

His Highness the Amir receives His Highness the Crown Prince. Amiri Diwan photo

HH Amir hosts Crown Prince, Acting Premier

KUWAIT CITY, April 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace Wednesday morning.

His Highness also received Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

Also on Wednesday, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace.



His Highness the Amir receives the Acting Prime Minister. Amiri Diwan photo

Kuwait triples fines, empowers police under stricter traffic law

Red light offenders face arrest

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Ministry of Interior announced that Decree-Law No. 5/2025, which amends certain provisions of Decree-Law No. 67/1976 related to traffic regulations, will come into effect on Tuesday, April 22. Under this decree-law, police officers will be authorized to arrest individuals who cross the stop line when the traffic light is red, and other such offenses, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Relations and Media outlined the traffic offenses that will result in the arrest of offenders. They are:

- Driving a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or psychotropic substances.
- Committing a traffic accident that results in injury or death.
- Participating in a motor vehicle race on roads without a permit or in violation of the granted permit.

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Amir, Iran's president discuss ties in Eid call

KUWAIT CITY, April 2, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a phone call Wednesday morning from President of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian, congratulating him on Eid Al-Fitr, and wished the two nations prosperity and blissfulness, His Highness the Amir good health and the state of Kuwait further progress.

The two heads of state talked of the sturdy bilateral ties between their nations and mechanisms of boosting such ties across a multitude of avenues, as well as discussed issues of common interest and regional and international developments.

His Highness the Amir expressed his deep gratitude and appreciation for the President, and commended the long lasting ties between Kuwait and Iran as well as affirmed keenness on developing these ties towards more cooperation, and wished the President good health and the friendly nation further progress.

Woman's throat slit, suspect nabbed

Police crack grisly Hawally murder case in record time

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: An Indian man has been arrested for slitting the throat of a compatriot woman with a sharp knife, which led to her immediate death, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to security sources, officers from Hawally Security Directorate's Operations and Patrols Department arrested the suspect in Maidan Hawally in record time after receiving a report about the crime.

The officers quickly surveyed the area, gathered initial information, and apprehended the perpetrator shortly after. The murder weapon was also recovered at the scene.

The suspect has been referred to the relevant authorities for necessary legal action.



Kuwait City's iconic skyscrapers stand tall against a backdrop of hot, partly cloudy skies and soaring temperatures of 36 degrees Celsius on Wednesday.

Electricity load enters red zone

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The electricity load index entered the "red zone" on Wednesday after recording 9,836 megawatts, which is a 336-megawatt increase compared to Tuesday's levels, due to the rising temperatures, which reached 36°C on April 2.

The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy announced that power outages would be carried out in phases in parts of agricultural and industrial areas due to the high electrical load and ongoing maintenance on some electricity generation units in preparation for full operation during the summer season.

It was reported on Tuesday that the electricity load index entered the orange zone after recording 9,494 megawatts at 2:00 pm due to a slight temperature rise. This was an increase of 494 megawatts compared to 9,000 megawatts recorded on Monday.

According to reliable sources, this does not indicate decrease in productivity, as it is the result of a number of production units being out of operation for routine maintenance.

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Lawyers applaud reforms to combat fraud, improve debt recovery

Kuwait registers over 7,000 travel ban transactions

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Execution General Department at the Ministry of Justice completed 1,020,906 transactions in January; including travel bans, vehicle seizures and seizure of debtors' assets held by third parties.

Through these transactions, the department received fees totaling KD784,464.

The newspaper obtained statistics, revealing that the request for an executive seizure of debtors' assets held by third parties recorded the highest number of transactions with 571,251 or 56 percent of the total; while the opening of a modification file is the lowest at 0.01 percent.

According to the concerned authorities, the Capital branch carried out the highest number of transactions at 30.7 percent, followed by Ahmadi at 20.5 percent, Farwaniya at 16.6 percent, Hawally at 13.5

percent, Mubarak Al-Kabeer at 9.6 percent, Jahra at 8.9 percent while the Ports-Sulaibiya-Lawyers Association branches accounted for 0.2 percent.

The total number of transactions in the Travel Ban Section was 7,193; the largest proportion of which was for lifting the travel ban with 2,709 or 37.7 percent of the total. Fee collection form and fee collection receipt accounted for the least number at 0.03 percent each.

Travel ban transactions in the Capital branch accounted for the largest number at 49.4 percent, followed by the Ports-Sulaibiya-Lawyers Association branches at 30.1 percent, Farwaniya at 6.0 percent, Ahmadi at 5.0 percent, Hawally at 4.5

percent, Jahra at 3.5 percent, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer at 1.5 percent.

The Rental Department had a total of 13,807 transactions. Fee collection receipt ranked first with 5,452 or 39.5 percent, while receipts for a warning or judgment were last at 0.01 percent.

The Capital branch recorded the largest number of such transactions at 54.6 percent, followed by Farwaniya at 14.2 percent, Hawally at 14.1 percent, Ahmadi at 11.1 percent, Jahra at 3.6 percent and Mubarak Al-Kabeer at 2.4 percent.

On the other hand, lawyers believe that measures stipulated in the draft decree-law amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law could be used to restore the rights of the concerned individuals. They welcomed this step, considering it "an absolute necessity to deal with the rise of fraud cases and the loss of rights."

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MoCI conducts inspection tour

Many exchange shops close as Kuwait Central Bank's regulations take effect

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: A large number of money exchange shops closed following the enforcement of regulations governing exchange companies and institutions, in line with the Central Bank of Kuwait's requirements, especially after the deadline for license holders to comply expired, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In response, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, led by Minister Khalifa Al-Ajeel, quickly conducted inspection tours with three teams targeting exchange shops throughout Kuwait. Out of 138 shops that failed to comply with the decision, only one was closed, while the others chose to remain inactive.

On June 11, 2024, the Council of Ministers issued Resolution No. 552/2024 for transferring the responsibility for supervising and monitoring exchange shops from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Central Bank of Kuwait. This decision was implemented through Ministerial Resolution No. 233/2024, which regulates the work of exchange businesses in line with the requirements set by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

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Combo photos show inspection teams from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry conduct an extensive campaign in areas with a high concentration of money exchange shops across the country.



2 Providing jobs to special needs people 'noble goal' – minister

3 Kidnap, sexual assault of minors could lead to death, life in prison



Agility reports KD 63 mln net income for FY 2024



9 Zain Al-Shuhoor campaign celebrated the spirit of the Holy Month



10 stc concludes its 2025 'With good, we go further' Ramadan campaign

Newswatch

KUWAIT CITY: The State of Kuwait has welcomed the Khujand Declaration on enhancing friendship between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as the treaty to define the point of contact at the international borders among the three countries, signed on Monday.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Kuwait lauded this positive step that reflected cooperation and extended congratulations to the three countries for solving the matter diplomatically. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: The White House on Tuesday assured that US President Donald Trump will be visiting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in May on his first journey out of the country.

White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said during a press briefing, "the President will be heading to Saudi Arabia in May" and that dates and more details will be provided. On Monday Trump mentioned that he intends to go on tour in the GCC to visit Saudi, Qatar, and the UAE. (KUNA)

WASHINGTON: Bahraini Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif Al-Zayani called on the international community late Tuesday, to uphold its legal and humanitarian responsibilities to end conflicts and alleviate human suffering.

This came at a roundtable discussion organized by the Hudson Institute, attended by Bahrain's Ambassador to Washington Shaikh Abdulla Al-Khalifa, and several experts.

Al-Zayani stressed the need for peace, security, and stability in the Middle East, a region that has endured years of wars and destruction. (KUNA)

GAZA: Health Authorities in Gaza Strip announced on Wednesday that more than 40 people were killed, at a shelter for the displaced affiliated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in Jabalia camp, northern Gaza Strip.

In a press statement, the Civil Defense said that its crews in the northern governorate recovered the bodies of seven martyrs and 12 injured people, as a result of the Israeli occupation's targeting UNRWA's clinic, that houses displaced people in the Jabalia camp. (KUNA)

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	04:17	Asr	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:37	Maghrib ..	18:07
Zohr	11:52	Isha	19:25

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be thundery at times.
By Night: Mild and partly

Weather			
cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate freshening at times northwest-erly wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait City	35	23	

Kuwait Airport	36	20
Abdaly	38	18
Bubyan	28	20
Jahra	38	22
Failaka Island	28	23
Salmiyah	29	21
Ahmadi	28	17
Jal Aliyah	35	22
Nuwaisib	34	21

NATO ICI regional center in Kuwait hub for political dialogue: Colomina

BRUSSELS, April 2, (KUNA): NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood, Javier Colomina, said on Tuesday that the NATO ICI Regional Centre (Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) hosted in Kuwait provides a platform for political dialogue between NATO and its Gulf partners.

The center allows for discussions on global security challenges, developing a shared understanding, and identifying opportunities for practical cooperation.

Since its inauguration in January 2017, the center has become an important regional hub for cooperation on security issues between NATO and the region through political dialogue, education, training, and public diplomacy, said Colomina in a statement to KUNA.

The center has conducted 101 events under political dialogue (events, conferences, and visits) and 56 military training courses.

He pointed out that in 2024, the center addressed topics such as climate change, food security, maritime security, and more with participation from NATO and Kuwait, including NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Boris Ruge, and Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah, Director General of Kuwait’s Coast Guard.

Colomina noted that one of the center’s objectives is to target youth, as the center hosted the “Young Ambassadors” program in February 2025 in coopera-



Javier Colomina

tion with the British and Canadian embassies as well as the United Nations.

He emphasized that the bilateral partnership between Kuwait and NATO includes political dialogue and practical cooperation, especially in cybersecurity and counterterrorism, as agreed in the “Partnership Program” in 2024, which continues until 2027.

Colomina added that Kuwait participates in multilevel political consultations to exchange views on peace and security issues in the Gulf and the Middle East. Kuwaiti civilians and military personnel participate in courses and training programs provided by NATO in areas such as civil emergency planning, counterterrorism, defense reform, and nuclear nonproliferation.

He mentioned that Kuwait was the first country to join the Istanbul Initiative in 2004, which reflects mutual interests between NATO and its Gulf partners.

Moreover, he emphasised that this initiative has two main pillars: political dialogue and practical cooperation, and that currently, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE are involved.

Colomina referred to the visit made by former NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to Kuwait in 2019 to mark the 15th anniversary of the initiative, as well as the special celebration of the initiative’s 20th anniversary organized under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

He explained that at the NATO Washington Summit in July 2024, alliance leaders approved an action plan to expand NATO’s strategic and effective approach toward the Gulf, the Middle East, and Africa, focusing on strengthening

the use of existing mechanisms such as the NATO-Istanbul Initiative Center.

Therefore, he expected that 2025 is scheduled to be the most active year since the establishment of the center, with courses delivered to participants from all GCC countries on a range of topics.

He added that the NATO Secretary-General has appointed a special representative for the Southern Neighborhood to be the central point of contact for the alliance in the region, enhancing NATO’s vision and partnership with Gulf countries.

Kuwait was the first Gulf country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which has since played a pioneering role in advancing relations between NATO and the GCC countries. Kuwait has hosted three high-level meetings between NATO foreign ministers and the GCC (2006, 2017, 2019), with the NATO Secretary-General’s participation.

The 2006 meeting was the first NATO Council meeting held outside member countries, titled “NATO and the Gulf: Facing Common Challenges through the Istanbul Initiative.”

Kuwait is also the first country in the initiative to adopt the “Individually Tailored Partnership Program,” a four-year framework (2024-2027) that enhances cooperation with NATO in various fields.

In September 2024, Kuwait organized a high-level celebration at the UN General Assembly to mark the 20th anniversary of the initiative, under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. A similar celebration took place in 2019 for the 15th anniversary.

Providing jobs to special needs people ‘noble goal’ – minister



KUNA photo
Kuwait’s Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr Amthal Al-Huwailah, the accompanying delegation and Kuwait’s Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled at the Global Disability Summit.

‘Kuwait public, private sector to play vital role’

BERLIN, April 2, (KUNA): Kuwait’s Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah said on Wednesday that integrating people with special needs in the job market was a challenge that required viable rules and regulations to achieve such noble goal. Speaking at the two-day third Global Disability Summit (GDS), which began in Berlin in coordination between the German and Jordanian governments, Minister Al-Huwaila affirmed that article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stressed that “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others.”

Al-Huwaila commended the efforts within the mainframe of the GCC, which recognized the rights of disabled people in work and livelihood.

She touched on the State of Kuwait’s efforts in this regard, saying that both the public and private sectors were keen on employing this important sector of society via its “partners in their employment” initiative.

On the GDS, Minister Al-Huwaila expressed hopes that the summit would achieve its goals in bolstering support to people with disability worldwide.

According to the Jordan-based Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD) the GDS aims at gathering international efforts in service of integrating people with disability in their respective societies.

It went on to say that the focus would also be on improving the lives of disabled people in the southern hemisphere of the world.

The first GDS was held in London in coordination between the UK and Kenyan governments as well as the International Disability Alliance (IDA).

Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila said earlier on Tuesday she will participate in the 3rd Global Disability Summit due in Berlin, Germany, on April 3-4.

In a press statement, Al-Huwaila said the summit will address significant issues concerning international efforts to empower persons with disabilities, enhance their inclusion in all aspects of life, highlight key challenges they face, and discuss necessary policies and programs to ensure their full enjoyment of rights and equal opportunities.

The summit is organized by the Federal Republic of Germany in cooperation with the International Disability Alliance (IDA), gathering high-level representatives of governments, international organizations, civil society entities, and the private sector from various countries.

The statement added that Kuwait’s Ambassador to Germany Reem Al-Khaled hosted a dinner banquet in honor of Minister Al-Huwaila and her accompanying delegation, which includes Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Sabah and several other Kuwaiti officials.

Court hikes alimony, comp for ex-wife in divorce case

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Court of Appeals has ruled to obligate a man to pay a fair financial compensation to his ex-wife to adequately compensate her for the harm she sustained due to their divorce after 20 years of marriage.

Lawyer Sarah Badr filed an appeal against the ruling issued by the Family Court of First Instance, which had granted her client a low amount as alimony and compensation.

She said the ruling had failed to take into consideration the wealth of the ex-husband, as well as the fact that her client had dedicated her life to serving her husband and children, only to grow older and lose her financial support and an opportunity to remarry.

She also stressed that the ruling contradicted the established facts in the case documents.

In light of these points, the Court of Appeals accepted the appeal, amended the initial ruling, and increased the alimony for the waiting period and compensatory benefits to properly compensate for the harm suffered by the woman, based on the legal arguments presented. The court thus fulfilled the purpose of the legislation on alimony for the waiting period and compensatory benefits.

Audit nods KD 4.551 mln tenders

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Ministry of Islamic Affairs plans to implement a comprehensive process to maintain mosques in various governorates of Kuwait.

The State Audit Bureau (SAB) has approved a series of tenders totaling KD 4.551 million, with each maintenance project having an implementation period of up to two years.

According to informed sources, the contracts approved by SAB include mosque maintenance projects in Jahra Governorate, valued at KD 684,000, the highest of all the tenders. The Capital Governorate follows in second place with a value of KD 674,200, and Ahmadi Governorate is third with KD 516,000 for the first area and KD 534,400 for the second. The maintenance costs in Farwaniya Governorate are KD 486,000 for the first area and KD 527,600 for the second area.

The maintenance costs in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate amounted to KD 275,600 for the first area and KD 219,700 for the second area, making it the lowest among the tenders.

In Hawally Governorate, the costs were KD 319,800 for the first zone and KD 314,400 for the second zone.

The sources explained that all contracts included good discounts ranging from 26 percent to 54 percent, compared to the original prices listed in the tender documents. As a result, SAB requested the ministry to update the pricing in future tenders to ensure they are consistent with current market rates.

SAB imposed several conditions for approving these contracts, most notably compliance with the provisions of Article 16 of Decree-Law No. 31/1978 regarding the rules for preparing general budgets, overseeing their implementation and final accounts, and ensuring that the contract values are accurately aligned with the ministry’s budget.

SAB granted the Ministry of Islamic Affairs a maximum grace period of 90 days to complete the necessary procedures. The contracts must be executed in accordance with the specified controls and standards to ensure that the maintenance work achieves its intended objectives.

‘Eid celebration teaches co-existence’

Indonesian cuisine highlight of get-together hosted by envoy

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Indonesian Ambassador to Kuwait Lena Maryana organized a grand Eid Al-Fitr celebration in Indonesian style at the Sheikh Ahmad Al-Dawood Chalet in Doha.

Present at the event were a large number of heads of diplomatic missions and their families, members of the Indonesian community in the country and some Kuwaiti citizens with their families; adding a distinctive cultural touch to the ambience.

In her speech, Maryana expressed her happiness over organizing the event; indicating that such a gathering gives diplomats relief from the pressure of daily



Lena Maryana

work, especially during Ramadan, and to familiarize them with the Eid customs and traditions in Indonesia.

She stated: “We succeeded in bringing together diplomats and members of various communities in Kuwait in a celebration that reflects the spirit of Eid and the values of coexistence and cultural commu-

nication, ensuring that this day will remain a beautiful memory for those present.”

The event featured traditional Indonesian dishes prepared by volunteer Indonesian women. All those who attended the event enjoyed a variety of Indonesian cuisine.

The celebration also included competitive sports and entertainment competitions for adults and children, in an air of fun and joyful interaction among the participants.

The atmosphere was filled with art and music, as attendees enjoyed distinctive musical performances, in addition to a karaoke session.

The performances were widely appreciated and enjoyed by everyone, adding even more vitality and joy to the occasion.

‘Need to repay our elders for what they have given to nation’

By Fares Al-Abdan
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Director of the Elderly Care Department at the Ministry of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Enezi revealed that the department has many plans, development projects and humanitarian initiatives to improve the quality of life for the elderly. In a press statement, Al-Enezi stressed that “no matter what we do for this dear group, we are still failing our parents. We hope to repay them for what they have given to the country and its people”.

He disclosed that the department is currently working on the ‘Family Gathering’ project -- which was launched by Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah -- to transform it into a broader initiative called, ‘Returning Home’. He explained that through this initiative, the wards of the family nursery will be constantly present with the elderly in order to develop the psychological and social aspects of both the elderly and the children.

On the other hand, Director of the Family Nursery Department Dr. Saad Al-Shabo stated that the department is expanding the ‘Substitute Mother’ and ‘Substitute Father’ projects; following the success of the pilot initiatives.

“We are committed to expand these projects, including the large school for children, which will open soon in the Social Care Homes Complex. The two-storey school will offer various educational services. We implemented this project in coordination with the Ministry of Education, particularly with regard to the educational programs and activities,” he added.

He also confirmed the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) at the authority’s headquarters in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for the Social Welfare Sector Dr. Jassim Al-Kandari. He said the agreement aims to expand the ‘Substitute Mother’ project with a budget of KD100,000.

On the current number of substitute mothers, he said “there are four substitute mothers and two fathers. We are in the process of increasing these numbers.”

He added the department is currently sorting a large number of job applications; indicating the applicants must be qualified and experienced, capable of handling the work like the need for the surrogate mother’s presence in the children’s home five days a week, and full awareness of the nature of the work and being psychologically prepared for it. On the number of wards, he disclosed the number of children in the orphanage reached 32; while the number of adults is constantly changing due to their ability to be independent in and outside the social care homes.



Photo by Samer Shaqair

A large number of children with parents and relatives turned up at different recreational parks throughout the Eid holidays. It was all fun and frolic at the parks after the fasting month of Ramadan. Above: Some Kuwaiti children making merry at the Hawally recreational park.

Slander case ruling put off till April 9

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Second Criminal Circuit of the Court of Appeals held its first appeal session at the new Justice Palace and postponed the announcement of State Security rulings until next week.

The court, headed by Counselor Nasr Salem Al-Haid and includes Judge Saud Al-Sanea and Tariq Metwally, decided to reschedule the hearing of the case of a citi-

zen for judgment on April 9.

The citizen is accused of broadcasting false news, endangering Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations, insulting expatriate advisors on the X platform through the hashtag he used, and contracting with actor Bayoumi Fouad to host a program at the Ministry of Information.

The Criminal Court had earlier fined the citizen KD2,000 for insulting expatriate advisors and misusing a means of communication, while acquitting him of the other charges.

diwaniya

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

The flood of Trumpian orders and revival of unipolar world

"THE lion is called the 'king of the jungle' for several reasons, most notably its physical characteristics, which make it strong and distinguish it from other jungle animals. It also possesses powerful senses, such as hearing, which enables it to easily hear its prey." **Suad Fahd Al-Muajil** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Lions do not need to hide, so they often live in open spaces without being threatened by other animals. However, lions are afraid of hedgehogs, or so they say, due to their thorny body and sharp teeth. Traditional narratives from most cultures tell meaningful stories that occurred between the lion -- the king of the jungle, and the mouse that has a small body. In these stories, the mouse's small mind outperforms the king of the jungle's strong body indicating the need not to underestimate anyone, even if they are small, and not to be arrogant and bully others, because everyone is equal.



Suad Al-Muajil

"In the book 'Kalila and Dimna', the history of the jungle is documented as a history of lions, or more accurately, a history of power and the powerful; regardless of the good and evil aspects of this equation. In the history of literature, 'Kalila and Dimna' is one of the most famous books that contain literary projections on the world of humans and their affairs.

"Most of the stories in 'Kalila and Dimna' compare the impulses of good and evil, the sources of both, and the balance of power and authority versus intelligence and wisdom. In international relations, too, of this power was the panic that Trump brought with his second term to the global markets and countries with political and military influence, in what are now known as the 'Trumpian flood of orders'.

"These orders sparked widespread controversy in and outside the United States of America, prompting China to declare that Trump's policies are considered a return to the law of the jungle. These decisions spared no one. Our share in Kuwait came through the statement of the US Secretary of Commerce, who accused Kuwait of being ungrateful and presented false figures for the cost of the Liberation War and extinguishing the oil wells. This prompted the press and the public to respond to such fallacies.

"Power has played an important role at many points throughout history, but ultimately, it failed to ensure continuity and subsequently collapsed, either under pressure from the majority in the world, which lacked the same power, or due to its policies outside its borders, as it happened with Napoleon in France, Hitler in Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan.

"The term 'superpower' declined following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, with the United States becoming the sole superpower. This was followed by the rise of China and the Russian Federation, and the superpowers once again dominated the world. However, it seems that Trump's dream of making America great again has revived the idea of 'unipolar' hegemony. With it, the chaos of aggression and competition has begun to prevail worldwide, affecting billions of people. This is a historical era that Al-Shall's weekly economic report likened to the conditions of the 1930s following World War II -- an era marked by a significant decline in respect for international laws, geography and State sovereignty.

"It is said that history is written by the victor and the strong at the same time. The problem here may not be that history is written by the victor alone, but rather that history is also written by the victor, who also formulates his own version of morals, values, beliefs and thought which, over time, become accepted under the pressure of power, authority and influence.

