17.

"It's a great joy and we have to enjoy it. We need a bit more time to realize what we've achieved. But it's a super moment and yes, we'll see what happens next," Alonso said, referring to the other trophies that his team can win this season. "But now is the time to celebrate."

Victor Boniface - starting a Bundesliga game for the first time since December because of injury - settled Leverkusen's nerves with the opening goal from the penalty spot before Granit Xhaka hit an audacious long-range shot to make it 2-0 with half an hour to go.

Bremen folded after that with substitute Wirtz scoring a goal very similar to Xhaka's, then another on the counter in the 83rd and a third to end the game, his first career hat trick.

Leverkusen is aiming for a historic treble of trophies. Alonso's team will play second-division Kaiserslautern in the German Cup final in Berlin on May 25 and has a 2-0 lead over West Ham after their Europa League quarterfinal first leg.

The title puts the spotlight firmly on an industrial city of just under 170,000, which has been overshadowed by larger, more famous neighbors.

"Not in Cologne and Duesseldorf, no, we're at home here," is the third line of the club song played just before kickoff. Soccer is how Leverkusen stands out.

The club started as a workers' team for the Bayer pharmaceutical giant 120 years ago and is a rare exception in Germany, where most clubs are majority-controlled by members under the so-called 50+1 rule.

Twelfth-place Bremen was in difficulties even before kickoff as the club accused midfielder Naby Keita of walking out on the squad after he was disappointed not to be in the starting lineup. Leverkusen goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky dealt with the few chances Bremen created.

In the early game, Ritsu Doan's first-half strike was enough for Freiburg to win 1-0 at last-place Darmstadt, which moved closer to automatic relegation.

Darmstadt, with 14 points, was 12 points from the relegation playoff spot with five matches to play. No team in the Bundesliga has ever overcome such a deficit at this stage of the season to survive.



Brest's Steve Mounie, (center), scores his side's first goal during a French League One soccer match between Lyon and Brest at the Groupama stadium, outside Lyon, France. (AP)

Sports

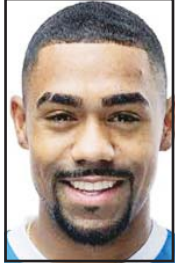
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Al-Ain showdown looms

Al-Hilal shift focus to CL semis as they continue four-title bid

RIYADH, April 15, (AP) — The likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema haven't been able to halt Al-Hilal's dominant run in Saudi Arabia's domestic soccer league. Now it's the turn of Al-Ain of the United Arab Emirates to come up against this seemingly unstoppable force in the semifinals of the Asian Champions League.

Al-Hilal is in contention for an unprecedented collection of four titles. The first trophy was secured last week when Malcom scored twice for the club in a 4-1 win over Al-Ittihad in the Saudi Super Cup final. With seven games in the Saudi Pro League remaining, the Blues are 12 points clear of Ronaldo's Al-Nassr.



Malcom

On April 30, the Riyadh-based club will meet Al-Ittihad of Jeddah in the semifinals of the King's Cup, a domestic knockout competition.

Al-Hilal also has its sights set on a record fifth continental title, though it's expecting a challenge Tuesday against the Herman Crespo coached Al-Ain, the 2003 champions who ousted Al-Nassr in the Asian Champions League quarterfinals.

"We have only won one trophy and there are three more to go for," defender Ali Al-Bulaihi told Saudi Arabian TV ahead of the continental semifinals. "Al-Hilal is a system and everyone at the club from the bottom to the top works hard and this is the reason for success. We are not afraid of any team and we are ready for any challenge."

Despite being without injured striker Aleksandar Mitrovic, the joint leading scorer in this season's Asian Champions League, and Brazilian

superstar Neymar, Al-Hilal is still in great form. The Super Cup victory over Ittihad extended its world record winning streak for top tier teams to 34 games.

While Al-Hilal is strongly favored to overcome Al-Ain and progress to next month's final, the meeting in the eastern zone - Asia's top continental club tournament is divided into two geographic halves until the final - appears closer to call.

The eastern zone playoff is between last season's champion of South Korea and Japan's runner-up as Ulsan HD, Asian champions in 2012 and 2022,

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welcomes Yokohama F. Marinos.

Five-time Japanese champion Yokohama has never reached this stage in Asia before, even under successful coaches Ange Postecoglou and Kevin Muscat.

Harry Kewell is the third successive Australian coach at the club and is hoping to take Yokohama all the way.

"It's important to understand when I first came into the job it was always going to be a quick turnaround for us because of the AFC Champions League games that were coming up," Kewell, appointed in December, said. "The attitude of the players has been excellent - the willingness from them to learn a slightly new style."

"It's been quite easy to implement my ideas," added Kewell, who won the UEFA Champions League as a player with Liverpool in 2005. "They've accepted it and they've worked very hard in perfecting them throughout the games."