"But in the end, and also according to history, it does not last. Strength is not always physical. Wisdom and reason have a similar power. More than one version of this is mentioned in the tales of 'Kalila and Dimna', which tell of how a weak animal once saved the lion -- the powerful king of the jungle -- from captivity and death.

"May the world be well and at peace, free of wars. Happy Eid!"

Also:

"As investigations continue, we are confronted with local crimes that are more significant and pervasive than even the largest scams, including commercial fraud, price manipulation, and money laundering. These are issues we have been highlighting for the past 20 years, gathering evidence and publishing it, yet with little effect," columnist **Badr Khaled Al-Bahr** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"We have long warned about the growing influence of expatriates, often with fake Kuwaiti partners, who are dominating various business sectors. In 2007, we reported on a group of expatriates spreading throughout the governorates, particularly in retail, car parts, and counterfeit goods. They operate like a religious sect, with their leader visiting them during special occasions and even arranging meetings with the previous political leadership to enhance their influence.

"In 2018, we conducted an experiment by purchasing a fake luxury watch from one of their stores in Mubarakia, with the intention of filing a case for commercial fraud. However, the store clerk refused to provide us with a receipt, fully aware of their fraudulent practices. We filed a complaint with the Consumer Protection Office in Mubara-

kiya, only to be shocked when we discovered that we, as citizens, had no legal standing to file a complaint about counterfeit goods.

"A municipal inspector issued a violation for refusal to provide a receipt, and we subsequently reported the case to the public prosecutor. This led to us becoming a party in a criminal lawsuit (case No. 2018/1980), which we won. The court imposed a fine of KD 1,000 on the store, with the fine allocated to the state, and the shop was closed.

"We also paid legal fees for a civil lawsuit against the customs authorities for flooding the market with counterfeit goods. We referenced law No. 62/2007, which criminalizes commercial fraud, while customs officials had previously stated, "Counterfeit goods are as dangerous as drugs."

"In December 2018 and June 2019, we published two articles challenging the customs authorities to explain how tons of counterfeit goods are entering the country in containers through the port, not via "magical flying carpets." Unfortunately, we received no response!

"We strongly believe that our market is flooded with counterfeit goods, which are banned in first-world markets. We were informed by a municipal inspection team about how they pursued the largest counterfeit car parts dealer, who fled to a Gulf country. The head of the team was later honored by the largest car manufacturer in the U.S.

"Regarding the court ruling in our favor against a member of the Bohra community, their stores now issue receipts and warranties for counterfeit goods. However, the fraud continues through a loophole, by not specifying the type of counterfeit watch on the receipt, allowing the scam to persist.

"We stopped following up on this case in court or pressuring customs due to COVID-19 and our belief that a writer's responsibility is to highlight the issue, not wage a war, one that should be handled by state authorities. The tragic and ironic part is that even the counterfeit car parts dealer had arranged a meeting with the previous political leadership, where they took selfies together to restore his influence.

"Commercial fraud and money laundering are two sides of the same coin. We thank Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef for his statement: "The file of money laundering involving celebrities has not been closed, only to be reopened again."

"Money laundering targets the dirtiest funds from the drug trade, amounting to hundreds of millions through dubious real estate deals, social media, retail stores, yachts, cars, and luxury accessories. We notice that some stores in malls and shopping centers sell products that can't even cover the workers' wages, let alone the extravagant rents and commissions. The same suspicion surrounds some modern kiosks in upscale mall corridors, where rents reach the thousands. This calls for an enforcement mechanism similar to those in tax havens, so we can monitor business activities, some of which involve expatriates leasing licenses from Kuwaitis.

"Institutions and companies, both corporate and individual, must provide audited financial statements supported by bank account statements, and impose government fees (around KD 1) on all outward transfers, even for individuals, which amount to hundreds of millions annually. This will enable the state to track financial liquidity, commercial fraud, and money laundering."

□ □ □

"One of the signs of mistreatment toward workers is the delay in paying their wages, or even withholding their wages for several months. How can a worker meet their monthly obligations for housing, food, clothing, and transportation under such circumstances? Many workers have financial entitlements, such as end-of-service benefits, that they are unable to receive due to the actions of certain employers," columnist **Fawaz Ahmad Al-Hamad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Efforts by the Public Authority for Manpower have been commendable, as they have helped in dealing with some of these financial issues by allowing workers to present claims and pressuring employers to settle their financial obligations. However, some workers, particularly those from Asian countries, face intimidation tactics from certain employers. In such cases, these vulnerable workers are unable to demand the payment of their delayed wages or end-of-service benefits, which is an injustice we cannot accept.

"Employers, especially those facing financial difficulties or cash flow issues, should be transparent with their employees about the company's financial situation. This transparency enables workers to understand their financial standing within the company, helps prevent the accumulation of overdue salaries, and gives workers the opportunity to seek other employment if necessary.

"Another form of mistreatment of workers is assigning them tasks that exceed their expertise or physical capability. For example, I often encounter domestic workers in residential areas who walk long distances to cooperative societies during the extreme heat of summer or the cold of winter. They carry heavy bags of groceries, all to fulfill their employer's requests, which highlights the harsh conditions they endure.

— **Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyeh / Simi K. Kutty**



Fawaz Al-Hamad



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visits Ardiya Police Station.

Farwaniya Gov visits Ardiya Police Station

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah visited the Ardiya Police Station on Wednesday to review the progress of work and discuss organizational security matters.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governor, during the visit, extended his congratulations to the security personnel on the oc-

casation of Eid Al-Fitr, and commended their efforts and dedication in maintaining security.

At the end of his visit, the governor prayed for the protection of Kuwait, its Amir, and its people from harm, and for the continued blessings of security, prosperity, and progress. He also wished a joyous Eid to Kuwait and the entire Islamic nation.

Kidnap, sexual assault of minors could lead to death, life in prison

Victims psychologically scarred for life: expert

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Lawyer Jassim Bandar says sexual assault is a sensitive and controversial issue within Kuwaiti society, as it violates human rights

and dignity, and leads to severe psychological and physical consequences for the victims.

He stressed that the sexual assault of a minor is one of the most heinous crimes, as it not only harms the child's body but also negatively impacts their development and mental health. As a result, the Kuwaiti

Penal Code imposes heavy penalties on those who commit such offenses.

Lawyer Bandar explained that the penalty for kidnapping a child without deception or force is a maximum prison sentence. However, the penalty increases if the kidnapping is for ransom. If the kidnapping involves sexual assault, the punishment may be death or life imprisonment. The penalty is more severe if the kidnapping is carried out using force or coercion.

Audio traps Kuwaiti insulting customer service rep

CCTV catches expat in daring minor cash robbery

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Hawally detectives arrested an expatriate who boldly stole from a citizen despite intense surveillance as the crime was recorded by security cameras at a local bank, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source revealed that the citizen initially filed a report claiming that while waiting inside the bank with a small bag beside him, KD50 were stolen from it. He did not accuse anyone of the theft.

The source said the detectives, upon reviewing the bank's security footage, quickly identified the suspect and made the arrest.

The source added that during questioning, the suspect confessed to stealing the money after noticing the bag was open and the cash visible. "The suspect claimed he took the money without realizing he was being recorded. He also stated that after the theft, he contemplated returning to the bank pretending to have found the money and give it to the victim; but ultimately decided against it," the source narrated.

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'Fees in effect'

'Temporary event' tent rules not suspended: Municipality

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Kuwait Municipality has denied reports published by a local newspaper claiming the suspension of regulations for temporary event tents, and called on the media to refrain from spreading inaccurate information.

The municipality clarified that the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdul Latif Al-Mishari has not issued any directives to suspend the existing regulations for temporary event tents, such as wedding halls, which are monitored by the Public Hygiene and Road Occupancy departments in the branches of Kuwait Municipality in all the governorates.

Furthermore, the municipality confirmed that Ministerial Resolution No. 935/2019, which governs the regulations for temporary event tents, remains unchanged. The fees and insurance for the issuance of related licenses are still in effect, and no modifications have been made.

It reiterated its commitment to fulfilling citizens' needs, enhancing the services provided to them, ensuring the continuation of existing services, and working on future improvements.

Fire erupts in mall eatery

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Fire broke out on Tuesday afternoon in the air conditioning duct of a restaurant located in a shopping complex in Hawally.

According to a press release issued by Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Hawalli and Salmiya fire stations rushed to the location and extinguished the fire. No casualties were reported.



KFF at the blaze site.

KFF photo

Delivery man in bizarre incident

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: In a bizarre case, an unidentified person beat a delivery man and dragged him into his apartment where he strangled him before letting him go, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

A security source disclosed details of the case registered as 'substantial beating' at Shaab Police Station. He said an expatriate, born in 1989, who works as a delivery man, narrated that the store where he works prepared a dessert and asked him to deliver the order to Block Eight in Shaab. About an hour later, the store management informed him that the person who received the order complained and that the store would resend the same order without compensation, the source added.

The delivery man stated "I carried out the order. Upon arriving at the address, I was surprised as the person who received the first order asked me to leave or call the police. He then dragged me by my clothes into the apartment, beat me and strangled me."

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Kuwait Municipality evaluates TEC’s revised Egaila Beach expansion plan

Operating hours set for massage salons and spas

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff & Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Kuwait Municipality is currently studying the request of that Tourism Projects Company (TEC) to the Municipal Council regarding the development of Egaila Beach (Place No. 7).

In its request, TEC cited the decision that the council issued on Oct 12, 2020; stipulating that the total built-up area is 11,463 square meters or 20 percent of the total beach area of 57,315 square meters, including five percent for commercial space.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the letter of the company, indicating its efforts to implement value-added recreational projects; while focusing on making the project more attractive to visitors by offering physical and outdoor activities and providing shaded recreational spaces for children.

Based on the above, TEC requested the council to approve the amendment of its aforementioned decision. This amendment will increase the project’s built-up area to 20 percent of the whole plot, excluding walkways and facilities like prayer rooms, bathrooms, power stations, administration building, electrical and mechanical service rooms, parking shades and the like.

The remaining five percent of the built-up area will be designated for commercial uses (retail stores, restaurants and cafés).

At the end of its letter, TEC expressed hope that the request will be approved immediately to move forward with the implementation of the development project, which will enhance the level of services provided to beachgoers in the country.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Municipality has set the operating hours for massage salons and spas from 6:00 am to 12:00 midnight, reports Al-Anba daily.

This is line with the directive of Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Abdullatif Al-Mishari, who stressed the need to regulate the operating hours of massage salons and spas for both men and women in private residences and commercial areas.

Director General of the Municipality Eng. Manal Al-Asfour issued an administrative decision formalizing these operating hours.



Farwaniya Governor photos



Farwaniya Governorate photos

Farwaniya Governor hosts Eid Al-Fitr reception for well-wishers

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received well-wishers for Eid Al-Fitr at his office on Wednesday morning at the governorate’s headquarters.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, those who attended included officials and employees of the governorate, Director General of the Farwaniya Security Directorate Brigadier General Mohammed Mutlaq Al-Mutairi, his assistant Brigadier General Nayef Mohammed Al-Hajraf, Mohammed Al-Sawagh, former mayor of Andalous Mutab Al-Fajji, Dr. Mubarak Al-Baghli, and a number of citizens.

The governor exchanged greetings and congratulations with everyone during the reception, and wished continued progress, prosperity, and stability for the State of Kuwait under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (May God protect and preserve them).

MoE to close SRS transfer window for secondary students on April 6

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Ministry of Education will close the transfer window for secondary school students through the Student Record System (SRS) by the end official working hours on April 6.

The ministry also announced that it will halt all changes to the basic data of Grade 12 students in the SRS on April

8. This includes the entry of days of absence, deletion, dropout and re-enrollment. It called on school administrations to ensure that all basic data are reviewed thoroughly and entered accurately before closing the system.

It added that these steps and procedures are intended to guarantee the accuracy of student data in order to ease the monitoring of grades and fully prepare for the end-of-year exams without any obstacle.

Financial handling removed from tasks

MoE outlines clear guidelines for educational activity coordinators

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Ministry of Education has called on educational activity coordinators in public and religious education schools to refrain from engaging in financial tasks, such as collecting subscription fees for remedial classes or cashing checks at banks. They are also advised not to handle deliveries of money, food, sportswear, or other items brought by parents for their children. The ministry stressed the need for them to adhere to their defined professional duties and avoid involvement in financial matters, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a decision issued regarding the duties and responsibilities of educational activity coordinators, the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri highlighted the following important points:

Article 1:

The responsibilities and duties of the educational activity coordinator are as follows:

1. Implement plans and programs related to educational activities, and follow the instructions and guidance of the direct supervisor in the workplace (the technical director for the activity and the school principal).
2. Participate in preparing studies and research related to educational activities by gathering and analyzing data and information, and draw conclusions regarding the educational activities that have been implemented.
3. Assist in coordinating educational programs and activities in line with the nature of the approved curricula from the workplace.
4. Participate in assessing the physical, skill-based, and psychological abilities of students to assign appropriate roles, locations, and responsibilities to each participant in the educational activity, in collaboration with the educational staff and the psychological services office.
5. Assist in training students to develop the scientific and practical skills required by the educational activities in the workplace for their physical and intellectual growth.
6. Help organize teams and groups for educational activities by selecting appropriate students and arranging competitions among them, based on the directives of the direct supervisor.
7. Participate in identifying the material and technical resources needed to carry out educational activities, with the goal of submitting these requirements to the direct supervisor.
8. Prepare, provide, and maintain accurate records of all data and information related to students participating in educational activities at the workplace, and ensure it is regularly updated.
9. Follow up on the implementation of bulletins received from educational activities and the school activities management.
10. Supervise the execution of school activities in areas such as competitions, festivals, school exhibitions, radio and television programs, school theater, and other activities related to arts, culture, and social development.
11. Participate in evaluating schools that are involved in theatrical performances and playwriting competitions.
12. Oversee the organization of the ministry’s celebrations for various occasions, in collaboration with the relevant departments.
13. Participate in designing decorations for school plays and ministry-organized celebrations, when possible.
14. Supervise the training of students for competitions and theatrical performances, and deal with any challenges faced by student delegation members in sister and friendly countries.
15. Manage the organization of exhibitions hosted by the Educational Activities Department.
16. Perform any other tasks assigned by the direct supervisor within the scope of their responsibilities.
17. Uphold professional and educational role in line with the values and culture of Kuwaiti society, adhere to the ministry’s policies in the school where they work, and respect the cultural framework of the local community, considering its circumstances and capabilities.
18. Prepare a work plan for each new school year in advance, outlining their activities and efforts for professional performance at the individual, group, and community levels for the learners.
19. Invest in school groups to develop students’ personalities, meet their needs, enhance their self-adjustment, and provide opportunities for them to engage in democratic life and participate in various activities.



Al-Dhafiri

20. Accompany students to educational or sports competitions along with the subject teachers.
21. Supervise the school radio and designate a day to present segments related to school activities, in collaboration with the educational technologies department, while documenting the radio programs.
22. Coordinate and communicate with the school’s academic departments and the school library to monitor activities and competitions.
23. Follow up on the morning assembly and the flag salute in collaboration with the Physical Education Department.
24. Supervise the cooperative activity (school canteen) for students only, without interfering in the collection of subscriptions or selling inside the school canteen, and maintain a special register for the cooperative activity group.
25. Follow up on the Ministry of Health decision No. 5/2020 regarding health requirements for school canteens.
26. Join the school activity council and serve as the deputy to the president.
27. Prepare a record for school activities, which includes the following:
 - All bulletins issued and received from the Educational Development and Activities Sector, the School Activities Department, and the Educational Activities Department.
 - School activities, including (cultural, scientific, and sports activities; names of students participating in activities and their grade levels; names of talented and distinguished students in various activities; names of the cooperative activity group [school canteen]; names of the school radio group; daily programs presented during the morning assembly; educational values bulletins and their activation during the morning assembly).
28. The school administration must provide a dedicated room equipped with a computer and printer to enable the coordinator to perform his duties effectively.

Article 2:

Given that the role of the school activity coordinator is of a specialized technical nature that requires full dedication to fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the position, they must adhere to the following:

1. The coordinator should not interfere in the roles of others within the school community, and ensure their primary responsibilities are not disrupted and that they do not allow others to interfere with their duties. In this regard, they must adhere to the following:
 - They should not issue permits for students to leave school, exit a class, or return to it, regardless of the reasons. Issuing such permits is an administrative, organizational, and supervisory responsibility that falls under the school’s management.
 - They should not monitor daily attendance, prepare attendance statistics, or issue attendance warnings to students’ parents, as these responsibilities are assigned to the administrative supervisor.
2. The coordinator should refrain from performing tasks or duties that fall outside their scope of responsibility, as this could hinder their work or negatively impact their professional standing. In this regard, they must adhere to the following:
 - They should not deliver requests, money, food, sportswear, or any other items that parents bring for their children.
 - They should not carry out financial tasks, such as collecting subscriptions for remedial classes, cashing checks from banks, selling photos of school events, purchasing gifts and prizes, or handling financial fund duties.
 - They should not escort students to the clinic or hospital, monitor students at the end of the school day, attend reserve periods, supervise exam committees, or be involved in any special committees.

Article 3:

This decision shall take effect from the date of its issuance, and all relevant authorities are required to comply with its provisions.

Al-Dhafiri expressed hope that educational activity coordinators would adhere to their professional roles, and that school administrations would support them by providing the necessary resources and tools to overcome any obstacles that may hinder the fulfillment of their responsibilities. This support would enable them to better serve students and ensure they benefit fully from the school programs.

It is worth adding that the Ministry of Education recently announced the appointment of 600 educational activity coordinators to work in public and religious education schools, following approval from the Civil Service Commission.

Online registration for primary stage students starts on April 6

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The Ministry of Education set April 6 as the start of online registration for new students in the primary stage for the 2025/2026 academic year, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources explained to the daily that the registration process will be through the official website of the ministry by selecting ‘services’ menu, then ‘student/parent’ and log into the service to register the new student by following the instructions for online registration that will continue until Sept 31.





Room Promotion

Book for One-night (Inclusive of breakfast)	Queen Cabana (2 persons). 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons).	BHD 76.230 net BHD 170.247 net
Book for Two nights and get 15% discount (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	BHD 64.800 net BHD 144.800 net
Book for Three nights and get 25% discount (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	BHD 57.200 net BHD 127.700 net

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Food & Beverage Promotion

Lunch Buffet will be served at **Café Marisol Restaurant** with price of **BD5.500/net** per person.
Starts from 12:30 Noon to 15:30

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KUNA photo
Kuwaiti Ambassador to the United States Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah meets with US Senator Lindsey Graham.

Kuwaiti envoy meets US Senator to strengthen bilateral relations

WASHINGTON, April 2, (KUNA): The State of Kuwait Ambassador to the US Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah has met with the Senate member Lindsey Graham, discussing plans for boosting the bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between the two states.

The Kuwait Embassy said in a statement that discussions between the two sides dealt with issues of joint interest, shedding light on the strong bilateral relations between the two countries. They also addressed means of expanding these relations and mutual coop-

eration.

Ambassador Al-Zain Al-Sabah attended, two days ago, a Ramadan iftar meal, hosted by President Donald Trump at the White House for heads of Arab and Islamic states' diplomatic missions and representatives of the Muslim community in Washington.

During the gathering, President Trump presented his candidate as the new US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Amer Ghaieb, praising Kuwait as a great state of a wonderful people.

CMA announces Resolution No. 54/2025 to amend Collective Investment Regulations

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: In line with its commitment to developing legislative and regulatory frameworks in line with modern trends in the capital markets, the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) issued Resolution No. 54/2025 on Wednesday, April 2, 2025.

According to a press release issued by CMA, this resolution amends article 1-1-2 of chapter 13 (Collective

Investment Regulations) of the executive regulations of law No. 7/2010 and its amendments, concerning the regulation of savings and insurance funds and programs.

CMA invites all licensed individuals and relevant parties to review the final version of the amendment and implement its provisions. The document can be accessed via the following link: www.cma.gov.kw.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait triples

- Attempting to flee in the event of an accident that harms a person's safety or failing to comply with an order issued by a police officer to stop.
 - Exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 km/h.
 - Driving all-terrain vehicles in areas not designated for them.
 - Crossing a red traffic light.
 - Using a vehicle for purposes other than its designated use.
 - Using a vehicle to transport passengers for a fee without a permit.
 - Driving a motor vehicle recklessly, or operating it in a way that endangers the driver's or others' lives or property.
 - Driving a motor vehicle without a valid driving license, in cases where the license has been revoked or suspended, with a license that does not match the vehicle category, or without the necessary permit as required by the law or its regulations.
 - Driving a vehicle without plates issued by the General Traffic Department.
- Under the new law, the fines for various traffic violations have been significantly increased.
- The fine for running a red light has been raised from KD 50 (USD 163.1) to KD 150 (USD 489.5), up from the previous KD 10 (USD 32.6).
 - Reckless driving fines have been increased from KD 30 (USD 97.9) to KD 150 (USD 489.5).
 - Parking in spaces designated for people with special needs now carries a fine of KD 150 (USD 489.5), up from the previous KD 10 (USD 32.6).
 - Using a mobile phone while driving will now result in a fine of KD 75 (USD 244.7), up from KD 5 (USD 16.3).
 - The fine for failing to wear a seatbelt has been increased from KD 10 (USD 32.6) to KD 30 (USD 97.9).
- These tougher penalties are part of the new law's efforts to enhance public safety, protect both motorists and pedestrians, and ensure the safety of property.

Electricity load

The total capacity of all units exceeds 18,000 megawatts.

They confirmed that the ministry is importing about 300 megawatts from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) in April to deal with the challenges resulting from increased demand for electricity due to rising temperatures.

The sources stressed the need to implement the energy conservation mechanisms, particularly during the period specified by the ministry -- from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm -- especially with regard to the use of air conditioners, which consume 70 percent of energy.

Kuwait registers

Attorney Enaam Haider said the arrest and summons orders have been reinstated under a law amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law. The law's provisions apply to solvent debtors who refuse to pay their debts, according to specific criteria, most notably that a debtor is not considered solvent if their solvency is based on assets that cannot be seized.

She explained the law stipulates

that arrest and summons orders do not apply to patients who cannot tolerate imprisonment, pregnant women and those with diminished legal capacity.

She added the law allows payment of debts in installments based on the debtor's financial ability, with the installment order being cancelled in the event of default.

She said the law sets a maximum term for imprisonment, separates the implementation of prison sentence for those imprisoned for criminal offenses, and allows debtors to make payments while in prison and to organize their financial situation and settle it.

Attorney Jarrah Mubarak Al-Wawan disclosed that one of the most important features of the draft decree-law amending certain provisions of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law is reforming the procedures for reporting the debts of the debtor by addressing the shortcomings of banking institutions to seize the funds or credit balances added to the debtor's bank account, in addition to expediting the seizure and enforcement procedures to ensure that the debtor is unable to smuggle his funds.