Yokohama will host Ulsan in the return leg of the semifinals on April 24, a day after Al-Hilal takes on Al-Ain in Saudi Arabia.

'Unstoppable' Scheffler wins another Masters green jacket

Aberg backs up the hype, finishes 2nd

AUGUSTA, April 15, (AP) — Scottie Scheffler spent more time looking at his feet than any of the white leaderboards at Augusta National, all of them showing that everyone was watching - a Masters champion again, the undisputed best player in golf.

He prefers to stay in his own little world, population one.

Nobody is close to him in the game at the moment.

Scheffler is No. 1 in the world by a margin not seen since Tiger Woods in his prime. In nine tournaments this year, he doesn't have a round over par and has earned over \$15 million. And on Sunday, he delivered the greatest piece of evidence when he slipped into that green jacket.

Scheffler pulled ahead with magnificent shots around the turn, poured it on along the back nine as his challengers melted away with mistakes and closed with a 4-under 68 to claim his second Masters in three years with a four-shot victory. "I had a lot of really talented players trying to chase me down, and I knew pars weren't going to get it done," Scheffler said.

Unlike two years ago when he won his first major, there were no doubts Sunday morning, no tears, and no wife to reassure him he was built for a moment like this. His wife, Meredith, was home in Dallas expecting their first child at the end of the month.

Scheffler made sure there was no



Scottie Scheffler holds the trophy after winning the Masters golf tournament at Augusta National Golf Club Sunday, April 14, 2024, in Augusta, Ga. (AP)

drama, either.

Much like Woods he made the outcome look inevitable with sublime control, the difference being a peach shirt instead of Sunday red, and no fist pumps until it was over.

After sharing hugs with caddie Ted Scott and Collin Morikawa, Scheffler turned to face the crowd with both arms raised. "WOOOOO!" he yelled, slamming his fist.

Masters newcomer Ludvig Aberg, among four players who had a share of the lead at one point, lost ground with

his approach went into the pond left of the 11th hole and he made double bogey. Against a player like Scheffler, those mistakes are not easy to overcome.

Aberg closed with a 69 and was the runner-up, not a bad debut for someone playing in his first major championship.

Morikawa, who had two double bogeys to fall out of the hunt, shot 74 and tied for third with Tommy Fleetwood (69) and Max Homa (73), whose hopes ended on the par-3 12th with a double bogey from the bushes, not Rae's Creek.

Woods, meanwhile, closed with a 77 and finished in last place at 16-over 304, the highest 72-hole score of his career. This came two days after he set the Masters record for making his 24th consecutive cut.

The 27-year-old Scheffler is the fourth-youngest player to have two green jackets. He now has three victories against the strongest fields - Bay Hill, The Players Championship and the Masters - in his last four starts. The other was a runner-up finish in Houston.

Scheffler finished at 11-under 277 and earned \$3.6 million from the \$20 million purse.

Perhaps even more daunting for the rest of golf is that Scheffler now has 10

GOLF

victories worldwide dating to his first PGA Tour title at the Phoenix Open just two years and two months ago.

During that stretch, Scheffler has finished in the top 10 a staggering 65% of the time.

It was the fourth straight Masters when the winner came to the 18th green with one arm in the green jacket. That doesn't mean Sunday was a walk in golf's most gorgeous garden.

Four players had a share of the lead at various points along the front nine, and then Scheffler began to assert himself with three straight birdies around the turn.

He got up-and-down with a 10-foot birdie putt at the par-5 eighth. He hit the perfect wedge that caught the ridge and came inches within going in on No. 9, leaving him a tap-in birdie.

Saudi Arabia take on Tajikistan

Kuwait eye victory in AFC U-23 Cup opener against Vietnam



Aston Villa's Lucas Digne, from left, Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus, Aston Villa's Lucas Digne, Arsenal's Kai Havertz and Aston Villa's Ollie Watkins go for header during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Aston Villa at the Emirates stadium in London. Unai Emery damaged his former team's title hopes again as Aston Villa beat Arsenal 2-0 to leave Manchester City top of the Premier League. Both goals came late after Villa had soaked up Arsenal's pressure for much of the game, with Leon Bailey putting his team ahead in the 84th and Ollie Watkins adding the second on a counterattack two minutes later. (AP)

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

DOHA, April 15: This evening marks the conclusion of the Kuwait Olympic football team's training sessions at the Qatar University stadiums. It is gearing up to face the Vietnam in the opening round of the fourth group competitions of the AFC U-23 Cup finals. This prestigious tournament commenced yesterday and will run until May 3rd. Alongside Kuwait and Vietnam, the group includes Uzbekistan and Malaysia.