He stated that the law allows combating the misuse of temporary enforcement disputes by stipulating that the effect of the suspension of enforcement be removed immediately upon the dismissal of the dispute. "This ensures that the implementation of judicial rulings is not disrupted, while combating the misuse of the suspension effect of the temporary dispute and the disruption of enforcement procedures. It can be done by raising the minimum and maximum amount of the fine for the dispute to not less than KD50 and not more than KD300" he elaborated.

He asserted that the reinstatement of arrest warrants after amending the law has several justifications; the most important of which is protecting the national economy from the obstruction of debt collection methods and reducing the rate of bad debts. He affirmed this will improve the investment climate in the country, enhance confidence in the rule of law and judicial institutions, combat debt evasion, and strike a balance between the right of the creditor to collect payment and the right of the debtor to fulfill his obligations without resorting to fraudulent misrepresentation of his financial position.

He concluded that the implementation of the law is a step toward modernizing Kuwaiti laws in line with the best international practices and ensuring a fair legal environment that achieves balance between parties to the relationship, while taking into account the human and social dimensions.

Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al-Qattan added that the abolition of arrest warrants in the previous period led to a major problem -- debtors and financial defendants evading payment, as this made it difficult to enforce court rulings; indicating that court rulings for financial claims have no value.

He said the previous decision was wrong, lacked due diligence, and caused enormous losses for companies and property owners. He revealed a large number of citizens and expatriates, including divorcees were harmed by such cancellation. "During this period, most debtors and those financially liable did not pay until the issuance of decisions," he added.

It is worth noting that arrest, detention and imprisonment are considered a means of pressure to pay debts. Travel

Kuwait envoy urges support for dialogue

GCC calls for stronger international efforts to prevent conflicts and human rights violations

GENEVA, April 2, (KUNA): The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Tuesday called for stronger international efforts and support for global initiatives that contribute to conflict prevention and the protection of human rights.

This includes the promotion of dialogue and mediation whether at the national, regional or international level, to address tensions before they escalate.

The aforementioned remarks were made by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen in his capacity as the Chair of the GCC Ambassadors' Council, during discussions on Agenda Item 10 concerning technical cooperation and capacity-building in human rights at the 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Ambassador Al-Hayen emphasized the GCC's



KUNA photo
Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayen, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva.

strong commitment to supporting countries in building their human rights capacities, stressing that successful programs rely on cooperation and

the consent of the states involved.

He stressed the importance of supporting developing countries in strengthening their national plans to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and encouraged States to seek support from the UN Human Rights Office, urging the Office at the same time to strengthen its efforts in this field.

He also underscored that technical assistance and capacity-building can play a key role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, adding that by creating the right conditions, these efforts can support successful dialogue and mediation when needed and requested by the parties.

Ambassador Al-Hayen reaffirmed the GCC's commitment to working closely with partners to make technical cooperation programs more effective and to ensure that they lead to real and lasting improvements on the ground.

Eid break causes surge in student absences, fuels education debate

Absenteeism exceeds 95%, disrupting schools

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Despite the end of the Eid Al-Fitr holiday and the return of normal life to all institutions and organizations in the public and private sectors, students continued to be absent from most schools in various educational levels on Wednesday.

Unprecedented absence rates

were recorded in some schools, exceeding 95 percent of the total student population, some of whom began their vacation during the last 10 days of Ramadan followed by the Eid holiday, including Wednesday and Thursday.

Faced with this reality, school administrations were forced to allow the small number of students, who committed to attendance, to leave school and contacted their parents for them to return home. This massive absence made continuing the school day futile.

This phenomenon, which occurs annually before holidays and exams, raised questions about the effective-

ness of the measures taken and the extent to which students and parents adhere to the importance of regular school attendance.

Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) also witnessed the same phenomenon, while faculty members continued to attend after the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

With the recurring phenomenon of mass student absences before and after holidays and special occasions, in addition to Thursdays of each week; the question is raised about the actual number of school days students attend during the academic year, and the direct impact of this on educational outcomes and academic

achievement.

Educators believe that resorting to online classes between holidays could be a practical solution to reduce educational waste and make up for lost days. This will ensure the completion of the curriculum without delay, especially as the academic year draws to a close.

Experts warn that the continuation of this practice without effective solutions will lead to poor academic performance among students and delayed completion of curricula.

This poses a real challenge for educational and administrative bodies in terms of how to regulate school hours and ensure maximum benefit from the academic year.

Application period runs from April 6 to May 5

KU opens nominations for scholarships and study leave for administrative staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Kuwait University has announced the opening of nominations for scholarships and study leave in various academic levels -- diploma, bachelor's, higher diploma, master's and doctoral degrees -- available to university employees; excluding faculty members, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The application period will be from April 6 to May 5.

Acting Secretary General of the university Dr. Bader Al-Rajhi disclosed that this initiative aims to improve the job performance and professional competence of the administrative staff. "By improving the administrative employees' educational qualifications, the university intends to elevate the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its operations, benefiting the university community in general," he explained.

The daily obtained a copy of the recent announcement of the University Secretariat General that applicants for the scholarships or study leave must meet certain conditions. These conditions include being a Kuwaiti citizen, under the age of 50 at the time of the scholarship, and have never been previously sent on a scholarship or study leave in the same field that ended in cancellation. The scholarship or study leave must be in line with the employee's current position, and applicants must have been employed at the university for at least one continuous year prior to applying for any of the academic programs.

This initiative reflects the commitment of the university to support the professional development of its administrative employees.

The announcement specified that studies must be conducted at a university accredited and recognized by the concerned government authorities in the field of specialization; particularly the National Bureau for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, as well as the Cultural Office for studies outside Kuwait.

In all cases, approval from the Scholarships and Study Leave Committee must be obtained before commencing studies. Applications will not be considered if the employees already started their studies.

For scholarships or study leave outside Kuwait, a TOEFL certificate is required as a condition of application. Applicants must have a minimum TOEFL score of 500, an IELTS score of at least 5, or an equivalent qualification before beginning their studies.

Exemptions to this language proficiency requirement include those accepted by universities that do not require language proficiency tests, and those who earned degrees from institutions where English is the medium of instruction.

The announcement also clarified that applications and nominations for university employees will be reviewed based on the criteria set by the designated committee for scholarships or study leave.

Applicants for scholarships or study leave must submit an official acceptance letter from the university, which includes the study start date and intended major, before commencing studies. This must be done within one year from the date of approval by the Scholarships and Study Leave Committee. If the one-year period expires, the initial approval will be revoked, and a new application must be submitted for a scholarship or study leave.

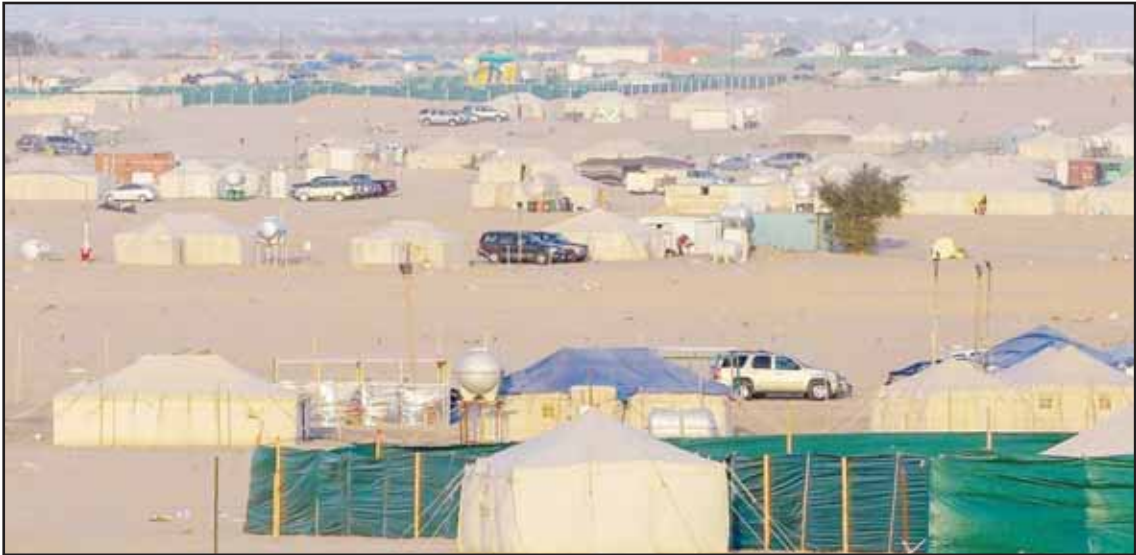
Moreover, a scholarship or study leave cannot be combined with any form of secondment or transfer, whether within or outside the university.

Applicants are not allowed to modify any terms of the scholarship or study leave decision without prior approval from the Scholarships and Study Leave Committee.

The announcement also emphasized that applicants must not hold an academic degree that has been equated to the level of the qualification they are applying for.

Furthermore, applications for leave of absence or scholarships must be based on the applicant's most recent qualification.

Individuals with disabilities are exempted from all scholarship requirements, provided they hold a valid disability certificate issued by the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) applicable for all types of disabilities and educational levels.



Removal of spring camps after the end of the spring season.

KUNA photo

Municipality urges spring camp owners to dismantle tents as season wraps up

KUWAIT CITY, April 2, (KUNA): Kuwait Municipality on Tuesday urged owners of spring camps to remove their tents as the camping season has ended.

Municipality Spokesperson and Public Relations Director Mohammad Al-Sindan said in a press statement that field teams have issued warnings

to camp owners who are still setting up their tents despite the official period set by Kuwait Municipality having ended.

Al-Sindan stressed that any spring camp that violates the specified period and is monitored by municipality teams may have its insurance amount confiscated, and the license holder will be charged for the removal costs.

He thanked the owners of the removed camps for their cooperation with the municipality teams by removing their tents, out of a shared commitment to implement camping regulations and conditions. He explained that the municipality teams will not hesitate to take all necessary measures and issue violation reports against violators.



A box truck rests on a sidewalk following a crash, which injured several people in the Chinatown neighborhood of Boston on April 1. (AP)

Boston truck accident injures 6

A box truck crashed into a building Tuesday afternoon in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood and hit several pedestrians before flipping onto its side, city officials said. The driver and five others were injured in what authorities said appears to have been an accident.

"At least at this preliminary juncture, we don't have any reason to believe that this was an intentional act," Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden said at a news conference. "It may very well end up being a tragic accident."

Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox said four people were

hospitalized. The driver and one pedestrian were in critical condition early on, but several hours later the driver's condition had improved. Two others declined medical treatment at the scene. Cox and others noted that the outcome could have been far worse given the location.

"This is such a busy part of the city, right on the middle of the day, people going back and forth on their way to get lunch and support our small businesses," Mayor Michelle Wu said. "And so it's quite shocking to see the scene as it stands right now." (AP)

Democratic-backed Crawford wins Wisconsin Supreme Court seat

MADISON, Wis., April 2, (AP): The Democratic-backed candidate for Wisconsin Supreme Court defeated a challenger endorsed by President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk on Tuesday, touting her victory as a win against powerful interests and cementing a liberal majority for at least three more years.



Crawford

Susan Crawford, a Dane County judge who led legal fights to protect union power and abortion rights and to oppose voter ID, stood on stage surrounded by the court's four current liberal justices and celebrated her win as a victory for democracy while also taking a dig at Musk.

"Growing up in Chippewa Falls, I never could have imagined that I would be taking on the richest man in the world for justice in Wisconsin," Crawford said. "And we won."

Musk and groups he backed had spent more than \$21 million in an effort to defeat Crawford. Musk even traveled to Wisconsin two days before the election to personally hand over \$1 million checks to two voters.

"Today Wisconsinites fended off an unprecedented attack on our democracy, our fair elections and our Supreme Court," Crawford said in her victory

speech. "And Wisconsin stood up and said loudly that justice does not have a price, our courts are not for sale."

Crawford defeated Republican-backed Brad Schimel in a race that broke records for spending, was the highest-turnout Wisconsin Supreme Court election ever and became a proxy fight for the nation's political battles.

Overnight, Musk posted on his X platform that "The long con of the left is corruption of the judiciary." In another comment, he seemed to take solace from voters' approval to elevate the state's photo ID requirement from state law to constitutional amendment.

Trump, Musk and other Republicans lined up behind Schimel, a former state attorney general. Democrats including former President Barack Obama and billionaire megadonor George Soros backed Crawford.

The first major election in the country since November was seen as a litmus test of how voters feel about Trump's first months back in office and the role played by Musk, whose Department of Government Efficiency has torn through federal agencies and laid off thousands of workers. Musk traveled to Wisconsin on Sunday to make a pitch for Schimel and personally hand out to \$1 million checks to voters.

Crawford was beating Schimel by more than 8 points, based on unofficial results. Turnout exceeded 52% of the voting age population, topping the record set in 2023 of nearly 40%. Spending was on its way to surpass \$100 million.



An Antrim County Road Commission crew clears branches and trees hanging near Atwood Road from ice build up on April 1, near Ellsworth, Michigan, following weekend storms that deposited as much as one inch of ice over areas of northern lower Michigan. (AP)

Forecasters warn of floods, tornadoes

As severe thunderstorms threatened to hit parts of the Midwest and South on Wednesday, forecasters warned of potentially deadly flash flooding, strong tornadoes and baseball-sized hail.

At least one tornado was observed Tuesday night around Salina, Kansas, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of Wichita, according to the National Weather Service.

The potent storm system was expected to bring the threat of "significant, life-threatening flash flooding" starting Wednesday, according to the Weather Prediction

Center, a part of the weather service.

The new flood threat came as residents in parts of Michigan continued to dig out from a weekend ice storm.

Thunderstorms with multiple rounds of heavy rain were forecast in parts of Texas, the lower Mississippi Valley and the Ohio Valley beginning midweek and lasting through Saturday. Forecasters warned the storms could track over the same areas repeatedly and produce heavy rains and dangerous flash floods capable of sweeping cars away. (AP)

Will it rally anti-Trump resistance?

Booker sets record with marathon Senate speech

WASHINGTON, April 2, (AP): In a feat of determination, New Jersey Democratic Sen. Cory Booker held the Senate floor with a marathon speech that lasted all night and into Tuesday night, setting a historic mark to show Democrats' resistance to President Donald Trump's sweeping actions.

Booker took to the Senate floor on Monday evening, saying he would remain there as long as he was "physically able." It wasn't until 25 hours and 5 minutes later

that the 55-year-old senator, a former football tight end, finished speaking and limped off the floor. It set the record for the longest continuous Senate floor speech in the chamber's history. Booker was assisted by fellow Democrats who gave him a break from speaking by asking him questions on the Senate floor.

It was a remarkable show of stamina as Democrats try to show their frustrated supporters that they are doing everything possible

to contest Trump's agenda. Yet Booker also provided a moment of historical solace for a party searching for its way forward: By standing on the Senate floor for more than a night and day and refusing to leave, he had broken a record set 68 years ago by then Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, a segregationist and southern Democrat, to filibuster the advance of the Civil Rights Act in 1957.

"I'm here despite his speech," said Booker, who spoke openly on the Senate floor of his roots as the descendant of both slaves and slave-owners. He added, "I'm here because as powerful as he was, the people are more powerful."

House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, the first Black party leader in Congress, slipped into the Senate chamber to watch Booker on Tuesday afternoon.

He called it "an incredibly powerful moment" because Booker had broken the record of a segregationist and was "fighting to preserve the American way of life and our democracy."

Still, Booker centered his speech on a call for his party to find its resolve, saying, "We all must look in the mirror and say, 'We will do better.'"



In this image provided by Senate Television, Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., speaks on the Senate floor on April 1. (AP)

Republicans win Florida special elections

GOP pushes ahead on Trump's tax cuts package

WASHINGTON, April 2, (AP): Senate Republicans said they are pushing ahead on President Donald Trump's big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts this week, even though they're punting some of the most difficult decisions - including the costs and how to pay for the multitrillion-dollar package - until later.

The Senate GOP's budget framework would be the companion to the House Republicans' \$4.5 trillion tax cuts package that also calls for slashing some \$2 trillion from health care and other programs. If the Senate can move the blueprint forward, it edges Trump's allies on Capitol Hill closer to a compromise setting the stage for a final product in the weeks ahead.

"Obviously we are hopeful this week we can get a budget resolution on the floor that will unlock the process," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D. "And so we are continuing to move forward with that."

While big differences remain, Republicans face increasing political pressure to deliver on what is expected to be Trump's signature domestic policy package - extending the tax cuts, which were initially approved in 2017, during his first term at the White House. Those tax breaks expire at the end of the year, and Trump wants to expand them to include new no taxes on tipped wages, overtime pay and other earnings, as he promised on the campaign trail.

Democrats are preparing to oppose the GOP tax plans as giveaways to the wealthy, coming as billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency is taking a "chainsaw" to the federal government. They warn Republicans plan to slash government programs and services that millions of Americans depend on nationwide.

"We are standing together against the GOP tax scam and in defense of the American people," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said alongside others on the Capitol steps late Tuesday.

One main sticking point between the House and Senate GOP plans has been over whether the existing tax cuts, which are estimated to cost the federal government \$4.5 trillion over the decade in lost revenue, need to be paid for by spending reductions elsewhere. Adding Trump's new tax breaks to the package would balloon the price tag even



US Senate Majority Leader John Thune, joined by Sen John Barrasso, the GOP whip, (left), talks to reporters at the Capitol, in Washington on April 1. (AP)

higher.

Also:

ORMOND BEACH, Fla.: Republicans **Jimmy Patronis** and **Randy Fine** won special elections Tuesday in two Florida congressional districts, bolstered by President **Donald Trump's** endorsement to fill vacant seats in reliably Republican strongholds.

Patronis, the state's chief financial officer, fended off a challenge from Democrat **Gay Valimont** even though she far outraised and outspent him. He will fill the northwest Florida 1st District seat vacated by former Rep. **Matt Gaetz**, who was chosen to be Trump's attorney general but withdrew from consideration amid allegations of sexual misconduct, which he has denied.

In north Florida's 6th District, Fine won against Democratic challenger Josh Weil for a seat vacated by **Mike Waltz** when he was tapped to become Trump's national security adviser.

The win bolsters Republicans' margin to 220-213 in the House of Representatives.

Europe

Leaders to work together: The rival leaders of ethnically divided Cyprus made some progress Wednesday on fostering trust between their conflict-riven Greek and Turkish speaking communities, agreeing to delve deeper into the dangers posed by minefields and working together on environmental initiatives.

But the two sides still have a long way to go to formally restart moribund peace talks, with both leaders alluding to the ongoing fundamental rift on the kind of a peace deal each side expects.

In a joint statement following the United Nations-hosted meeting, **Ersin Tatar**, the leader of the breakaway Turkish Cypriots and Nikos Christodoulides, the island's Greek Cypriot President, said they also agreed on restoring neglected cemeteries and setting up a joint group of young people from both sides of the divide to discuss issues relevant to them. (AP)



Tatar

Bardella inherits spotlight: He wears his suits like armor, smiles like a pop star and boasts more than 2 million followers on TikTok. At just 29, Jordan Bardella has become the fresh-faced figurehead of France's National Rally party and is now poised to inherit one of the most electorally successful far-right machines in Europe.

But behind the image of youthful confidence lies a question increasingly whispered by allies and adversaries alike: Can Bardella, who has no experience in government, really lead?

The presidential ambitions of Bardella's mentor, Marine Le Pen, could be over after a French court convicted her of embezzling European Union funds and barred her from holding office for five years.

That means Bardella finds himself the last man standing atop the largest party in the French National Assembly. But having the spotlight doesn't mean he commands the stage. (AP)

Denmark's Premier Frederiksen heads to Greenland on 3-day trip

NUUK, Greenland, April 2, (AP): Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is traveling to Greenland on Wednesday for a three-day trip aimed at building trust and cooperation with Greenlandic officials at a time when the Trump administration is seeking control of the vast Arctic territory.

Frederiksen announced plans for her visit after US Vice President JD Vance visited a US air base in Greenland last week and accused Denmark of underinvesting in the territory.

Greenland is a mineral-rich, strategically critical island that is becoming more accessible because of climate change. Trump has said that the land-mass is critical to US security. It's geographically part of North America, but is a semiautonomous territory belonging to the Kingdom of Denmark.

Frederiksen is due to meet the incoming Greenlandic leader, Jens-Frederik Nielsen, after an election last month that produced a new government. She is also to meet with the future Naalakkersuisut, the Cabinet, in a visit due to last through Friday.

"It has my deepest respect how the Greenlandic people and the Greenland-



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen arrives for an EU summit at the European Council building in Brussels, Thursday, March 20, 2025. (AP)

dic politicians handle the great pressure that is on Greenland," she said in government statement announcing the visit.

Wary Europe awaits Marco Rubio with NATO's future on the line

WASHINGTON, April 2, (AP): US Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** travels this week to a gathering of top diplomats from NATO countries and is sure to find allies that are alarmed, angered and confused by the Trump administration's desire to reestablish ties with Russia and its escalating rhetorical attacks on longtime transatlantic partners.

Allies are deeply concerned by President Donald Trump's readiness to draw closer to Russian leader Vladimir Putin, who sees NATO as a threat, amid a US effort to broker a ceasefire in Ukraine. Recent White House comments and insults directed at NATO allies Canada and Denmark - as well as the military



Rubio

alliance itself - have only increased the angst, especially as new US tariffs are taking effect against friends and foes alike.

Rubio arrives in Brussels on Thursday for two days of meetings with his NATO counterparts and European officials, and he can expect to be confronted with questions about the future US role in the alliance.

For 75 years, NATO has been anchored on American leadership, and based on what they have seen and heard since Trump took office in January, European officials have expressed deep concerns that Trump may upend all of that when he and other NATO leaders meet for a June summit in the Netherlands.

UK Foreign Secretary Lammy urges Kosovo to make progress in talks with Serbia

PRISTINA, Kosovo, April 2, (AP): The United Kingdom's foreign secretary gave assurances of Britain's interest in the Western Balkan region while visiting Kosovo on Wednesday, urging both Kosovo and Serbia to make progress in normalization talks.

David Lammy was on the second day of a visit to Kosovo where he met with its senior officials, calling on Pristina to form a new Cabinet quickly following the country's Feb 9 parliamentary election.

Prime Minister Albin Kurti's Self-Determination Movement Party, or Vetevendosje!, won 48 seats in the 120-seat parliament, falling short of a majority.

Lammy assured Kosovar officials that "the UK continues to play its essential role as a key friend and partner of this great nation."

The secretary expressed support for the EU-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia normalization talks.

"This this is a region that matters to Britain," he said at a briefing after meeting with President Vjosa Osmani. "We want a lasting, peaceful normalization."

Kosovo-Serbia ties remain tense and the 14-year-long normalization talks facilitated by the EU have failed to make progress.

The EU and the United States have urged Kosovo and Serbia both sides to implement agreements reached two years ago that include a commitment by Kosovo to establish an Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities and Serbia's obligation to provide de facto recognition of Kosovo.

"I hope that the next government will address all citizens needs, including by making progress to integrate Kosovo Serbs and engage vigorously in the EU-led dialogue," said Lammy.

Around 11,400 people died in the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo, mostly from Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority. A 78-day NATO air campaign against ended the fighting and pushed Serbian forces out.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, a move Belgrade and its key allies Russia and China re-



This image released by the US Navy shows an aerial view of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Island group. (AP)

fuse to recognize.

Also:

LONDON: Britain and Mauritius are finalizing a deal to transfer sovereignty over the Chagos Islands, a disputed UK territory that is home to a major US military base, the UK government said Tuesday.

The government signaled that President **Donald Trump's** administration, which was consulted on the deal, has given its approval and no further action is needed from the US.

"We are working with the Mauritian government to finalize and sign the treaty," said **Tom Wells**, a spokesman for Prime Minister **Keir Starmer**. "Once signed it will be laid before both houses of Parliament for scrutiny and for ratification."

Britain and Mauritius have been negotiating a deal for the UK to hand over the Indian Ocean archipelago, which is home to a strategically important naval and bomber base on the largest of the islands, Diego Garcia. The UK would then lease back the base for at least 99 years.

But the deal has faced criticism from the opposition Conservative Party and

from some allies of Trump. Last year the now-Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** said it posed "a serious threat" to US national security.

Trump indicated during a visit to Washington by Starmer in February that he would support the deal, saying: "I have a feeling it's going to work out very well."

Britain split the islands away from Mauritius, a former British colony, in 1965, three years before Mauritius gained independence, and called the Chagos archipelago the British Indian Ocean Territory.

In the 1960s and 1970s Britain evicted up to 2,000 people from the islands so the US military could build the Diego Garcia base.

Mauritius has long contested Britain's claim to the archipelago and in recent years the United Nations and its top court have urged Britain to return the Chagos to Mauritius.

Britain agreed to do so in a draft deal in October, but that has been delayed by a change of government in Mauritius and reported quarrels over how much the UK should pay for the lease of the Diego Garcia air base.

Myanmar’s ruling military declares ceasefire in civil war to facilitate quake relief efforts

BANGKOK, April 2, (AP): Myanmar’s ruling military declared a temporary ceasefire in the country’s civil war Wednesday to facilitate relief efforts following a 7.7 magnitude earthquake that has killed more than 2,800 people.

The announcement by the military’s high command was reported late Wednesday on state television MRTV, which said the truce would run until April 22 and was aimed at showing compassion for people affected by Friday’s quake.

The announcement followed unilateral temporary ceasefires announced by armed resistance groups opposed to military rule. Those groups must refrain from attacking the state, or regrouping, or else the military will take “necessary” measures, the army’s statement said.

Earlier Wednesday, rescuers pulled two men alive from the ruins of a hotel in Myanmar’s capital and a third from a guesthouse in another city, five days after the quake. But most teams were finding only bodies.

The quake hit midday Friday, toppling thousands of buildings, collapsing bridges and buckling roads. The death toll rose to 2,886 Wednesday, with another 4,639 injured, according to state television MRTV. Local reports suggest much higher figures.

The earthquake came amid civil war in Myanmar, making a dire humanitarian crisis even worse. More than 3 million people had been displaced from their homes and nearly 20 million were in need even before it hit, according to the United Nations.

Two of the major armed resistance forces fighting the military, which seized power in 2021 from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, had announced ceasefires to facilitate the humanitarian response to the earthquake, though the military initially did not relent in its attacks.

In the capital, Naypyitaw, a team of Turkish and local rescue workers used an endoscopic camera to locate Naing Lin Tun on a lower floor of the damaged hotel where he worked. They pulled him gingerly through a hole jackhammered through a floor and loaded him on to a gurney nearly 108 hours after he was first trapped.

Shirtless and covered in dust, he appeared weak but conscious in a video released by the local fire department, as he was fitted with an IV drip and taken away. State-run MRTV reported later in the day that another man was saved from the same building, more than 121 hours after the quake struck. Both were age 26.

Another man was rescued by a team of Malaysian and local crews from a collapsed guesthouse in the Sagaing township, near the epicenter of the

earthquake close to Myanmar’s second-largest city, Mandalay.

The earthquake also rocked neighboring Thailand, causing the collapse of a high-rise building under construction in Bangkok. One body was removed from the rubble early Wednesday, raising the death total in Bangkok to 22 with 35 injured, primarily at the construction site.

The Three Brotherhood Alliance, one of a powerful group of militias that has taken a large swath of the country from the military, announced a unilateral one-month ceasefire on Tuesday to facilitate the humanitarian response.

The shadow opposition National Unity Government founded by lawmakers ousted in 2021 had already called a ceasefire for its forces.

The announcements had put pressure on the military government to follow suit.

Before Wednesday’s ceasefire announcement, an opposition militia belonging to the Brotherhood Alliance reported that the military fired on a relief convoy of nine Chinese Red Cross vehicles late Tuesday in the northern part of Shan state near Ohn Ma Tee village.

The Ta’ang National Liberation Army said that the Chinese Red Cross was bringing supplies to Mandalay and had reported its route to the military.



In this aerial drone photo, China Search and Rescue Team, assigned by the country’s Ministry of Emergency Management, and a rescue team from China’s Hong Kong carry out a joint search and rescue operation at the Sky Villa residence in Mandalay, Myanmar on April 1. Equipment, including snake-eye endoscopes, radar wave all-view cameras and drones, was used in the joint mission. (Xinhua)

PLA conducts long-range live-fire drills in waters of East China Sea

NANJING, April 2, (Agencies): The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command said its ground force on Wednesday conducted long-range live-fire drills in waters of the East China Sea according to training plans of the “Strait Thunder-2025A” exercise.

The drills involve precision strikes on simulated targets of key ports and energy facilities, and have achieved desired effects, said Senior Colonel Shi Yi, spokesperson for the theater command.

China conducted military drills around Taiwan for a second day, focusing on the Taiwan Strait - a crucial conduit for international trade separating the self-governing island democracy from China.

The Strait Thunder-2025A drills were held in the middle and southern areas of the strait, a People’s Liberation Army spokesperson said.

Taiwan’s military said that it was closely monitoring the drills, but there was nothing unusual on the island of 23 million people that



Lai

China claims as its own territory.

The latest exercises “focus on subjects of identification and verification, warning and expulsion, and interception and detention so as to test the troops’ capabilities of area regulation and control, joint blockade and control, and precision strikes on key targets,” Shi was quoted as saying on the Chinese Defense Ministry’s Weibo social media account.

Taiwan reported that 76 military aircraft and 19 naval or government ships had entered waters and airspace near the island, with 37 of the planes crossing the center line in the 160-kilometer (110-mile) wide Taiwan Strait that forms an unofficial border, but which China refuses to acknowledge.

China’s Shandong aircraft carrier group also entered into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone, a self-defined area tracked by the military.

China’s Taiwan Affairs Office said that the exercises were directed at **Lai Ching-te**, Taiwan’s strongly pro-independence president. Polling shows the overwhelming majority of the island’s residents reject the possibility of Chinese rule and back their current state of Taiwan independence.

Taiwan and China split amid civil war 76 years ago, but tensions have risen since 2016, when China cut off almost all contacts with Taipei.

Parliament reports impeachment motion against Choi S.Korea’s acting prez pleads to accept ruling on Yoon’s impeachment

SEOUL, April 2, (Xinhua): South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, who is serving as acting president, pleaded to accept a scheduled ruling on President Yoon Suk-yeol’s impeachment, local media said Wednesday.

“No matter what decision is made, we must accept the consequences calmly and level-headedly in accordance with the principle of the rule of law,” Han said at a meeting with public safety-related ministers, including chiefs of interior, justice and defense ministries as well as police and fire-fighting agencies.

The constitutional court will decide whether to remove Yoon from office on Friday over his botched martial law bid last December.

The acting president called on people to peacefully express their views during rallies in support of or against Yoon’s impeachment, saying the ongoing crisis of confusion and conflict would be overcome if people become one again with their strength and wisdom.

He urged politicians to refrain from remarks provoking or inciting illegal protests and violence and show responsible attitudes contributing to social cohesion rather than division and conflict.

Han noted that any act challenging government authority and destroying the communities, such as the destruction of facilities, assault and arson, will



Police officers are seen on duty in front of the constitutional court in Seoul, South Korea on April 1. (Xinhua)

Choi was submitted for four reasons, including Choi’s alleged involvement in the impeached President Yoon’s botched martial law imposition and his refusal to appoint a constitutional court justice.

The nine-member constitutional court currently has eight justices as one has yet to be appointed by the acting president.

The constitutional court planned to decide whether to remove Yoon from office on Friday.

Yoon declared an emergency martial law on the night of Dec 3 last year, but it was revoked by the opposition-led National Assembly hours later.

The motion to impeach Yoon was passed in the parliament on Dec 14, and the constitutional court held 11 hearings on Yoon’s impeachment until Feb 25.

In another development, South Korea’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance Choi Sang-mok on Sunday announced the government’s plan to draw up a supplementary budget of 10 trillion won to deal with some of the most pressing issues.

Choi revealed the plan when he presided over an emergency meeting of economic ministers on urgent issues at the Seoul Government Complex, after the most destructive wildfires in decades struck the country over the past week.



Crowds watch from the headland as large swells hit Sydney’s Bondi Beach on April 2. (AP)

High waves cause damage on Sydney waterfront

Sydney beachfront properties were flooded and coastal infrastructure damaged after a large swell combined with a king tide battered the Australian shore, officials said Thursday.

Several homes were evacuated at Botany Bay in Sydney’s south around midnight as waves surged across the coast, according to New South Wales State Emergency Ser-

vice spokesman Andrew Edmunds.

Further north at Sydney’s premier Bondi Beach, the coast was lashed by a 5.5-meter (18-foot) swell, officials said.

Windows were shattered at Bondi Icebergs Swimming Club, a waterfront pool, gymnasium and restaurant complex. CCTV footage showed waves bursting through glass doors

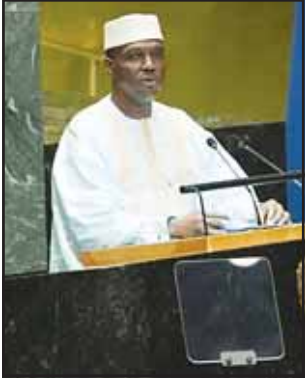
after 11 p.m. on Tuesday.

“It has just been devastating,” club general manager Bob Tate said. “I’ve been a member for 50 years at Bondi. I’ve never seen this sort of thing before. You know, the sheer magnitude of the level of water and the power of the water coming through must’ve just been horrendous.” (AP)

Algeria shoots down drone near its border with Mali

BAMAKO, Mali, April 2, (AP): Algeria said Tuesday it shot down a military drone near the country’s border with Mali in the first incident of its kind during growing tensions between the two countries governing a vast portion of the Sahara.

The country’s army said in a statement that the armed reconnaissance drone had entered Algerian airspace Monday near Tin Zaouatine, a border town and stronghold for Tuareg separatists opposed to Mali’s government. Mali’s army acknowledged that one of its drones had crashed in the area, but did not confirm whether it was shot down by Algeria.



Mali’s Deputy Prime Minister Abdoulaye Maiga addresses the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 28, 2024. (AP)

Rida Lyammouri, a Sahel expert at the Morocco-based Policy Center for the New South, said the shooting down of the drone - rather than issuing a warning - reflected simmering frustrations.

It “confirms the serious tensions between the countries and unwillingness and zero tolerance by Algeria to allow the use of its airspace and territory by Malian forces,” he said.

The incident comes as tensions rise between Algeria and its southern neighbors, including Mali.

Algeria once served as a key mediator during more than a decade of conflict between Mali’s government and Tuareg rebels. But the two countries have grown apart since a military junta staged coups in 2020 and 2021, putting military personnel in charge of the country’s key institutions.

Algeria has denounced the direction that Mali’s new government has taken and its expanded efforts to quash rebellion in historically volatile parts of northern Mali. Afraid of conflict spilling over the border, Algerian officials have denounced Mali’s use of Russian mercenaries and armed drones near Tin Zaouatine, which is divided by the border separating the two countries.



Back row from left: Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun, Marcel Malanga and Tyler Thompson, all American citizens, attend a court verdict in Congo, Kinshasa on Sept 13, 2024, on charges of taking part in a coup attempt in May 2024. (AP)

Congo commutes death sentences of 3 Americans

KINSHASA, Congo, April 2, (AP): Congo’s President Felix Tshisekedi has commuted the death sentences of three Americans convicted on charges of participating in a botched coup attempt in the country’s capital Kinshasa last year, an official said Wednesday.

A presidential order commuted their death sentences to life imprisonment, Congolese presidential spokesperson Tina Salama said, more than six months after a military court sentenced the three and more than 30 others to death for the failed coup.

The pardon came amid efforts by Congolese authorities to sign a minerals deal with the U.S. in exchange for security support that will help Kinshasa fight rebels in the conflict-hit eastern region. Six people were killed during last year’s botched coup attempt, led by little-known opposition figure Christian Malanga, that targeted the presidential palace in Kinshasa as well as a close ally of Tshisekedi. Malanga was fatally shot while resisting arrest soon after live-streaming the attack on his social media, the Congolese army said.

Malanga’s 21-year-old son Marcel Malanga, who is a US citizen, was among the Americans convicted for participating in the coup plot. The other Americans are Tyler Thompson Jr., 21, a high school friend of the younger Malanga who flew to Africa from Utah for what his family believed was a free vacation, and Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun, 36, who is reported to have known Christian Malanga through a gold mining company.



US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, (left), arrives to meet with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum at the National Palace in Mexico City on March 28. (AP)

Dam talks suspended Paraguay recalls ambassador to Brazil

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay, April 2, (AP): Paraguay announced Tuesday that it was recalling its ambassador to Brazil a day after Brazilian authorities acknowledged that their country’s intelligence agency spied on Paraguayan officials in 2022. Paraguay’s government also said it would suspend negotiations with Brazil over the massive hydroelectric dam it jointly operates with its more powerful neighbor.

Paraguay’s decision came after Brazil’s foreign ministry revealed that the administration of Jair Bolsonaro, the right-wing predecessor of current President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, had conducted espionage against the small South American nation.

Lula’s government insisted that it had halted the surveillance against Paraguay immediately after becoming aware of it, without elaborating on the nature of the operation or whom it targeted.

Brazilian news site UOL reported



Paraguay Foreign Minister Rubén Ramírez Lezcano speaks during a press conference during his visit in Taipei, Taiwan on Nov 29. (AP)

that the country’s intelligence agents had infiltrated Paraguayan computer systems to obtain intel on sensitive

tariff negotiations related to the Itaipu dam on their shared border.

Paraguay on Monday said it would stop talks that had been underway for months with Brazil over the costs of hydropower generation from the Itaipu dam until Brazil can clarify “the intelligence action ordered against our country.”

Paraguay’s Foreign Ministry said it had launched an investigation into what exactly occurred between June 2022 and March 2023, when the espionage operation reportedly took place under then-President Bolsonaro. Paraguayan authorities said they had not been aware of any such infiltration.

“It is a violation of international law, the interference in the internal affairs of one country in another,” Paraguayan Foreign Minister Rubén Lezcano told journalists. “We are under constant attack, and the ministry is taking all necessary steps to defend our confidential information.”

Mexico has no biometric data on migrants, says Sheinbaum

MEXICO CITY, April 2, (Xinhua): Mexico does not have biometric data on migrants, President Claudia Sheinbaum said Tuesday in response to the US request to share the information as part of cooperation on border security.

“We don’t have that biometric data,” Sheinbaum said at a regular morning press conference.

However, talks with the United States are ongoing within the framework of cooperation and with respect for national sovereignty, she added.

In an interview with Fox News, US Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem said that during her meeting with Sheinbaum in February, she gave her “a list of things that President Donald Trump would love to see,” including sharing migrants’ biometric data with the United States and stricter monitoring of Mexico’s southern border.

Kuwait oil price up 44 cents to \$78.43 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 2, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 44 cents to USD 78.43 per barrel on Tuesday as opposed to USD 77.99 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

The prices of the Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate at the global markets had decreased by 28 cents for each benchmarks, settling them respectively at USD 74.49 pb and USD 71.20 pb.

General index drops 0.55%

Boursa Kuwait closes lower

KUWAIT CITY, April 2, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Wednesday in the red, with its general index dropping 44.70 points (0.55%) to settle at 8,029.34 points. Market activity saw 229.4 million shares traded through 17,994 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 71.7 million (approximately \$220.8 million).The Main Market Index declined 38.54 points (0.53%) to 7,229.05 points, with 128.9 million shares changing hands through 8,849 transactions worth

KD 26.2 million (\$80.6 million). The Premier Market Index dropped 48.46 points (0.56%), closing at 8,626.26 points, with 100.5 million shares traded through 9,145 transactions, amounting to KD 45.4 million (\$139.8 million).Meanwhile, the Major 50 Index shed 16.64 points (0.24%) to settle at 7,062.23 points, as 110.9 million shares were traded through 7,567 transactions worth KD 24.7 million (\$76 million).

Firm announces cash dividend of 10 fils per share

Agility reports KD 63 mln net income for FY 2024

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Agility, a supply chain services, infrastructure and innovation company, today reported full year net income of KD 63 million equivalent to 25.07 fils per share. EBITDA stood at KD 277 million and revenue of KD 1,528 million. The 2024 figures include the impact of the In-Kind Dividend Distribution in the form of shares in Agility Global PLC, a 51%-owned subsidiary now listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX), has led to an increase in minority interest, thus periods are not comparable.

Included in 2024 full year results is a one-off net impact of KD 43 million resulting from legal claims for and against the company. Performance update “With the listing of Agility global on ADX, we sought to unlock additional value for Agility shareholders, this has also given our largest business units exposure and access to a broader international investment community,” said Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan. For 2024, Agility delivered strong results as its operating entities continued to expand and capitalize on new opportunities. “Agility Global, our primary subsidiary, reported EBIT growth of 21.4%, driven by the strong performance of its three largest businesses: Menzies, Tristar, and Agility Logistics Parks (ALP).



Agility Vice Chairman Tarek Sultan

Menzies experienced growth in new operations across Europe and Asia, Tristar continued its positive trajectory, and ALP expanded its footprint in Saudi Arabia. On the investment front, DSV announced its acquisition



Agility logo

of Schenker which will make DSV the world’s largest freight forwarder and logistics provider.

In Kuwait, the businesses remain focused on executing their growth strategies and identifying opportunities to maximize value and returns for shareholders. GCS is focused on growth and driving efficiency. MRC was the successful bidder to develop and operate Metal Reclamation Facility (MRF) to reclaim metals from the spent catalyst from KNPC & KIPIC refineries., Sultan said. Key developments in Kuwait included the

	FY 2024 (Million KD)	FY 2023 (Million KD)	Variance (%)
Revenue	1,528	1,353	13.0%
Net Revenue	975	818	19.2%
EBITDA	277	257	7.8%
EBIT	175	166	5.8%
Net Profit	63	84	-25.0%
EPS (fils)	25.07	33.46	-25.1%

Numbers above are rounded.

S2/South Village. ALP Kuwait is developing S2, or South Village, a multi-purpose commercial, logistics and crafts/services zone serving Sabah Al-Ahmad City, Kuwait’s next-generation city. Development on S2 project is progressing and is expected to deliver its first units during 2025. End of Year Dividends Recommendation

Agility’s board is recommending a cash dividend of 10%, equivalent to 10 fils per share, for the year 2024. This recommendation is subject to the approval of the General Assembly.

Outlook
“We enter 2025 optimistic about the future and the opportunities to grow both globally and in Kuwait, driving value for our shareholders, employees, customers, and communities,” Sultan said.

Recap of Agility KSCP FY 2024 Financial Performance

■ Agility’s net profit was KD 63 million and EPS was 25.07 fils.

■ Agility’s EBIT increased 5.8% and EBITDA increased 7.8% to KD 277 million.

■ Agility’s revenue increased 13% to KD 1,528 million and net revenue increased 19.2%.

■ Agility enjoys a healthy balance sheet with KD 4.2 billion in assets.

■ Agility reported an operating cash flow of KD 238 million for the full year of 2024.



GCC markets see marginal 0.4% decline

Global equity markets under pressure in March 2025 due to US trade uncertainty

By Kamco Invest

Equity markets across the globe remained under pressure for the second consecutive month during March-2025 after uncertainty related to US trade policies and a forecasted slowdown in the US economy affected investor sentiments. The US government’s consecutive announcements related to imposition of tariffs on US imports and the counter measures from its trading partners shook investor confidence in global economic growth in the near term. As a result, investors favored safer asset classes like gold, that reached a record level during the month, as well as government bonds.

Nevertheless, the decline was mainly centered around advanced markets with the US market sliding by 5.8% and the tech heavy Magnificent 7 stocks declining seeing the biggest decline since December-2022 with a fall of 10.2%. On the other hand, the emerging market index witnessed a marginal gain of 0.4% highlighting gains mainly in India, Brazil and China. The MSCI GCC index also witnessed only a marginal decline of 0.4% during the month despite a broad-based decline across the seven exchanges in the region. Within th GCC,

Dubai was the biggest decliner during the month at -4.2%, the first decline in ten months for the exchange. Abu Dhabi and Qatar declined by 2.0% each during the month while the rest of the markets witnessed marginal declines.

In terms of sector performance, the relatively smaller decline in the GCC index reflected gains in large cap sectors, that included Banking, Telecom and Materials that almost fully offset declines in the rest of the sectoral indices. Gains for the banking sector came after interest rate expectations showed higher for longer rates in the near term, supporting net interest income for the sector. Performance since

the start of the year showed Kuwait as the only market with gains that stood at one of the highest levels globally at 9.7%.

Boursa Kuwait

Kuwaiti benchmarks receded during March-2025 following a broad-based decline that affected most sectors on the exchange. In terms of market segments, the Main 50 Index witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 4.2% as the performance of constituent stocks in the index skewed downwards. The Premier Market Index and the All-Share Market Index reported marginal monthly declines of 0.2% and 0.3% respectively, while the Main Market Index receded 0.9% during the month. The performance in Q1-2025 also reflected relatively better performance of Premier market stocks with a gain of 10.7% while the Main Market and Main 50 index showed smaller gains of 5.2% and 4.0%, respectively. The broader All Share index witnessed a gain of 9.7% during Q1-2025, the biggest in the GCC and one of the highest globally.

The sector performance chart highlighted the broad-based declines in the market with merely four sectors witnessing gains. The gainer’s side was topped by the Health Care index with a gain of 9.9% followed by Insurance and Consumer Discretionary with gains of 3.3% and 1.6%, respectively. On the other hand, the Technology index registered the biggest fall of 33.3%, followed by the Consumer Staples and Financial Services indices with declines of 4.8% and 3.9%, respectively. Gains in the Health Care sector were mainly led by 13.9% surge in shares of Al-Maidan Clinic while gains of 9.0% and 5.2% in shares of Ahleiah Insurance and GIG supported the Insurance index. The decline in the Technology index reflected the fall in the shares of its sole constituent Automated Systems Co. Large-cap sectors like Banks reported a gain of 0.7%.