Under the guidance of Portuguese coach Emilio Peixe, the team is striving to find the optimal lineup during its final training session before the tournament kicks off. Kuwait targets

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a positive result that will not only boost morale but also enhance its prospects of advancing to the quarter-finals.

The technical staff of the team has been diligently implementing multiple tactics during recent training sessions to formulate a comprehensive strategy. They have emphasized the importance of focus and precise execution of instructions to attain their desired objectives.

It's noteworthy that the participating teams have been divided into four groups, with each group comprising four teams. These teams will engage in a round-robin league format, and the top two teams from each group will secure berths in the quarter-finals. Additionally, today features four captivating matches in the tournament's second day. Saudi Arabia clashes with Tajikistan, while Iraq takes on Thailand in the third group's encounters. Meanwhile, Japan squares off against China in the second group, and the UAE national team faces off against the South Korean national team.

Lyon win 7-goal thriller vs Brest

PARIS, April 15, (AP) — Ainsley Maitland-Niles scored a penalty deep into stoppage time as Lyon rallied from trailing 3-1 to beat second-place Brest 4-3 in a dramatic French league game.

Alexandre Lacazette is Lyon's regular penalty-taker but he had been stretched off after being accidentally hit on the head by goalkeeper Marco Bizot, which saw the penalty awarded after VAR. Lacazette lay on the ground for several minutes before being stretchered off.

With 16 minutes of stoppage time on the clock, Maitland-Niles stepped up and sent Bizot the wrong way to give Lyon a win, and also open the door wider for Paris Saint-Germain to clinch a record-extending 12th league title.

Brest is 10 points behind PSG and only one point ahead of Monaco in third place. Brest has five games left and PSG, which did not play this weekend, has six. Lyon climbed up to seventh spot.

Brest looked set for a victory after scoring three times in eight minutes through striker Steve Mounie and a brace from Romain Del Castillo, but Lyon hit back in the 70th minute through Lacazette's 15th goal of the season and left back Nicolás Tagliafico nine minutes later.

Tagliafico was sent off in the 86th along with Brest midfielder Pierre Lees-Melou after an altercation between them. It led to pushing and shoving between players from both sides and Lyon defender Jake O'Brien - a former national junior champion boxer in Ireland - was shown a yellow card.

Former France midfielder Corentin Tolisso gave Lyon the lead with a powerful strike in the 18th minute. It was harsh on Brest, which had a blatant-looking penalty turned down moments earlier when O'Brien blocked Bradley Locko's header with his hand.



Kuwaiti players hold their final training before their game against Vietnam.

'The trophy must come back to Munich'

Bayern face uncertain future after losing Bundesliga title

DUESSELDORF, Germany, April 15, (AP) — Three of Bayern Munich's senior figures did something Sunday that no one at the club had done since 2012.

They congratulated another team on winning the Bundesliga.

President Herbert Hainer, CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen and sporting director Max Eberl each offered praise for new champion Bayer Leverkusen and coach Xabi Alonso - who Bayern had been keen to sign - and each vowed Bayern would fight to reclaim the trophy it held for 11 long years.

"The goal for FC Bayern now is: the trophy must come back to Munich!" Hainer wrote.

The question is how. Bayern didn't just lose the Bundesliga title to Leverkusen, it lost it by 16

points with five games to go. Bayern wrapped up the crown that early only three times in its 11-year reign. That means a comprehensive rebuild is looming.

Bayern's 2023-24 season isn't over yet, and coach Thomas Tuchel could yet salvage some pride in the Champions League before he leaves. It's not impossible that Wednesday's quarterfinal second leg against Arsenal, poised at 2-2, could be Bayern's next step to the June 1 final and a



Eberl

first trophy for Harry Kane.

Despite the jibes on social media about how the England captain managed to join Germany's perennial champion team and still not win a league title, Kane has been a resounding success in Munich with 39 goals in the Bundesliga

SOCCER

and Champions League.

A year ago, Bayern's need for a striker was clear when the team held onto the Bundesliga on goal difference as a strong Borussia Dortmund challenge crumbled.

Tuchel, though, argued Bayern needed a defensive midfielder as well, and was concerned that the central

pairing of Leon Goretzka and Joshua Kimmich were both too keen to make impactful attacking runs, leaving a gap. After wrapping up the Kane deal in August for over \$100 million, Bayern switched focus to Fulham defensive midfielder Joao Palhinha and even got him to Munich for a medical before the deal broke down.

With Eberl heading into his first transfer window in overall charge of Bayern's sporting approach, he will have to decide how to fix the problem Tuchel identified a year ago, and how much to allow the club's new coach - whoever that may be - to shape the team. Eberl may also need to replace left back Alphonso Davies, whose contract is due to expire at the end of next season amid reported interest from Real Madrid.