Within its ongoing efforts to promote the ‘Let’s Be Aware’ banking awareness campaign

NBK calls to check URL legitimacy and website matching when shopping online

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Reflecting its active role in promoting financial literacy and inclusion among all sectors of society, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues promoting the “Let’s Be Aware” banking awareness campaign introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks and Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

NBK intensifies awareness by sharing educational content including video clips, text messages, and tips across its social media platforms and other digital channels, as well as reposting CBK’s communications, aiming to raise awareness among all people and familiarize them with the various fraud schemes and required precautions.

In this context, the bank called to check website URL to ensure using the legitimate website when shopping or making any banking transactions online to avoid falling victim to fraud.

NBK also stressed on never clicking any links from unknown sources,



whether via e-mail or social media platforms, which may redirect the user to clone websites, as scammers make clone webpages that look exactly like well-known shopping websites, so, it is necessary to check the URL before entering any credentials or banking information.

With the ever-growing fraud threats using various techniques, NBK is keen to protect customers and increase their awareness of how to steer clear of these threats by following the tips provided across its digital channels.

The bank also affirms that it will never ask customers for personal information

via e-mail, SMS or phone calls, warning them of responding to such messages representing fraud attempts to obtain their banking information to steal their money or information.

NBK employs its strong customer communication capabilities as well as all its digital channels, which are the most popular among all Kuwaiti banks, to support the Central Bank’s endeavors to protect customers and the national economy.

It is worth mentioning that NBK is a key supporter and partner in all CBK’s campaigns and initiatives aiming to increase financial and banking awareness among different segments of society. As a leading financial institution in Kuwait, NBK frequently organizes various activities to raise awareness on all topics related to the banking sector, as well as various training courses for its employees to enhance their experience in the areas of combating fraud and financial crime.

Business

In line with its commitment to Diraya campaign

KFH warns against unverified online links

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) advises customers to stay cautious about a new phishing scam targeting their bank accounts and stealing their funds. KFH warning is part of its continuous support for Diraya campaign, which aims to promote banking awareness, in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA).

In its press release, KFH stated that the new form of online scam involves sending a message with a suspicious link tricking victims to click the link to visit a particular website or participate in a survey. Once they click the link, their devices will be hacked, enabling the hacker to access and exploit their personal data for harmful purposes.

KFH urged customers to stay vigilant and refrain from disclosing their personal information to requests received through e-mails, text messages, or phone calls, as they are attempts to obtain customers’ banking information to steal their funds or data.

KFH advised customers to be careful when receiving links as these links could lead to theft of sensitive banking information. The bank also recommended that customers protect their bank accounts by avoiding the storage of confidential information, such as card numbers or passwords, on their mobile phones. Additionally, customers were urged not to share their OTP with anyone and to log out of the bank’s application or website promptly after finishing a transaction.



KFH logo

Challenges in establishing heavy industries in Kuwait, experts say

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: A number of economists have called for Kuwait to enter the world of heavy industries as a key step towards diversifying its sources of income to counter the fluctuations in oil prices, which are affected by global political and financial tensions; while highlighting the importance of expanding other medium-sized industries.

In a special investigation by the newspaper; the economists stated that the most challenging obstacles to heavy industries in the country include the lack of laborers, industrial land distribution problem, and flooding the local market with imported products.

Regarding the importance of entering the era of major industries such as aircraft and automobiles; these experts think these industries will reduce the budget deficit, solve the employment problem, and play a major role in reducing the prices of products.

Economic expert Sultan Al-Jazzaf said there are major challenges in establishing heavy industries in Kuwait. “Heavy industries require large, long-term investments; in addition to the fact that infrastructure, such as transportation and logistics, are still underdeveloped. This is in addition to the lack of trained laborers like those with technical expertise and lack of freedom of movement,” he elaborated.

He pointed out that the business environment remains difficult, considering the lack of incentives for local and foreign investors. “More importantly, there is a lack of large-scale industrial land for heavy industries, which exist in surrounding countries -- Kuwait’s biggest competitors. Therefore, if an investor wants to compare investment with surrounding countries, he will certainly not come to Kuwait. For heavy, light or transformation industries to operate, there must be an economic vision or goal. To achieve this, all capabilities must be utilized to serve your goal and realize your vision.”

Another economic expert Ahmed Al-Khashnam believes that industry is important in supporting the economy in general, as it stimulates all other sectors, such as the commercial and industrial sectors, among others. “Therefore, the industrial sector is one of the most important sectors in the country, given the financial returns it generates for the State budget, especially since industry is the process of transforming raw materials in several different ways,” he explained.

He stated that if heavy industry is implemented in Kuwait, it will boost the national economy and help the country avoid budget deficits, considering Kuwait possesses oil and its crude oil can be converted for use in a variety of industries. He then stressed the need for the country to diversify its sources of income by relying on industries.

He revealed the main obstacle to hav-

ing large-scale industries in Kuwait, such as the automotive, aircraft and train industries, is the lack of skilled laborers.

However, he believes it is easy to solve this problem, as the government could make the private sector serious about entering large-scale industry facilities to attract skilled laborers from various countries; suggesting testing this labor force through Kuwaiti embassies abroad.

He added the private companies can address the issue of labor wages through the profits they will generate from these industries in the future; hence, Kuwaiti banks can finance these industries in their early stages so they can achieve profitability.

He indicated that Kuwait needs heavy industries, so it does not rely on oil as its primary resource, especially since oil is vulnerable to global political and financial fluctuations.

He also underscored the importance of providing industrial land for manufacturers and removing all obstacles like bureaucracy. “Kuwait must have all industries to meet the basic needs of the local market. It must also expand the existing traditional industries like the food industry. Expanding these industries contributes to lowering prices. Aggressively expanding the pharmaceutical industry to lower the prices of their products is important as well,” he asserted.

He went on to suggest that Kuwait can export heavy and medium-sized industries to neighboring countries, because its strategic geographic location allows for the transfer of industries to various countries around the world. He said the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port will lead to a massive boom for Kuwait in the world of maritime transport in the future.

He pointed out that expanding the reinforcing steel industry in the country has become a necessity, as it underpins many other industries like housing and other buildings and bridges.

He affirmed that Kuwait possesses all the components contributing to the success of heavy industries, including oil and refineries.

On the obstacles to industry in Kuwait, he disclosed these obstacles include the scarcity of industrial land and absence of precise coordination between government departments concerned with the industrial sector.

“This has led to the migration of Kuwaiti capital to establish factories abroad, in addition to the challenges that Kuwaiti products face, such as flooding the local market with imported industrial products,” he asserted.

Mohammad Ramadan, also an economic expert, admitted it is difficult to establish heavy industries in Kuwait for several reasons. “The environment in Kuwait is not conducive to industries; in addition to the high cost of labor, which will discourage the entry of major industries. Kuwait can expand into other economic sectors like international trade and other service sectors,” he concluded.

Al-Dulaijan calls for detailed studies on Kuwait’s craft real estate sector

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Real estate appraiser and expert Sulaiman Al-Dulaijan says a thorough discussion of the craft real estate sector requires extensive studies and data on the community’s demand for these properties and their expected size in new residential areas, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Al-Dulaijan explained that areas with privately owned vocational properties are very limited, with only two main areas - Qurain Markets and Ardiya Vocational, in addition to the new Fahaheel Vocational. Other areas, such as Shuwaikh Industrial, Al-Rai, Ahmadi, and others, are state-owned properties.

Regarding other real estate sectors, he said the residential sector has

seen a decline in both trading volume and prices between 2024 and the first months of 2025, with a drop of approximately 10 percent to 15 percent compared to 2023.

Al-Dulaijan explained that investment property prices are expected to increase by 10 percent to 15 percent for plots in general during 2024. The demand for residential buildings fluctuates based on bank interest rates on loans. The recent decrease in bank interest rates has resulted in increased trading and demand for residential buildings.

Trading volume in the investment sector, which previously ranged between 25 percent and 27 percent, has now risen to between 35 percent and 40 percent.

The largest and most comprehensive community campaign in Ramadan

Zain Al-Shuhoor campaign celebrated the spirit of the Holy Month



Zain Alshuhoor 2025

- Over 40k Iftar meals served across multiple locations throughout the month
- Iftar banquets at Nawaf Al-Ahmad Base and Failaka Island recognized Kuwait's heroes
- Competition encouraged nearly 500 youth to embody Quran's noble values
- Girgeaan festivities brought joy to children and individuals with disabilities
- Zain Who Knows No Fear dazzled audiences on the world's largest circular children's stage



CEO Nawaf Al-Gharabally with winners of Zain's Quran Competition.



Zain's team joins Kuwait's heroes on Failaka Island.



Zain Who Knows No Fear: a spectacular musical on the world's largest circular children's stage.

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: As it does every year, Zain welcomed the Holy Month of Ramadan by launching its annual campaign Zain Al-Shuhoor, one of the first and most prominent Ramadan community campaigns in Kuwait. It is also among the country's broadest and most comprehensive initiatives, having launched more than 11 years ago and continuing annually with great success. This year, the campaign featured a diverse and evolving array of volunteer, charitable, humanitarian, social, and religious programs that kick-offed ahead of Ramadan and continued daily until Eid Al Fitr.

The Zain Al-Shuhoor campaign aimed to promote volunteerism and community engagement through its wide range of programs, all centered around values of giving, helping others, and collective cooperation to create a positive impact in society. As usual, Zain opened the door for its employees to volunteer as part of the Zain Al-Shuhoor Volunteer Team, made up of staff members from across all departments, who actively participated in humanitarian and volunteering programs throughout the Holy Month.

Zain is proud that Zain Al-Shuhoor remains one of the largest and most successful community campaigns during Ramadan. It evolves every year, expanding its programs and initiatives, and this continued success is owed to many factors—chief among them being its partners, with whom Zain builds bridges of collaboration to reflect the spirit of generosity that defines this Sacred Month. The success of a community project of this scale relies entirely on constructive cooperation and a shared vision among all stakeholders.

In this report, Zain highlights the key moments of its 2025 Ramadan campaign:

Food Baskets

Zain kicked off its campaign with the Ramadan food baskets initiative, distributed to underprivileged families through its strategic partners: the Ministry of Social Affairs' care centers and the Kuwait Food and Relief Bank.

The baskets were delivered to social care centers under the Ministry of Social Affairs, ben-

efiting foster care children, the elderly, and people with special needs. They were also distributed by the Kuwait Food and Relief Bank to families in need across various areas of Kuwait.

Iftar Meals

From the first day of Ramadan, Zain resumed its annual Iftar initiative—now in its 18th year—offering daily meals to fasting individuals at Manahi Al-Dawwas Hall in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. This year, over 40,000 meals were served throughout the month. The Zain Al-Shuhoor team, including volunteers from across departments, directly supervised and organized the initiative, reaffirming their commitment to impactful community involvement.

Meals were also delivered in collaboration with the Kuwait Food and Relief Bank through mobile food trucks dispatched

daily across Kuwait. These included stops at the traditional Mubarakiya Market in downtown Kuwait—joined by Zain's executive team—and the fish market in Sharq, where children from the Kharafi Center for children with disabilities helped distribute meals, showcasing Zain's efforts to include individuals with special needs in meaningful societal participation.

Iftar with Kuwait's Heroes

Zain hosted a Ramadan Iftar banquet at Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Base on the northern island of Jaber Al Ahmad Bridge in honor of the Coast Guard, recognizing their tireless efforts to safeguard Kuwait's maritime borders. Another banquet was held for personnel from six ministries and institutions stationed on Failaka Island, in appreciation of their service.

The Zain Al-Shuhoor team

visited the island and shared Iftar with members of the Ministry of Interior, the Kuwait Fire Force, Emergency Medical Services, the Kuwait Army, the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, and the Ministry of Information. During the visit, the team expressed their deep gratitude and appreciation for the significant efforts these individuals dedicate to protecting Kuwait and its people.

Zain x 965 Ramadan Nights

The first edition of the Zain x 965 Ramadan Nights exhibition was launched this year, a three-day event at Salhiya Plaza that created a vibrant space for community bonding and showcased the creativity and promising ventures of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

The event was part of Zain's ongoing partnership with 965 Outlet, known for organizing

marketing events that empower local businesses by allowing them to present their products and services in a festive atmosphere—this time for the first time during Ramadan.

Zain Girgeaan

For Zain, the Girgeaan tradition presents a wonderful opportunity to bring joy to children and individuals with disabilities. The company hosted several celebrations, including its annual Girgeaan at the Ministry of Social Affairs care centers. This year, Zain partnered with Dabdoob to deliver joy through gifts, toys, and Girgeaan packs to family care children, the elderly, and individuals with special needs.

Following the huge success of the past two years, Zain revived its innovative "Drive-Thru Girgeaan" celebration in collaboration with Wainkom, drawing hundreds of cars to its Shuwaikh

headquarters for a festive family event.

The Zain Al-Shuhoor volunteer team also organized visits to celebrate Girgeaan with children and their families at Zain ENT Hospital and Jaber Al Ahmad Hospital, bringing joy to young patients and the nursing staff caring for them through gifts and games in partnership with Dabdoob.

Zain also continued supporting annual Girgeaan celebrations at the Kharafi Center for children with disabilities and Al-Tomoooh Sports Club for individuals with intellectual disabilities, which featured cultural and entertaining activities for the children and their families.

Embodying Quran Values

Zain successfully concluded the second edition of its Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition, which saw strong participation from around 500 youth from various age groups competing to memorize the Holy Book and embrace its noble values.

Held over two days at Zain's headquarters, the competition included three age categories for both males and females and was overseen by an official committee from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. Additionally, Zain hosted the fifth edition of the Quran Competition for its employees and their children, awarding the top three winners with motivational cash prizes.

Zain Who Knows No Fear

This year, Zain's theater returned with the dazzling musical Zain Who Knows No Fear, which premiered on the first day of Eid Al Fitr and ran for 10 days at The Arena Kuwait. It featured a breathtaking visual performance on the world's largest circular children's stage, telling a story about monsters representing negative emotions and thoughts, and how to face and overcome them.

The play was written by Heba Mashari Hamada, directed by Samer Aboud, and starred Huda Hussein, Fatima Al-Safi, Hamad Ashkanani, Laila Abdullah, Hala Al-Turk, Haneen Hussein, Mohsen Al-Aswad, along with many young talents. The music was composed by Ihab Abdel Wahid and arranged by Ahmed Tarek Yehia, with Joy Production as the executive producer.



Zain's Girgeaan: one-of-a-kind experience for the third consecutive year.



Zain's Iftar Hall welcomed worshippers daily.



Zain Al-Shuhoor Volunteer Team actively participated in company initiatives.



Zain Al-Shuhoor team visited children's hospital wards with Dabdoob to distribute toys.

Spreading good in the community through meaningful and cause-driven initiatives

stc concludes its 2025 ‘With good, we go further’ Ramadan campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, concluded its 2025 Ramadan campaign under the slogan “With good, we go further”. The annual initiative organized by stc focuses on diverse impactful initiatives and programs that aim to leave lasting impact in the community. The campaign reflected some of the core values of stc’s corporate social responsibility and sustainability frameworks, with the objective of driving positive change and empowering the community to support one another.

In a statement, stc highlighted that the success of its Ramadan 2025 campaign was due to several factors this year, one of which included its collaboration with key partners. The collective exposure and community presence shared between stc and its partners, enabled each initiative organized under the campaign to deliver its message successfully. Throughout the month, stc launched its several campaigns and participated in community-based initiatives that reflected the spirit of Ramadan and helped promote the values of generosity, unity, and compassion. The primary message behind the “With good, we go further” campaign was to demonstrate the impact of community-driven activities and collective action, and how that can contribute to a more sustainable and positive future.

Empowering Good

With the main theme this year focusing on the importance of doing good, stc organized a number of activities aimed at reaching different segments of the community. Supported by its key partners in this campaign, the initiative focused on empowering goodness in the community in meaningful ways that focused on leaving a positive impact on individuals.

A positive impact with the Tarahom Volunteer Team

For the 6th consecutive year, stc partnered with the Tarahom Volunteer Team to promote the values behind volunteering, charitable giving, and community support during this special time of the year. Supporting the community through volunteer work and collective contributions from members of the community comes as an essential pillar of stc’s CSR framework, with a focus on creating positive and lasting change.

The collaboration included a wide range of activities and initiatives aimed at supporting those in need and giving back through effective initiatives that align with the essence of the Holy Month. These initiatives managed to reach thousands across Kuwait, while spreading awareness on the importance of coming together as a community to support those in need. The activities included the distribution of iftar meals throughout the month and supporting worshippers during the last 10 days of Ramadan.

Additionally, stc participated in ‘Sirdab Al Faiha’, a community-driven event dedicated to supporting low-income families by distributing Eid essentials. Organized for the 5th consecutive year in a collaboration between the Tarahom Volunteer Team and the International Islamic Charity Organization, ‘Sirda Al Faiha’ welcomes various sponsors to give back to the community. This year, stc contributed to the initiative by distributing Nagsat al Eid to families in need in preparation for Eid Al Fitr.

A transformational journey with Mohammad Al Saddani

In a heartfelt initiative organized in collaboration with the Tarahom Volunteer Team and Media Personality Mohammad Al Saddani, stc supplied a family in need with essential appliances that were delivered and installed into the family’s home to help improve their daily living conditions. In addition to equipping the household with new appliances, stc fulfilled the wish of the young child by gifting them a PlayStation 5 as an additional form of entertainment to enjoy at home. stc also ensured that the family stays connected to the digital world by installing a high-speed internet router.



Tarahom and stc teams distributing iftar meals to fasting people.



stc’s participation in the Grand Mosque and Moza Muhammad Salem Mosque.



stc employees participate in the Quran competition.

tal world by installing a high-speed internet router.

Unity in the Community

Over the years, stc has been active in introducing different concepts and initiatives that aim to bring the community together. The Company utilizes its vast resources to create different atmospheres that tailor to the different segments within the community. This year, stc, in collaboration with various partners, is set to amplify its impact by hosting a diverse array of events that not only entertain but also serve the community’s broader needs.

Quran memorization contest – Second edition

For the second year in a row, stc organized a Quran memorization contest in collaboration with the renowned reciter Bader Al Bashar as part of its annual Ramadan campaign. The competition was held at the Moza Muhammad Salem Mosque in Bayan and welcomed more than 100 participants across two categories that include participants from

7-10 years old and 11-13 years old. Members from the stc family also participated in the contest that aimed to encourage the recitation of various segments of the Quran. The winners of the memorization and recitation competition were awarded valuable prizes in recognition of their efforts and skills.

Worshippers’ hospitality services during the last 10 days of Ramadan

For the second year in a row, stc offered various services to the Grand Mosque and Moza Muhammad Salem Mosque located at Bayan Area, ensuring a comfortable and welcoming environment for worshippers attending Qiyam prayers during the final days of Ramadan. The services provided under stc’s care and hospitality initiative included providing refreshments such as water and coffee, providing seats for the elderly, and other additional amenities aimed at enriching the worshippers’ experience during this spiritual and significant

time during Ramadan.

At the Grand Mosque, stc offered its special services in the Amiri Hall, to create an inviting and pleasant ambiance for senior officials and distinguished guests attending prayers.

stc also sponsored the various volunteer groups at the Grand Mosque, extending its support to those who dedicate their time and efforts during Ramadan to assist and serve the community. In addition to other services provided, these activities were designed to create an atmosphere that promotes unity, care and comfort for all worshippers attending prayers.

At Moza Muhammad Salem Mosque, stc provided its various services throughout the last 10 days of Ramadan, ensuring worshippers could focus on their prayers in a comforting and welcoming environment. The initiative reflects the core objectives behind stc’s Ramadan campaign for 2025, supporting the community and creating an impact during the Holy Month.

stc Gergean celebrations

stc organized several Gergean cel-



Participation of worshippers in the last ten days of Ramadan.

Force Gym, Intersport, Perform Athletics, and the Ya Hala Festival, stc organized another edition of the “Your Steps = Internet” challenge at Assima Mall. Proven by its success in previous years, stc organized this initiative once again given its impact on participants and the meaningful support it provides to families in need, reinforcing the power of collective movement for a greater cause.

stc’s Ghabga

stc welcomed its success partners at the ‘weyak’ Ghabga, an annual initiative organized by the Company where it recognizes its relationship with partners who have become part of the stc family. The gathering aligns with stc’s strategic approach to strengthening its pioneering role in the market complimented by a network of strong and reliable partners. This was the 5th Ghabga organized by stc for its success partners and is considered one of the largest of its kind gathering for entrepreneurs in Kuwait. The event comes as part of stc’s broader vision of supporting the private sector and empowering entrepreneurs and SMEs to drive sustainable growth to the economy and social progress.

As part of its 2025 Ramadan campaign, stc also hosted its annual Ghabga, welcoming the entire stc family and its various partners to an exceptional and memorable night. The event brought together stc’s Executive Management, including stc’s CEO, Engineer Muataz Aldharrah, alongside employees from stc and its subsidiaries in a family-like setting. The Ghabga aimed to strengthen team spirit and recognize the Company’s collective efforts in achieving milestones, while strengthening the bonds within the organization.

stc Sofara’a

The stc Sofara’a Program is an initiative that enables employees from various departments to serve as stc brand ambassadors at events, Company activities, and social media. The program is a key part of stc’s strategy to involve employees in strengthening the brand’s pioneering role in Kuwait. During the Ramadan campaign, stc’s Sofara’a played an active role across all initiatives, contributing to the spirit of giving and promoting a volunteer culture. stc actively encourages employees to participate in community programs that reflect the values behind its humanitarian efforts. The Company highlighted that the Sofara’a team plays a major role in executing and overseeing all Ramadan campaign initiatives, helping build a stronger culture of community engagement amongst the younger generation.

stc concluded its statement by highlighting that the Company is proud of the 2025 “With good, we go further” Ramadan campaign’s success and impact on the community. Every year the Company strives to introduce new initiatives by leveraging its strategic partnerships to organize meaningful activities that have become annual events under its Ramadan campaigns. This year, the Company focused on diversifying its events, programs, and sponsorships to further align with the core objectives behind its CSR framework and sustainability program.

In its statement, the Company also extended its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the organizations and partners that have played a contributing role in the successful outcome of its 2025 Ramadan campaign. stc has managed to consistently enrich and grow its CSR agenda, while working alongside reputable partners that share the same vision as the Company. Looking ahead, stc stated that it will continue to organize initiatives under its Ramadan campaigns that aim to help those in need, spread awareness, or bring the community together, leaving a positive and lasting impact for generations to come.

To find out more about stc’s events, promotions, and sponsorships, follow stc’s official social media platforms, visit one of stc’s branches, download mystc mobile application, visit www.stc.com.kw or contact the customer service center by dialing 102 for around the clock assistance.

Economists warn tariffs could trigger economic downturn

Trump to announce sweeping new tariffs on ‘Liberation Day’

WASHINGTON, April 2, (AP): After weeks of White House hype and public anxiety, President Donald Trump is set Wednesday to announce a barrage of self-described reciprocal tariffs on friend and foe alike.

The new tariffs, coming on what Trump has called “Liberation Day,” are a bid to boost U.S. manufacturing and punish other countries for what he has said are years of unfair trade practices. But by most economists’ assessments, the risky move threatens to plunge the economy into a downturn and mangle decades-old alliances.

The White House is exuding confidence despite the political and financial gamble being undertaken.

“April 2, 2025, will go down as one of the most important days in modern American history,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said at Tuesday’s briefing while adding that the new tariffs will take effect immediately.

The reciprocal tariffs Trump plans to announce follow similar recent announcements of 25% taxes on auto imports; levies against China, Canada and Mexico; and expanded tariffs on steel and aluminum. Trump has also put tariffs against countries that import oil from Venezuela and plans separate import taxes on pharmaceutical drugs, lumber, copper and computer chips.

None of the warning signs about a falling stock market or consumer sentiment turning morose have caused the administration to publicly second-guess its strategy.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro has suggested that the new tariffs would raise \$600 billion annually, which would be the largest tax increase since World War II. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told lawmakers that the tariffs would be capped and could be negotiated downward by other countries, according to the office of Rep. Kevin Hern, R-Okla. But the White House has yet to confirm policy details, despite Trump saying on Monday that he had made his decision.

Importers would likely pass along some of the cost of the taxes on to consumers. The Budget Lab at Yale University estimates that a 20% universal tariff would cost the average household an additional \$3,400 to \$4,200.

The Republican administration’s premise is that manufacturers will quickly increase domestic production and create new factory jobs - and the White House is expressing confidence that Trump’s approach is correct.

“They’re not going to be wrong,” Leavitt said. “It is going to work. And the president has a brilliant team of advisers who have been studying these issues for decades. And we are focused on restoring the golden age of America and making America a manufacturing superpower.”

The bold optimism has done little to reassure the public or allies who see the import taxes as a threat.

Based on the possibility of broad 20% tariffs that have been floated by some White House aides, most analyses see an economy tarnished by higher prices and stagnation. U.S. economic growth - as measured by gross domestic product - would be roughly a percentage point lower, and clothing, oil, automobiles, housing, groceries and even insurance would cost more, the Budget Lab analysis found.

Trump would single-handedly be applying these tariffs, since he has ways of legally doing so without congressional approval. That makes it easy for Democratic lawmakers and policymakers to criticize the Republican administration, if the uncertainty expressed by businesses and declining consumer sentiment are, in fact, signs of trouble to come.

Heather Boushey, who served as a member of the Biden White House’s Council of Economic Advisers, noted that the less aggressive tariffs Trump imposed during his first term failed to stir the manufacturing renaissance he promised voters.

“We are not seeing indications of the boom that the president promised,” Boushey said. “It’s a failed strategy.”

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the tariffs were fundamentally a way for Trump to raise revenues in order to pay for his planned extensions of income tax cuts that disproportionately favor millionaires and billionaires.

“Almost everything they do, including tariffs, it seems to me, is aimed at getting those tax cuts for the wealthy,” Schumer said Tuesday on the Senate floor.

Even Republicans who trust Trump’s instincts have acknowledged that the tariffs could be disruptive to an economy with an otherwise healthy 4.1% unemployment rate.

“We’ll see how it all develops,” said House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La. “It may be rocky in the beginning. But I think that this will make sense for Americans and help all Americans.”

Longtime trading partners are preparing their own countermeasures. Canada has already imposed some in response to the 25% tariffs that Trump tied to the trafficking of fentanyl. The European Union, in response to the steel and aluminum tariffs, put taxes on 26 billion euros’ worth (\$28 billion) of U.S. goods, including on bourbon, which prompted Trump to threaten a 200% tariff on European alcohol.

Many allies feel they have been reluctantly drawn into a confrontation by Trump, who routinely says that friends and foes have essentially ripped off the United States with a mix of tariffs and other trade barriers.

The flip side, of course, is that Americans also have the incomes to choose to buy designer gowns by French fashion houses and autos from German manufacturers, whereas World Bank data show the EU has lower incomes per capita than the United States.

“Europe has not started this confrontation,” said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. “We do not necessarily want to retaliate but, if it is necessary, we have a strong plan to retaliate and we will use it.”

Because Trump has hyped his tariffs without providing specifics, he has provided a deeper sense of uncertainty for the world, a sign that the economic slowdown could possibly extend beyond U.S. borders to other nations that would see one person to blame.

Ray Sparnaay, general manager of JE Fixture & Tool, a Canadian tool and die business that sits across the Detroit River, said the uncertainty has crushed his company’s ability to make plans.

“There’s going to be tariffs implemented. We just don’t know at this point,” he said Monday. “That’s one of the biggest problems we’ve had probably the last - well, since November - is the uncertainty. It’s basically slowed all of our quoting processes, business that we hope to secure has been stalled.”

Leavitt is among three administration officials who face a lawsuit from The Associated Press on First and Fifth Amendment grounds. The AP says the three are punishing the news agency for editorial decisions they oppose. The White House says the AP is not following an executive order to refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

‘This movie celebrates kindness and human love’

Gunn predicts ‘Superman’ to save 2025 box office

LAS VEGAS, April 2, (AP): The 2025 box office has been hit with a deficit. Can the James Gunn-dubbed “summer of ‘Superman’” save it?

Warner Bros. showed off a diverse and starry slate of its upcoming films on Tuesday - but the night was carried on the shoulders of Clark Kent.

“I really do believe in this movie. And I do believe that there is a lack of human kindness, or at least a degradation of human kindness,” Gunn said. “This is a movie that celebrates kindness and human love.”

At the annual CinemaCon convention and trade show in Las Vegas, Gunn - the director and writer of the first film in the new iteration of the connected DC Universe - also brought out its stars, who gushed over their experience making the film.

“It’s a great honor to play a role that exists so clearly in the public consciousness, to the point where everyone I think, even if you haven’t seen a film or read a comic, you sort of know what the Superman symbol means and you know what it stands for,” said David Corenswet, adding that he hopes to “illuminate something new about the character, or even just bring the beloved character to a new audience.”

Corenswet was joined onstage by Rachel Brosna-

han, who plays Lois Lane, and Nicholas Hoult, who plays Lex Luther.

“James makes a family out of every set,” Brosnahan said. “The set is full of people who want to be there, who love making these movies. And it’s such a joy to come to work every day. As many of you have probably heard from other people, it’s not always like that.”

Gunn was announced to direct the film in 2023 shortly after he and Peter Safran became co-chairmen and co-CEOs of DC Studios.

“We appreciate and share your passion for this art form,” Safran told a room full of theater owners. “It’s the fulcrum of our ambitious DC Studios slate and it’s what inspired James to shoot all over the world and push filmmaking technology to its limits, to propel moviegoers out of their homes into your theaters.”

The film will be released theatrically in July amid a summer of superhero titles, including “The Fantastic Four: First Steps” and “Thunderbolts(asterisk).”

In addition to “Superman,” Warner Bros. teased some of its April releases on the convention’s main stage, like Ryan Coogler’s “Sinners” and “A Mine-craft Movie,” but they also looked further down the

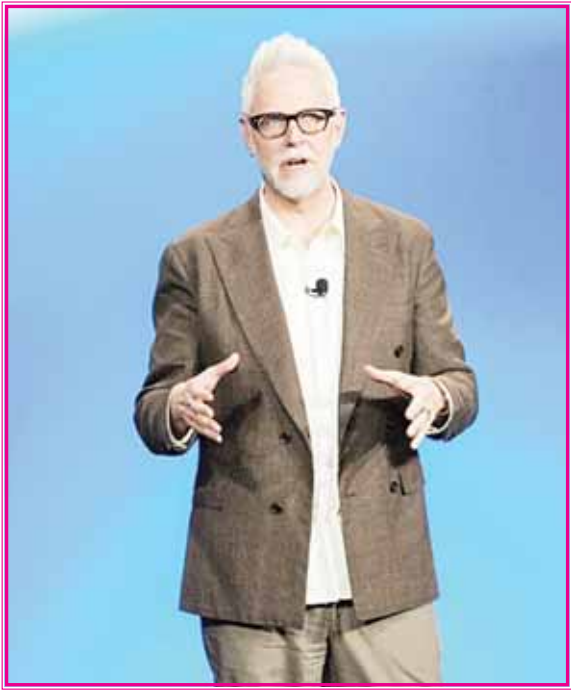
road for 2025.

In a nod to cinephiles, the studio kicked off its presentation by bringing out the stars of Paul Thomas Anderson’s “One Battle After Another,” including Leonardo DiCaprio and Regina Hall. The film is set to hit theaters in September.

“I’ve been wanting to work with Paul for over, gosh, almost 20 years now. He’s one of the most unique talents of our time,” DiCaprio said. “With this film, he’s tapped into something politically and culturally that is brewing beneath our psyche. But at the same time, it’s an incredibly epic movie and has such scope and scale.”

Director Joseph Kosinski and producer Jerry Bruckheimer also treated the audience to an extended sneak peak of “F1,” Brad Pitt’s Formula One racing drama premiering in June.

In addition to Hollywood studios and stars boasting their theatrical menus which they believe will lure audiences to cinemas, the annual convention is also a time to discuss current industry debates, like how long movies should stay in theaters and the extent to which studios should get into production with streaming companies.



James Gunn, writer, director, and producer of the upcoming film ‘Superman,’ speaks during the Warner Bros. Pictures presentation at CinemaCon on Monday, April 1, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. (AP)

People

Obituary

Rebuilding lives

Hilton donates \$25K to women

LOS ANGELES, April 2, (AP): There are brief moments when Annisa Faquir forgets that the Little Red Hen Coffee Shop, the Altadena diner her grandmother founded a half century ago, burned down in the Eaton Fire.

“You think, ‘I can go grab something - oh wait, it’s in ashes,’” said Faquir, who has worked at the shop since her mother, Barbara



Hilton

Shay, took over the family business seven years ago.

The women want to rebuild the diner loved by neighbors for its shrimp and grits, catfish, and Shay’s secret house cof-

fee blend. They knew they’d need help, but were surprised when **Paris Hilton** called to offer it to them.

The Little Red Hen Coffee Shop is one of 50 women-owned businesses impacted by the Eaton Fire receiving a recovery grant of up to \$25,000 from Hilton’s nonprofit 11:11 Media Impact and GoFund-Me.org.

“These women are the backbone of their communities,” the reality TV star said in a statement. “Through this powerful partnership, we’re not just helping them rebuild - we’re investing in their futures, their families, and their neighborhoods.”

Faquir said the significant grant and the ease of the process was helpful, especially compared to tougher questioning for smaller grants from other donors who asked “for an arm and a leg.” “They saw us,” she said. “They heard our story.”

Revenue

More than 1,800 businesses were located in the Eaton and Palisades fire zones, according to Los Angeles County’s Economic Development Corporation. They employed 9,600 workers and generated \$1.4 billion in annual sales. The county estimates subsequent losses in economic output, income reductions, and tax revenue will be in the billions.

“Making sure they stay afloat now is supercritical so that we can even talk to them about longterm recovery,” Kelly LoBianco, director of L.A. County’s Department of Economic Opportunity, said of those businesses.

Businesses generally struggle to reopen after catastrophes. In 2023, three-quarters of small businesses were underinsured, according to the insurer Hiscox, and less than half had property insurance.

In the L.A. fires, many business owners also lost their homes. Some are still repaying loans from the COVID-19 pandemic. The county is distributing about \$20 million in emergency grants, but LoBianco said much more will be needed.

After applications flooded in for its own program, 11:11 Media Impact and GoFundMe.org expanded it from 11 to 50 grants. The recipients include childcare centers, bakeries, bookshops, dance studios, and salons.

“Seeing the overwhelming response from women entrepreneurs in need of support showed us how important and urgent the need is to help this community rebuild,” said Hilton.

The money will boost entrepreneurs who worried the Eaton Fire had destroyed their futures, said Lizzy Okoro Davidson, director of the Pasadena Women’s Business Center, which is partnering on the grant program. The money can help pay back-rent after long closures, secure new spaces, and replace equipment.



Val Kilmer poses for a portrait, Jan. 9, 2014, in Nashville, Tenn. (AP)

An actor died from pneumonia

Val Kilmer, ‘Top Gun’ and Batman star, dies at 65

LOS ANGELES, April 2, (AP): Val Kilmer, the brooding, versatile actor who played fan favorite Iceman in “Top Gun,” donned a voluminous cape as Batman in “Batman Forever” and portrayed Jim Morrison in “The Doors,” has died. He was 65.

Kilmer died Tuesday night in Los Angeles, surrounded by family and friends, his daughter, Mercedes Kilmer, said in an email to The Associated Press. The Times was the first to report his death on Tuesday.

Val Kilmer died from pneumonia. He had recovered after a 2014 throat cancer diagnosis that required two tracheotomies.

“I have behaved poorly. I have behaved bravely. I have behaved bizarrely to some. I deny none of this and have no regrets because I have lost and found parts of myself that I never knew existed,” he says toward the end of “Val,” the 2021 documentary on his career. “And I am blessed.”

Kilmer, the youngest actor ever accepted to the prestigious Juilliard School at the time he attended, experienced the ups and downs of fame more dramatically than most. His break came in 1984’s spy spoof “Top Secret!” followed by the comedy “Real Genius” in 1985. Kilmer would later show his comedy chops again in films including “MacGruber” and “Kiss Kiss Bang Bang.”

His movie career hit its zenith in the early 1990s as he made a name for himself as a dashing leading man, starring alongside Kurt Russell and Bill Paxton in 1993’s “Tombstone,” as Elvis’ ghost in “True Romance” and as a bank-robbing demolition expert in Michael Mann’s 1995 film “Heat” with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.

“While working with Val on ‘Heat’ I always marvelled at the range, the brilliant variability within the powerful current of Val’s possessing and expressing character,” director Michael Mann said in a statement Tuesday night.

Actor Josh Brolin, a friend of Kilmer, was among others paying tribute.

“You were a smart, challenging, brave, uber-creative fire-cracker,” Brolin wrote on Instagram. “There’s not a lot left of those.”

Kilmer - who took part in the Method branch of Suzuki arts training - threw himself into parts. When he played Doc Holiday in “Tombstone,” he filled his bed with ice for the final scene to mimic the feeling of dying from tuberculosis. To play Morrison, he wore leather pants all the time, asked castmates and crew to only refer to him as Jim Morrison and blasted The Doors for a year.

That intensity also gave Kilmer a reputation that he was difficult to work with, something he grudgingly agreed with later in life, but always defending himself by emphasizing art over commerce.

“In an unflinching attempt to empower directors, actors and other collaborators to honor the truth and essence of each project, an attempt to breathe Suzukian life into a myriad of Hollywood moments, I had been deemed difficult and alienated the head of every major studio,” he wrote in his memoir, “I’m Your Huckleberry.”

One of his more iconic roles - hotshot pilot Tom “Iceman” Kazansky opposite Tom Cruise - almost didn’t happen. Kilmer was courted by director Tony Scott for “Top Gun” but initially balked. “I didn’t want the part. I didn’t care about the film. The story didn’t interest me,” he wrote in his memoir. He agreed after being promised that his role would improve from the initial script. He would reprise the role in the film’s 2022 sequel, “Top Gun: Maverick.”

One career nadir was playing Batman in Joel Schumacher’s goofy, garish “Batman Forever” with Nicole Kidman and opposite Chris O’Donnell’s Robin - before George Clooney took up the mantle for 1997’s “Batman & Robin” and after Michael Keaton played the Dark Knight in 1989’s “Batman” and 1992’s “Batman Returns.”

Performance

Janet Maslin in The New York Times said Kilmer was “hamstrung by the straight-man aspects of the role,” while Roger Ebert deadpanned that he was a “completely acceptable” substitute for Keaton. Kilmer, who was one and done as Batman, blamed much of his performance on the suit.

“When you’re in it, you can barely move and people have to help you stand up and sit down,” Kilmer said in “Val,” in lines spoken by his son Jack, who voiced the part of his father in the film because of his inability to speak. “You also can’t hear anything and after a while people stop talking to you, it’s very isolating. It was a struggle for me to get a performance past the suit, and it was frustrating until I realized that my role in the film was just to show up and stand where I was told to.”

His next projects were the film version of the 1960s TV series “The Saint” - fussily putting on wigs, accents and glasses - and “The Island of Dr. Moreau” with Marlon Brando, which became one of the decade’s most infamously cursed productions.

David Gregory’s 2014 documentary “Lost Soul: The Doomed Journey of Richard Stanley’s Island of Dr. Moreau,” described a cursed set that included a hurricane, Kilmer bullying director Richard Stanley, the firing of Stanley via fax (who sneaked back on set as an extra with a mask on) and extensive rewrites by Kilmer and Brando. The older actor told the younger at one point: “‘It’s a job now, Val. A lark. We’ll get through it.’ I was as sad as I’ve ever been on a set,” Kilmer wrote in his memoir. In 1996, Entertainment Weekly ran a cover story about

Kilmer titled “The Man Hollywood Loves to Hate.” The directors Schumacher and John Frankenheimer, who finished “The Island of Dr. Moreau,” said he was difficult. Frankenheimer said there were two things he would never do: “Climb Mount Everest and work with Val Kilmer again.”

Other artists came to his defense, like D. J. Caruso, who directed Kilmer in “The Salton Sea” and said the actor simply liked to talk out scenes and enjoyed having a director’s attention.

“Val needs to immerse himself in a character. I think what happened with directors like Frankenheimer and Schumacher is that Val would ask a lot of questions, and a guy like Schumacher would say, ‘You’re Batman! Just go do it,’” Caruso told The New York Times in 2002.

After “The Island of Dr. Moreau,” the movies were smaller, like David Mamet human-trafficking thriller “Spartan”; “Joe the King” in 1999, in which he played a paunchy, abusive alcoholic; and playing the doomed ’70s porn star John Holmes in 2003’s “Wonderland.” He also threw himself into his one-man stage show “Citizen Twain,” in which he played Mark Twain.

“I enjoy the depth and soul the piece has that Twain had for his fellow man and America,” he told Variety in 2018. “And the comedy that’s always so close to the surface, and how valuable his genius is for us today.”

Kilmer spent his formative years in the Chatsworth neighborhood of Los Angeles. He attended Chatsworth High School alongside future Oscar winner Kevin Spacey and future Emmy winner Mare Winningham. At 17, he was the youngest drama student ever admitted at the Juilliard School in 1981.

Shortly after he left for Juilliard, his younger brother, 15-year-old Wesley, suffered an epileptic seizure in the family’s Jacuzzi and died on the way to the hospital. Wesley was an aspiring filmmaker when he died.

“I miss him and miss his things. I have his art up. I like to think about what he would have created. I’m still inspired by him,” Kilmer told the Times.

While still at Juilliard, Kilmer co-wrote and appeared in the play “How It All Began” and later turned down a role in Francis Ford Coppola’s “The Outsiders” for the Broadway play, “Slab Boys,” alongside Kevin Bacon and Sean Penn.

Kilmer published two books of poetry (including “My Edens After Burns”) and was nominated for a Grammy in 2012 for spoken word album for “The Mark of Zorro.” He was also a visual artist and a lifelong Christian Scientist.

He dated Cher, married and divorced actor Joanne Whalley. He is survived by their two children, Mercedes and Jack.

“I have no regrets,” Kilmer told the AP in 2021. “I’ve wit-ness and experienced miracles.”



Angelique Songco, of the Philippines, also known as ‘Mama Ranger,’ (center), is presented an International Women of Courage award by first lady Melania Trump, (left), and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, at an award ceremony, April 1, at the State Department in Washington. (AP)



Investigative journalist Namin Wijedasa, of Sri Lanka, is awarded an International Women of Courage award by first lady Melania Trump, (left), and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, at the State Department in Washington. (AP)



Amat Al-Salam Abdullah Abdo Al-Hajj, of Yemen, (center), is presented an International Women of Courage award by first lady Melania Trump, (left), and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the State Department in Washington. (AP)

Courage is ‘based in love’

Trump recognizes brave women around the world

WASHINGTON, April 2, (AP): Courage is based in love, Melania Trump said Tuesday as she recognized women from around the world for bravery.

“These extraordinary women illuminate the transformative power of love in shaping our world,” the first lady said during a ceremony at the State Department, which created the International Women of Courage Award. “Their journeys remind us that true courage is born from a deep commitment to others, showing the love fuels the call for justice.”

The public appearance was her first in Washington since she sat in the gallery for President Donald Trump’s speech to a joint session of Congress on March 4. Tuesday marked her fifth time speaking at the awards ceremony; she participated every year during the president’s first term.

Melania Trump defined courage as “a strength that is based in love,” and she sought parallels with the diverse group of honorees. She said that, in her own life, “I have harnessed the power of love as a source of strength during challenging times. Love has inspired me to embrace forgiveness, nurture empathy and exhibit bravery in the face of unforeseen obstacles.”

Trump singled out recipient Georgiana Pascu, of Romania, as someone who exemplifies “love in action.” Pascu advocates for the rights of institutionalized children and adults with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, the State

Department said.

“Georgiana is a ‘watchdog’ who defends the dignity of Romanians whose voices cannot be heard,” Trump said, telling the audience that Pascu “fearlessly enters” facilities designated as “care centers,” often dropping in unannounced, to rescue people with disabilities “who are unwittingly held captive.”

“Thanks to Georgiana’s brave work, dozens of offenders have been charged with human trafficking, exploitation and even organized crime,” the first lady said.

The other award recipients are:

- Henriette Da, of Burkina Faso, a human rights advocate.
- Major Velena Iga, of Papua New Guinea, an advocate for combatting violence against women and human trafficking.
- Angelique Songco, of the Philippines, also known as “Mama Ranger,” because she leads a small team of rangers protecting Tubbatara Reefs Natural Park from illegal fishing and poaching.
- Zabib Musa Loro Bakht, of South Sudan, a women’s rights leader.
- Namini Wijedasa, of Sri Lanka, an investigative journalist.
- Amat Al-Salam Al-Hajj, of Yemen, who works to bring international attention to the plight of thousands of abducted and forcibly detained Yemenis.

A group award named for Madeleine Albright, the late former secretary of state, went to female student leaders who protested against violent repression in Bangladesh in July and August of 2024.

Financial wrongdoing

Tony Bennett’s daughters sue brother over ‘estate’ dispute

NEW YORK, April 2, (AP): **Tony Bennett**’s two daughters have filed a new lawsuit against their brother, alleging he illegally enriched himself at their expense against their father’s wishes both before and after the legendary singer’s death in 2023.

Antonia and Johanna Bennett filed the lawsuit Monday in New York against D’Andrea “Danny” Bennett, who was their father’s manager and heads their family trust.

“Since Tony’s death, Johanna and Antonia have discovered that Danny exercised complete and unchecked



Bennett

control over Tony and his financial affairs prior to and following his death through multiple fiduciary and other roles of authority that Danny has abused, and continues to abuse, for his own significant financial gain,” the suit alleges.

It says Danny Bennett took advantage of his father’s diminished capacity late in life due to Alzheimer’s disease to make deals to make millions for himself and his company, including the sale shortly before his death of Tony Bennett’s catalog and his name, likeness and image rights to the brand development firm Iconoclast.

The sisters previously sued their brother in June seeking an accounting of their father’s assets and alleging Danny Bennett had mishandled them. The new suit makes more serious and more specific allegations of wrongdoing.

Celebs, brands, and creators receive top nominations

Lamar, Abrams, Saldana earn Webby Awards nods

NEW YORK, April 2, (AP): Kendrick Lamar, Gracie Abrams, Zoe Saldana and Nutter Butter are among the nominees for this year’s Webby Awards, recognizing the best internet content and creators.

The International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences will announce the nominees on Tuesday, the result of nearly 13,000 entries from over 70 countries. The Associated Press got an early look.

A mullet-filled song about jorts performed by Will Ferrell, Nick Jonas and Jimmy Fallon was nominated for best general music video and film, and it will next face off against Abrams’ 20-minute behind-the-music “The Secret of Us.”

The Generation Alpha phenomenon known as Skibidi Toilet got a nod for the fan multiverse by studio Invisible Narratives, while Donald Duck celebrated his 90th birthday by appearing on “Hot Ones” and earned a nomination for eating spicy chicken wings while steam came out of his mouth.

The category for top video or film comedy pits Jim Gaffigan, The Onion, the makeover series “Very Important People” and humor from Kai Cenat,



From left: Gracie Abrams, Kendrick Lamar and Zoe Saldana are among the nominees for this year’s Webby Awards. (AP)

Kevin Hart and Druski. They face stiff competition from Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman cracking on each other in a “Tonight” show skit.

“New Heights with Jason & Travis Kelce,” which won two Webby awards last year - including People’s Voice Award for best co-hosts - is back, nominated this time for best podcast video series. Saldana’s appearance on the Netflix podcast “Skip Intro” to discuss her role in the film “Emilia Pérez” earned her a Webby nod for best individual podcast interview.

In beauty, Selena Gomez’s Rare Beauty line faces off against Alexis Bittar’s “The Bittarverse,” Byrdie, Retrofête and theSkimm. The language-learning app Duolingo’s parody of “The Bear” with its murderous mascot, Duo, got a nod, too.

Cynthia Erivo was nominated for

an episode of the video series “Celebrity Substitute,” in which she visited a New York City public school to teach elementary students the importance of storytelling. She and Ariana Grande also got nods for their viral “holding space” interview for “Wicked.”

The awards are selected by the academy, while The Webby People’s Voice Award is voted on by fans around the world. Voting for that award is open now until April 17. Winners for all awards will be announced April 22 and will be invited to a ceremony May 12 hosted by Ilana Glazer.

Media companies earning the highest number of nominations are NBCUniversal with 24, MTV Entertainment Studios with 18, CNN and National Geographic with 16 each, and tied with 14 are PBS, The Walt Disney Company and The Washington Post.

Matthew McConaughey’s Super Bowl ad for Uber Eats that uncovered a conspiracy between football and food made the cut in two categories. Kelley Heyer’s often-copied “Apple” dance to the song by Charlie xcx, and Ogilvy’s unhinged commercial for CeraVe with Michael Cera both became eligible for a Webby.

Film



This image released by Bleecker Street shows Naomi Watts in a scene from ‘The Friend.’ (AP)

A heartfelt tribute to grief, love, and a very good boy

Bing the dog is true star of ‘The Friend’

NEW YORK, April 2, (AP): The star of “The Friend” has the loping stride of Robert Mitchum and the droopy, melancholy eyes of Peter Lorre. He has those classic Hollywood features - instantly accessible, forever unknowable - and when he walks down the street with his co-stars, Naomi Watts and Bill Murray, people’s heads turn.

“People would go, ‘Hey, get a load of the blonde,’” Murray says before acting out a double take. “Get a load of The Dog!”

Bing, the harlequin Great Dane of “The Friend,” is the latest in a long line of four-legged big-screen breakout stars. But unlike canine idols before him, Bing is gigantic. Toto would fit in his paw and Asta could comfortably sit on his head. David Siegel, co-director of “The Friend,” estimates Bing has a good 40 pounds (18 kilograms) on Watts. Gentle as he is, Bing looks more like one of those hulking walkers in “Star Wars” than Lassie.

“The Friend,” which opens nationwide in theaters Friday, isn’t your average dog movie. either. Adapted from Sigrid Nunez’s 2018 National Book Award-winning novel, it stars Watts as Iris, a New York author who reluctantly inherits Apollo (Bing), the cherished companion of her late mentor Walter (Murray). Their cramped coexistence is challenged not just by the pet policy of Iris’ building but by Apollo’s own grief, too.

“How creatures find each other - what we share with other humans but

also animals - that’s where the solace comes from,” says Siegel. “We cast Bing to some degree for his countenance, just like we cast actors for their countenance. Does he have a face that can look sad? Does he look happy when he’s happy?”

On a recent spring day, Bing did indeed look happy, if a little worn out. He had spent the day at photo shoots and other media appearances, with his owner, Beverly Klingensmith, shuttling him around Manhattan in a van. Bing’s duties, which included appearances on “The Tonight Show” and “The View,” were arguably more demanding of him than his biped co-stars. In between interviews, he warmly nuzzled a reporter while a grateful publicist compared him, given the pressures of a movie marketing, to an emotional support animal.

“At one of the Q&As, every time he’d move, the audience would go, ‘Awww,’” said Klingensmith. “Bill was like: ‘I told them not to bring out the dog yet.’”

But Murray and Watts have grown accustomed to being upstaged by their co-star. Not only that, as proud “dog people,” they’re delighted by Bing and praise him as not just a good boy but a fine actor. Murray has long maintained he wouldn’t trust anyone that a dog didn’t like.

“Dogs have a pretty good sense of who’s OK,” Murray muses. “I’ve met many thousands of people and there’s a real high number of people I wouldn’t

trust. But as far as dogs, there’s maybe only been, like, three.”

For writer-directors Scott McGeehee and Siegel, the filmmaking duo of “The Deep End” and “What Maisie Knew,” the prominence of the dog in Nunez’s book - a black-and-white Great Dane graces the cover - was both a great hook for the movie and the biggest challenge in making it. When they contacted trainer Bill Berloni, he urged them to consider another breed.

“When you put that dog on the cover of a book that wins the National Book Award, it’s got to be that dog,” says Siegel, laughing. “Bill was like, ‘Can’t it be another dog?’ We were like (holding up imaginary book): ‘Look.’”

Search

An extensive search ultimately led them to an obedience-training club in Des Moines, Iowa. There, they found Bing and Klingensmith, who runs a kennel on a 10-acre property in Newton, Iowa, with her husband. The directors, having already looked coast-to-coast, stopped their search immediately.

“We kind of knew right away,” McGeehee says. “He was a little too young at the time. We thought we were going to be making the movie that spring. Then the pandemic hit. So he aged beautifully right into the role.”

“If you see George Clooney in person, it’s like he attracts light in a special way,” adds McGeehee. “Bing has that.”

As much as Berloni tried to prep Klingensmith on what lay ahead, she acknowledges, while in the midst of a hectic publicity tour, that she didn’t fully realize what she was getting into. But Bing responded well to the filmmaking process. (A representative of the American Humane Society was also present on set.)

“He loves to do things. The days where he had really active behaviors were his favorites,” says Klingensmith. “And what dog doesn’t want to spend 24/7 with their owner?”

Special care was taken to acquaint Bing and Watts - not just to bring them closer but so that Watts would feel comfortable keeping such a powerful animal safe on the streets of New York. A huge amount of “The Friend” unfolds with just the two of them interacting - a testament to both Watts’ subtle, quicksilver powers and to Bing’s expressiveness.

“He was a very curious dog and he did really look at you with attention. I found him a pure delight to work with,” Watts says. “The scene when I break down, if he hears crying, he’s a little spooked. He picks up on everything. He’s like: ‘Is something wrong?’”

Can a dog act? It’s a question that might not have bedeviled philosophers or animal-rights activists, but that anyone watching a movie like “The Friend” is sure to ponder. Murray, who voiced one in Wes Anderson’s “Isle of Dogs,” is an ardent believer.

Variety

LONDON: Soprano **Anna Netrebko** will return to London’s Royal Opera after a six-year absence to open the 2025-26 season in a new production of Puccini’s “Tosca” that starts Jakub Hruša’s tenure as music director.

She is to sing four performances from Sept. 11-21 in a new production by Oliver Mears set in a modern war-torn Rome, the company announced Wednesday. It co-stars Freddie De Tommaso and Gerald Finley.

Netrebko also is to appear in four performances of a revival of Puccini’s “Turandot” from Dec. 15-23 and to give a recital on June 24, 2026.

She last sung at Covent Garden in April 2019 in Verdi’s “La Forza del Destino.” Scheduled appearances in Verdi’s “Nabucco” in January 2022 were canceled because of European travel restrictions.



Netrebko

Netrebko was dropped from future engagements by New York’s Metropolitan Opera shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Met General Manager Peter Gelb had demanded she repudiate Russia President Vladimir Putin.

She has continued to sing at most top houses and made her first U.S. appearance in six years at a Palm Beach Opera recital in February.

Hruša, who succeeds Antonio Pappano, also will conduct the company premiere of Janáček’s “The Makropulos Case” (Nov. 4) and a revival of Britten’s “Peter Grimes” (May 5, 2026). (AP)

LONDON: American authors Elizabeth Strout and Miranda July are among finalists announced Wednesday for the Women’s Prize for Fiction, alongside four debut novelists exploring the search for freedom in different countries and cultures.

Pulitzer Prize winner Strout’s Maine-set mystery novel “Tell Me Everything” and writer-filmmaker July’s “All Fours,” in which a “semi-famous artist” seeks a new life, are shortlisted for the 30,000 pound (\$39,000) prize. It’s open to female English-language writers from any country.

The contenders also include Dutch writer Yael van der Wouden’s postwar story “The Safekeep” and German-born poet Aria Aber’s novel “Good Girl,” about a teenager exploring her dual German-Afghan heritage.

Also on the list are Iran-born writer Sanam Mahlouji’s intergenerational family saga “The Persians,” and “Fundamentally” by Britain’s Nussabab Younis, about an academic trying to rehabilitate women caught up with the Islamic State group. (AP)



Photos from the event.

LuLu Hypermarket marks Autism Day, supports autistic individuals

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait hosted an event to mark World Autism Awareness Day on April 2nd at its Al-Qurain outlet, aiming to raise awareness about autism and lend support to autistic individuals. The event featured a variety of activities, including kids' games and interactive workshops designed specifically for children with autism.

A special highlight of the day was the participation of students from the Conductive Education School - Kuwait for Special Needs, who took part in the event's activities, further emphasizing the importance of inclusion and understanding. The students engaged in various interactive sessions designed to promote social skills and sensory awareness.

Additionally, the event included a kids' shopping activity, where children with autism were given the opportunity to experience shopping in a supportive and friendly environment. The activity was tailored to ensure a positive experience, with staff offering guidance and support as the children navigated the store.

Several products and services that cater to the unique needs of individuals with autism were also showcased, highlighting LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the community.

In a statement on the occasion, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait reiterated its commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, emphasizing the importance of creating a society that is inclusive and supportive of individuals with autism. The event aimed to promote greater understanding of autism and encourage the public to show support for those with autism.

The event was well-received by the community, with many attendees expressing their gratitude to the hypermarket for providing an opportunity to learn more about autism and connect with others in the autistic community. LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait also confirmed that it plans to continue its efforts to support individuals with autism in the future.

CERN plans \$16b collider

Experts unveil plans for a bigger atom smasher to solve mysteries of physics

GENEVA, April 2, (AP): Top minds at the world's largest atom smasher have released a blueprint for a much bigger successor that could vastly improve research into the remaining enigmas of physics.

The plans for the Future Circular Collider - a nearly 91-kilometer (56.5-mile) loop along the French-Swiss border and below Lake Geneva - published late Monday put the finishing details on a project roughly a decade in the making at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

The FCC would carry out high-precision experiments in the mid-2040s to study "known physics" in greater detail, then enter a second phase - planned for 2070 - that would conduct high-energy collisions of protons and heavy ions that would "open the door to the unknown," said Giorgio Chiarelli, a research director at Italy's National Institute of Nuclear Physics.

"History of physics tells that when there is more data, the human ingenuity is able to extract more information than originally expected," Chiarelli, who was not involved in the plans, said in an e-mail.

For roughly a decade, top minds at CERN have been making plans for a successor to the Large Hadron Collider, a network of magnets that accelerate particles through a 27-kilometer (17-mile) underground tunnel and slam them together at velocities approaching the speed of light.

"Ultimately what we would like to do is a collider which will come up with 10 times more energy than what we have today," said Arnaud Marsollier, a CERN spokesman. "When you have more energy, then you can create particles that are heavier."

The blueprint lays out the proposed path, environmental impact, scientific ambitions and project cost. Independent experts will take a look before CERN's two dozen member countries decide in 2028 whether to go forward, starting in the mid-2040s at a cost of some 14 billion Swiss francs (about \$16 billion).

CERN officials tout the promise of scientific discoveries that could drive innovation in fields like cryogenics, superconducting magnets and vacuum technologies that could benefit humankind.

Outside experts point to the promise of learning more about the Higgs boson, the elusive particle, which helped explain how matter formed after the Big Bang.

Work at the particle collider confirmed in 2013 the existence of the Higgs boson - the central piece in a puzzle known as the standard model that helps explain some fundamental forces in the universe.

"This set of reports represents an important milestone in the process, but a full sense of the likelihood of it being brought to fruition will only be known through careful studies by scientists, engineers and others, including politicians who must make difficult decisions at time when uncertainty rules the day," Dave Toback, a professor of physics and astronomy at Texas A&M University, said in an e-mail.



Mike Lamont, director for accelerators and technology, (center left), and Fabiola Gianotti, (center right), director general of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), speak with members of the US House of Representatives in the Large Magnet Facility during a visit to CERN facilities in Meyrin, near Geneva, Switzerland, March 21, 2025. (AP)

Mike Lamont, director for accelerators and technology, (center left), and Fabiola Gianotti, (center right), director general of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), speak with members of the US House of Representatives in the Large Magnet Facility during a visit to CERN facilities in Meyrin, near Geneva, Switzerland, March 21, 2025. (AP)

Funding cuts threaten health, economy, research

Experts warn of Trump's 'assault on science'

SACRAMENTO, United States, April 2, (Xinhua): Nearly 2,000 top scientists issued an urgent warning Monday about what they call the Trump administration's "wholesale assault on US science," saying the actions threaten America's health, economy and global leadership in research.

The scientists, all elected members of the prestigious National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, released an open letter claiming that the Trump administration had moved with "unprecedented speed" since taking office in January, laying off thousands of employees at US science agencies and announcing reforms to research-grant standards that could drastically reduce federal financial support for science.

In this "SOS" to the public, the signatories included Nobel Prize winners who "call on the administration to cease its wholesale assault on U.S. science."

The letter emphasized that the signatories are speaking as individuals - not representing the National Academies or their home institutions. This distinction is important as the National Academies organization has remained silent on the Trump administration's science policies. The signatories represent about 23 percent of the National Academies' full membership.

According to the letter, the administration is "destabilizing this enterprise by gutting funding for research, firing thousands of scientists, removing public access to scientific data, and pressuring researchers to alter or abandon their work on ideological grounds." One of the most controversial moves came on Feb. 7, when the Trump administration announced a National Institutes of Health policy that would slash billions of dollars of funding annually for U.S. universities, hospitals and other research institutions.

Measles resurgence raises concerns in US

Measles can ravage immune system, brain, causing lasting damage: expert

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

By Peter Kasson

Georgia Institute of Technology

The measles outbreak that began in west Texas in late January 2025 continues to grow, with 400 confirmed cases in Texas and more than 50 in New Mexico and Oklahoma as of March 28.

Public health experts believe the numbers are much higher, however, and some worry about a bigger resurgence of the disease in the US. In the past two weeks, health officials have identified potential measles exposures in association with planes, trains and automobiles, including at Washington Dulles International Airport and on an Amtrak train from New York City to Washington, D.C. - as well as at health care facilities where the infected people sought medical attention.

Measles infections can be extremely serious. So far in 2025, 14% of the people who got measles had to be hospitalized. Last year, that number was 40%. Measles can damage the lungs and immune system, and also inflict permanent brain damage. Three in 1,000 people who get the disease die. But because measles vaccination programs in the US over the past 60 years have been highly successful, few Americans under 50 have experienced measles directly, making it easy to think of the infection as a mere childhood rash with fever.

As a biologist who studies how viruses infect and kill cells and tissues, I believe it is important for people to understand how dangerous a measles infection can be.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases on the planet. One person who has it will infect nine out of 10 people nearby if those people are unvaccinated. A two-dose regimen of



Matt Caldwell, (left), a Lubbock Fire Department official, administers a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to Clair May, 61, at the Lubbock Health Department, Feb. 26, 2025, in Lubbock, Texas. (AP)

the vaccine, however, is 97% effective at preventing measles.

When the measles virus infects a person, it binds to specific proteins on the surface of cells. It then inserts its genome and replicates, destroying the cells in the process. This first happens in the upper respiratory tract and the lungs, where the virus can damage the person's ability to breathe well. In both places, the virus also infects immune cells that carry it to the lymph nodes, and from there, throughout the body.

What generally lands people with measles in the hospital is the disease's effects on the lungs. As the virus destroys lung cells, patients can develop viral pneumonia, which is characterized by severe coughing and difficulty breathing. Measles pneumonia afflicts about 1 in 20 children who get measles and is the most common cause of death from measles in young children.

The virus can directly invade the nervous system and also damage it by causing inflammation. Measles can cause acute brain damage in two different ways: a direct infection of the brain that occurs in roughly 1 in 1,000 people, or inflammation of the brain two to 30 days after infection that occurs with the same frequency. Children who survive these events can have permanent brain damage and impairments such as blindness and hearing loss.

An especially alarming but still poorly understood effect of measles infection is that it can reduce the immune system's ability to recognize pathogens it has previously encountered. Researchers had long suspected that children who get the measles vaccine also tend to have better immunity to other diseases, but they were not sure why. A study published in 2019 found that having a measles infection destroyed between 11% and 75% of their antibodies, leaving them vulnerable to many of the infections to which they previously had immunity. This effect, called immune amnesia, lasts until people are reinfected or revaccinated against each disease their immune system forgot.

Occasionally, the virus can lie undetected in the brain of a person who recovered from measles and reactivate typically seven to 10 years later. (AP)

Half of Aussie teens have chronic conditions

SYDNEY, April 2, (Xinhua): Nearly one in two Australian teenagers is living with a chronic disease or developmental condition, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism, said a new study.

The study was published online on Tuesday in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, the official journal of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA). As the first of its kind in Australia, it surveyed over 5,000 adolescents, linking these conditions to poor lifestyle habits, unhealthy diets, and mental health issues.

Lead author Bridie Osman from the University of Sydney's Matilda Center described the findings as a wake-up call to prioritize the health of young people.

"They can hinder a teenager's ability to attend school or sports and can have social and developmental implications," Osman said, adding some may also contribute to long-term health complications.

The most common chronic illnesses identified were hay fever, about 23 percent, and asthma, about 15 percent, while ADHD was the most prevalent developmental condition, affecting 9 percent of participants, said the study.

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Hosts lead the 3-match series 2-0

New Zealand beats Pakistan by 84 runs

HAMILTON, New Zealand, April 2, (AP): Ben Sears took 5-59 as New Zealand bowled out Pakistan for 208 to win the second one-day cricket international by 84 runs, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in three-match series.

Faheem Ashraf top-scored for Pakistan with 73 and put on 60 for the ninth wicket with Naseem Shah, who made 51. Both posted their maiden ODI half centuries as Pakistan was dismissed in 41.2 overs.

Will O'Rourke softened up the Pakistan batters with an outstanding opening spell of 1-8 from six overs on a lively pitch at Seddon Park.

He twice hit Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan, once on the top hand and once on the biceps, and he later hit Haris Rauf on the helmet with a searing bouncer. Rauf retired hurt after failing a concussion test and was replaced by Naseem.

"We didn't do well as a batting group because the start of the batting we didn't utilize the swing and New Zealand bowled very well," Rizwan

said. "Later on Faheem and Naseem batted very well on a disappointing day for us."

Jacob Duffy and Sears reaped the rewards. Duffy took 3-35 and Sears snared a five-wicket haul on his ODI debut.

Earlier, Mitch Hay was left stranded on 99 as New Zealand made 292-8 after being sent in. Hay hit 22 runs from New Zealand's final over, including two sixes and two fours, as he chased a maiden ODI century.

Wasim took 1-15 and Sufiyan took 2-29, bowling tandem seven-over spells which seemed to have limited New Zealand's total after it was 97-2 at the end of the 15th over. But Hay helped New Zealand to a highly competitive score, reaching his half century from 61 balls, then adding 49 from 17 deliveries.

New Zealand started well and the new-look opening partnership of Rhys Mariu, who made 18 in his first ODI, and Nick Kelly, who made 31 in his second, put on 54. Daryl Mitchell (18) kept up the momentum until wickets began to fall and

run-scoring became increasingly difficult.

Newcomer Muhammad Abbas, whose 50 from 24 balls in he ODI series opener was the fastest half century on debut in ODI history, produced a contrasting innings notable for its slowness. He made 41 from 66 balls.

Pakistan struggled even more against New Zealand's four-pronged pace attack, losing Abdullah Shafique, Imam-ul-Haq and Babar Azam with only nine runs on the board. Rizwan battled courageously against O'Rourke's pace but made only 5 runs from 27 balls.

"It's challenging conditions here," Rizwan said. "If you look at their bowlers, they get swing and bounce which is different from the Asian conditions. But we don't make excuses."

New Zealand won the first match at Napier by 73 runs. The third match is scheduled for Saturday at Mount Maunganui. New Zealand won the preceding Twenty20 series 4-1.

Iyer's unbeaten half-century helps Punjab beat Lucknow



Punjab Kings' Prabhsimran Singh plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Kings climb to second

LUCKNOW, India, April 2, (AP): Shreyas Iyer hit his second straight half-century for the Punjab Kings in an eight-wicket win over the Lucknow Super Giants in the Indian Premier League.

The Punjab captain scored 52 not out off 30 balls, including three fours and four sixes, helping his team to victory with 22 balls to spare.

Punjab finished with 177-2 in 16.2 overs, after Lucknow was restricted to 171-7 in 20 overs. Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh picked 3-43 for the Kings.

The chase was also made easier by opener Prabhsimran Singh's 69 off 34 balls, including nine fours and three sixes.

Impact player Nehal Wadhwa scored 43 not out off 25 balls, hitting four sixes as well, and put on 67 off 37 balls with Iyer to wrap up the chase in whirlwind fashion for Punjab.

Punjab climbed to second in the points' table behind Royal Chal-



Punjab Kings' Arshdeep Singh, right, celebrates the dismissal of Lucknow Super Giants' Mitchell Marsh during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

lengers Bengaluru on run-rate. Lucknow is sixth.

Put into bat, Lucknow suffered early losses - Mitchell Marsh was out caught off Singh for a golden duck.

Skipper Rishabh Pant's lean patch continued as he was caught for two runs - trying a wild swing

off Glenn Maxwell.

In between, Aiden Markram (28) and Nicholas Pooran stitched together 31 off 19 balls, before Markram was castled by Lockie Ferguson.

Pooran and Ayush Badoni then put on 54 off 40 balls to rescue the innings from 35-3 in the fifth over.

Club America draws 0-0 with Cruz Azul

Galaxy, Tigres tie in 1st leg of Champions Cup quarters



Luka Romero of Mexico's Cruz Azul, right, and Israel Reyes of Mexico's America vie for the ball during a CONCACAF Champions Cup first leg quarterfinal soccer match in Mexico City. (AP)

CARSON, Calif., April 2, (AP): John McCarthy made four saves while the LA Galaxy and Tigres UANL played to a 0-0 draw Tuesday night in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal matchup.

Nahuel Guzmán made two saves in the second half for Tigres, but neither team managed much offensively on a cold, windy night south of downtown Los Angeles.

The teams meet for the second leg of the quarterfinal April 8 at Tigres' Estadio Universitario stadium outside Monterrey, Mexico.

The Galaxy didn't get a shot on target in the first half, but McCarthy made three saves to keep Tigres scoreless as well. He made another save in the 84th minute, stopping Ozziel Herrera from 10 yards away.

In the clubs' first meeting in a competition, the Galaxy couldn't break through offensively despite the presence of Joseph Paintsil, a key component of their MLS Cup championship run last season. The physical Ghanaian winger made his season debut last weekend against Orlando after injuring his quadriceps during the preseason.

Galaxy captain Maya Yoshida left in the 31st minute after the defender apparently injured his left leg.

Club America had to settle for a 0-0 draw against crosstown rival Cruz Azul in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal series.

Playing at home in the Estadio de los Deportes, Club America had the

best scoring chances, including one by Alejandro Zendejas in the second half.

The return game will be played next Tuesday at the Olympic Stadium, with the winner advancing to a semifinal against either Tigres or L.A. Galaxy.

In the other quarterfinals, Inter Miami faces Los Angeles FC and Pumas takes on Vancouver Whitecaps.

Club America won the last of its CONCACAF record seven titles in 2016, the last year it reached the Club World Cup. Cruz Azul is tied with Pachuca for second place in the region with six titles each.

Even if it doesn't win this tournament, Club America might have a chance to return to a Club World Cup.

FIFA has announced a plan for a playoff for a vacant spot between Club America and Los Angeles FC - depending on the outcome of Mexican club Leon's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport after it was kicked out for breaching the tournament's rules on multi-club ownership.

On Tuesday, the Aguilas had their best chance to score in the 46th when Zendejas dragged a shot wide to the right post. A couple of minutes later, Diego Valdes's shot was sent away by Colombian goalkeeper Kevin Mier.

Cruz Azul's best opportunity was in the 57th, with Angel Sepulveda's close-range header was deflected by goalkeeper Luis Malagón.

Cano fires Fluminense to victory

Racing makes winning start in Copa Libertadores

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 2, (Xinhua): Racing completed an impressive night for Argentine clubs with a 3-0 away win over Brazilian side Fortaleza in their Copa Libertadores group stage opener.

Maximiliano Salas gave Racing an early lead before Agustin Almendra and Santiago Sosa added second-half goals at the Castelao stadium in northeastern Brazil.

Earlier, fellow Argentine side Estudiantes eased to a 2-0 victory over Carabobo in Venezuela thanks to goals from Santiago Nunez and Santiago Ascacibar either side of halftime.

The host was forced to play the last half hour with only 10 men after Edson Tortolero was shown a straight red card for a rash challenge on Lucas Piovli.

In Asuncion, Argentine striker Jonathan Torres scored a hat-trick as Paraguay's Cerro Porteno won 4-2 at home to Bolivar of Bolivia. Jorge Morel was also on target for the host while Ramiro Vaca netted twice for Bolivar.

Meanwhile, Chile's Colo-Colo recovered from two goals down to earn a 3-3 away draw with Colombian outfit Atletico Bucaramanga. Marcelo Correa scored twice for Colo-Colo while Mauricio Isla was

also on target for the visitor.

Kevin Londono, Luciano Pons and Carlos Henao were on the scoresheet for Atletico Bucaramanga.

□ □ □

Veteran Argentine striker German Cano netted a first-half goal as Fluminense edged to a 1-0 away victory over Once Caldas in their Copa Sudamericana group stage opener.

Cano gave the Brazilian team the lead in the 31st minute with a looping 15-yard header while running away from the goal following Jhon Arias' cross.

The Colombian outfit had several chances to equalize in the second half but was denied by Fluminense goalkeeper Fabio, who made six saves.

Meanwhile, Victor Abrego and Diego Diellos scored second-half goals as Bolivia's Nacional Potosi registered a 2-0 home victory over Argentine club Independiente.

In Montevideo, defender Gustavo Vargas struck in the 91st minute as Paraguay's Guaraní salvaged a 3-3 draw with Boston River.

Elsewhere, Union Santa Fe won 1-0 at home to Cruzeiro, Caracas FC prevailed 2-1 at Deportes Iquique, and Cienciano was held to a goalless home draw by Atletico Mineiro.



Gabriel Neves of Argentina's Estudiantes de La Plata, left, and Carlos Ramos of Venezuela Carabobo FC jump for the ball during a Copa Libertadores Group A soccer match at Misael Delgado stadium in Valencia, Venezuela. (AP)

Experts involved in Maradona's autopsy testify

Argentine icon had an abnormally large heart

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, April 2, (AP): Experts involved in Diego Maradona's autopsy testified on Tuesday at the trial of seven health professionals accused of negligent homicide that the Argentine soccer star had an abnormally large heart, suffered from cirrhosis, and showed no traces of alcohol or drugs at the time of his death.

Forensic expert Alejandro Ezequiel Vega told the court that Maradona's heart was "enlarged" and weighed about 503 grams, when the average weight is between 250 and 300 grams.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the World Cup title in 1986, died on Nov. 25, 2020. He was 60.

Vega explained that the examination of

Maradona's heart showed that the former star suffered from "long-standing ischemia," with "lack of blood flow and oxygen."

The autopsy concluded that Maradona died of acute pulmonary edema secondary to congestive heart failure.

Maradona died in a house on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, days after undergoing surgery for a hematoma that formed between his skull and brain.

According to the prosecution, the seven professionals charged in the case - a neurosurgeon, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, doctors, and nurses - who were caring for the former soccer great failed to provide adequate care, which may have

led to his death.

During the testimony, forensic expert Ezequiel Gustavo Ventosi stated that the blood and urine samples taken from Maradona showed no traces of alcohol or drugs.

Meanwhile, Silvana De Piero, from the same police task force, said that the liver analysis detected "conditions compatible with cirrhosis," and that the kidney "had altered function and lacked a good blood supply to carry oxygen."

Among those on trial is Leopoldo Luque, Maradona's personal physician during the last four years of his life; and psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov, who prescribed the medication Maradona took until the time of his death.

Warriors move past Grizzlies into fifth place

Timberwolves weather 61-point night by Jokic

DENVER, April 2, (AP): Nickeil Alexander-Walker hit two of three free throws with 0.1 seconds remaining and the Minnesota Timberwolves overcame a career-best 61-point performance from Nikola Jokic to outlast the Denver Nuggets 140-139 in double overtime on Tuesday night.

The final play concluded a wild sequence as Russell Westbrook stole the ball on one end in the closing seconds, missed a layup and then fouled Alexander-Walker in the corner. The Timberwolves guard made two and missed the third one on purpose.

Anthony Edwards led Minnesota with 31 points.

Jokic's 61 points were the most by a player in the NBA this season. He also had 10 rebounds and 10 assists as he played 52 minutes, 38 seconds. He didn't leave the floor after halftime.

Jokic hit two free throws with 13.9 seconds remaining to tie it at 112 in regulation. He knocked in a floater

with 7.3 seconds left to knot it up at 125 in the first overtime.

The game had a playoff intensity and featured 21 lead changes. The Timberwolves have now won six straight over the Nuggets.

Warriors 134, Grizzlies 125

In Memphis, Stephen Curry had 52 points, including 12 3-pointers, as Golden State held on for a victory over Memphis.

Curry was 16 of 31 from the field, making 12 of his 20 shots from distance, the dozen 3-pointers matching his season high. Jimmy Butler scored 27 points, and Draymond Green had 13 points, 10 rebounds and 12 assists.

The victory moved the Warriors past Memphis into fifth place in the Western Conference, and benefitted in two areas. With the victory, Golden State won the season series 3-1, in essence giving them a two-game lead over the



Minnesota Timberwolves guard Nickeil Alexander-Walker (9) drives past Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (15) in the second overtime of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

Grizzlies in the standings. Curry connected on his first five

shot, including four 3-pointers, was 11 of 16 by halftime, including 8 of 10 from distance. His 32 points in the first half gave the Warriors a lead, but they had to hold on for the victory..

Bucks 133, Suns 123

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 37 points and Milwaukee relied on a team-record shooting performance to snap a four-game skid by winning over slumping and short-handed Phoenix.

The Bucks shot 68.9% (51 of 73) from the floor to set a franchise record for field-goal percentage. The previous record was 66.7% on Dec. 15, 1985, against Sacramento.

Magic 116, Spurs 105

In San Antonio, Paolo Banchero had 24 points and 10 rebounds, Franz Wagner added 24 points and Orlando rallied to beat San Antonio.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 23 points as the Magic won for the fifth

time in seven games. Orlando (37-40) moved ahead of Atlanta (36-39) and into seventh place in the Eastern Conference.

Harrison Barnes scored 24 points for San Antonio, which lost its fifth straight. Julian Champagnie scored 19 points, Stephon Castle 16 and Chris Paul 10.

Orlando outscored San Antonio 37-21 in the final quarter after trailing much of the game.

Trail Blazers 127, Hawks 113

In Atlanta, Shaedon Sharpe had 33 points and 10 rebounds and Deni Avdija finished with 32 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Atlanta Hawks.

Toumani Camara scored 18 points and Donovan Clingan and Dalano Banton added 11 points apiece as Portland snapped a four-game skid.

Trae Young had 29 points and 15 assists for Atlanta. Dyson Daniels had

22 points and 10 rebounds, Vit Krejci scored 13 points and Onyeka Okongwu 12 in the loss.

Knicks 105, 76ers 91

In New York, OG Anunoby scored 27 points and New York beat Philadelphia, sending the 76ers to their ninth straight loss.

Landry Shamet added a season-high 20 points with six 3-pointers for the Knicks, who won their third straight. Mitchell Robinson had 14 points and 14 rebounds on his 27th birthday in his second start of the season.

Bulls 137, Raptors 118

In Chicago, Coby White scored 28 points, Talen Horton Tucker had 27 points and Chicago locked in a spot in the Eastern Conference play-in tournament with a win over Toronto.

Nikola Vucevic shot 9 for 12, including 2 for 3 from 3-point range to finish with 22 points, while adding 10 rebounds and seven assists.

Arsenal's Saka returns with a bang, Forest Champs League hopes rise

Wolves climb away from relegation zone

LONDON, April 2, (AP): Bukayo Saka stood with his arms outstretched and a wide, cheeky grin on his face as he took in the acclaim of the Arsenal fans.

It was like he'd never been away.

On his first appearance after more than three months out injured, the England winger scored what proved to be the clinching goal in Arsenal's 2-1 win over Fulham.

Saka - Arsenal's star player and easily its most popular - entered as a substitute in the 66th minute to a huge ovation after his long absence because of a serious hamstring problem. Within seven minutes, he was being cheered again after nodding home Arsenal's second at Emirates Stadium.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said the supporters' thunderous reception of Saka showed how much "people love him and missed him."

"He lifted the stadium," Arteta said, while Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice welcomed back "one of the best wingers in the world."

"He attacks the box and sniffs the goal," Rice said. "With Bukayo back, it's a real boost."

Mikel Merino scored the 37th-minute opener for second-place Arsenal, which requires an unlikely collapse by Liverpool if the London club is to capture its first league title since 2004.

Arsenal stayed four points clear of third-place Nottingham Forest, which beat Manchester United 1-0 thanks to a brilliant solo goal by Anthony Elanga - a former United player - to close in on a remarkable qualification for the Champions League.

Forest, which was battling relegation last season, is 10 points clear of sixth-place Newcastle. The top five are likely to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Saka, who has been sidelined since sustaining his injury on Dec. 21 in a league match at Crystal Palace, is back in time to face Real Madrid in the Champions League quarterfinals starting next week.

Whether Gabriel Magalhaes will be available for Arsenal against the European champions remains to be seen. The Brazil center-back went off with an apparent hamstring injury in the 16th minute against Fulham.



Arsenal's Myles Lewis-Skelly, left, duels for the ball with Fulham's Sasa Lukic during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Fulham at Emirates stadium in London. (AP)

"I hope he's OK because he's been arguably our best player this season," Rice said, "and we need him for big matches and big occasions."

Rodrigo Muniz grabbed a stoppage-time consolation goal for Fulham.

Elanga showed Man United what it is missing with one of the goals of the season.

The Sweden winger got hold of possession 20 meters inside his own half in the fifth minute and set off on a run directly toward United's goal, first shrugging off backtracking opponent Alejandro Garnacho and then entering the penalty area before shooting left-footed into the bottom corner.

Elanga, who left Malmo at age 11 to move to Manchester with his mother and sisters and was soon recommended to United, celebrated in muted fashion against the team that brought him into the pro ranks before selling him to Forest in 2023.

"I appreciate Manchester United so much as I learned a lot there," Elanga said. "I am enjoying my football (at Forest), and I want to keep on going."

Forest captain Ryan Yates said El-



Nottingham Forest's Morgan Gibbs-White, left, and Manchester United's Leny Yoro battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Nottingham Forest and Manchester United at the City Ground, Nottingham, England. (AP)

anga was a "dream" for his teammates. "Especially us sitting in that low-block - you can give him the ball and he does the rest," Yates said.

He is now a key player in Forest's unlikely march toward Champions League qualification for the first time. It won't be the team's first time in Europe's top competition, of course - Forest was famously the European Cup winner in 1979 and '80 under Brian Clough.

United substitute Harry Maguire had an effort cleared off the line by Forest defender Murillo in one of the last kicks of the game in a dramatic finish at the City Ground.

United stayed marooned in 13th place in what is set to be its worst Premier League finish.

"We should have won this game, not even drawn," said United manager Ruben Amorim, whose team had 24 shots, "but in the end, we have lost three points."

In the night's other game, Wolverhampton beat West Ham 1-0 thanks to Jorgen Strand Larsen's 21st-minute goal to push further clear of relegation danger.

Wolves stayed in fourth-to-last place but moved 12 points clear of the bottom three.

PSG survives Dunkerque scare to reach Cup final

PARIS, April 2, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain avoided a huge upset when it rallied from two goals down to beat second-tier Dunkerque 4-2 and reach the French Cup final.

It seemed a mismatch between unbeaten Ligue 1 leader PSG and Dunkerque, which is fifth in Ligue 2. But PSG's fourth goal only came deep into stoppage time and on the counterattack with Dunkerque pushing hard for an equalizer.

Dunkerque took confidence from knocking out top-tier sides Auxerre, Lille and Brest in previous rounds and started strongly against a PSG team that has given away careless goals this season, just like in previous years.

Dunkerque's first goal came after seven minutes when a free kick from the left was flicked on to the back post, with center half Vincent Sasso left unmarked to score.

The second came after 27 minutes and made bad viewing for PSG goalkeeper Matvei Safonov and his defense.

A routine long kick from the goalkeeper was headed on by Gaëtan Courtet, who beat PSG captain Marquinhos in the air, and Saudia Arabian midfielder Muhanad Al-Saad latched onto the ball and finished confidently.

PSG top scorer Ousmane Dembélé made it 2-1 just before the break and the equalizer came shortly after when Marquinhos headed in Dembélé's cross following a corner. Television replays showed the ball hitting Marquinhos' back before going out and not a Dunkerque player.

"The frustrating thing is that it was never a corner," Dunkerque captain Opa Sangante said. "It was the turning point of the match."

Désiré Doué's deflected strike made it 3-2 and Dembélé sprinted through to complete the scoring with his 32nd goal of the season.

The final is on May 24.

PSG is set to repeat its double from last season and can clinch a record-extending 13th Ligue 1 title on Saturday.

Ronaldo urges Brazil to chase Pep

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 2, (Xinhua): Former Brazil striker Ronaldo has urged the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) to pursue Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola for the national team's vacant manager's post.

Guardiola has repeatedly denied speculation linking him to the Selecao, and in November last year signed a two-year contract extension that ties him to Manchester City until 2027.

But Ronaldo called on the CBF not to give up on the 54-year-old Spaniard, who is widely regarded as one of the greatest managers of all time.

"I would try, but it really should be done much faster than the CBF is doing," Ronaldo told Brazil's Band TV.

"In the following order I would aim for Guardiola, Jorge Jesus and Abel Ferreira," he said, adding that former Gremio manager Renato Gauchao should also be considered.

"If none of them works out, I would have a plan to bring in Renato Gauchao, who I think could

provide an urgent solution until the World Cup. He is the type of guy who could win over the group very easily and change the [current] situation." Brazil has been without a manager since last Friday, when Dorival Junior was sacked in the wake of the team's 4-1 defeat to Argentina in a World Cup qualifier.

The five-time World Cup winner is currently fourth in the 10-team South American zone qualifying standings, 10 points behind leader Argentina.

Ronaldo also criticized the CBF's pathway for coaches, saying the existing national training program was too small for a country of Brazil's size.

"Brazilian football is desperately asking for help so that there are more coaches coming through the ranks," he said. "The current academy course is not big enough. It needs to be multiplied across 27 states (26 states and the federal district) so that we can better train our young people."

'We made our dream come true'

Bielefeld stuns holder Leverkusen to book historic German Cup final spot

BERLIN, April 2, (Agencies): Third-division side Arminia Bielefeld pulled off a historic upset on Tuesday, rallying to defeat defending champion Bayer Leverkusen 2-1 and secure its first-ever German Cup final berth.

Leverkusen appeared in control early when Jonathan Tah volleyed home Amine Adli's 17th-minute corner at the back post. Bielefeld, however, refused to buckle. Marius Worl pounced on a loose ball just three minutes later, slotting calmly past goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky to level the match.

The underdog struck again on the stroke of halftime. Louis Opplie's whipped free kick found Maximilian Grosser at the far post, whose clinical volley sent the home crowd into raptures.

Leverkusen introduced forwards Victor Boniface and Patrik Schick after the break but struggled to break down a resolute Bielefeld defense. Goalkeeper Jonas Kersken preserved the lead with a fingertip save to deny Boniface's header, while Schick's late effort agonizingly grazed the post.

"We are simply proud of the team," said Arminia Bielefeld head



Leverkusen's Piero Hincapié, left, and Bielefeld's Noah Sarenren Bazee fight for the ball during the German soccer cup, DFB Pokal, semifinal soccer match between Arminia Bielefeld and Bayer Leverkusen in Bielefeld, Germany. (AP)

coach Mitch Kniat. "We made our dream come true by reaching the final in Berlin. We defended with passion, and it was great to take the lead just before the break. All in all, it's a well-deserved win." Leverkusen midfielder Robert Andrich conceded: "It is very hard to say what exactly went wrong to-

day. We have to be honest - Bielefeld deserved to be in the final. We just couldn't find a way through up front."

St. Pauli supporters have raised over 27 million euros (29.1 million) for a majority stake in the club's stadium after taking part in German soccer's first fan cooperative.

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NEWS



Punjab Kings' captain Shreyas Iyer plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. Kings won by eight wickets. (AP) - See Page 14

Sports

Madrid advances to Copa del Rey final

Rüdiger breaks Sociedad heart

MADRID, April 2, (AP): Real Madrid came close to being eliminated at home again by Real Sociedad in the Copa del Rey but prevailed to reach its second final in three seasons.

Antonio Rüdiger scored the decisive goal in extra time at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to allow the Spanish powerhouse to advance 5-4 on aggregate score.

Five years ago, Sociedad stunned the Bernabeu with a 4-3 victory in the quarterfinals, putting the Basque Country Club on track for the title that season.

"Sociedad played very well; it's always difficult against them," Rüdiger said. "But this is Real Madrid, and we must keep fighting until the end. We are in another final, and we will win it."

Madrid will play the April 26 final in Seville.

Madrid beat Osasuna to win its 20th Copa title in 2023. Sociedad won its third in 2020 when it beat Basque rival Athletic Bilbao.

Carlo Ancelotti's team had won the first leg 1-0 in February, but Sociedad took the second leg 4-3 after Mikel Oyarzabal's stoppage-time goal in regulation, when both teams scored twice after the 80th minute.

Rüdiger's extra-time goal came with a header off a corner kick taken by Arda Güler in the 115th.

The visitors had opened the scoring with Ander Barrenetxea in the 16th before Endrick equalized with a nice flick over Sociedad goalkeeper Álex Remiro in the 30th.

Sociedad moved ahead with an own-goal by David Alaba in the 72nd, and Oyarzabal added to the lead in the 80th. Madrid rallied with Jude Bellingham in the 82nd and Aurélien Tchouaméni in the 86th.

Madrid was minutes away from advancing when Oyarzabal scored with a header three minutes into stoppage time to extend the match.



Real Madrid's Federico Valverde, left, and Real Sociedad's Luka Sucic jump for the ball during the Spanish Copa del Rey semifinal second leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Real Sociedad in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Kuwait Club's push for the league title continues against Al-Tadamon

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: The final round of the Zain Premier League kicks off today with a match between Kuwait Club and Al-Tadamon at 6:35 pm at Jaber Al-Mubarak Stadium, marking the start of the top six teams' championship league.

The round will continue tomorrow with a matchup between Al-Qadsia and Al-Salmiya, and conclude on Friday with Al-Arabi facing Al-Fahaheel.

This round follows a single round format, with the title race narrowed down to Kuwait Club (47 points) and Al-Arabi (45 points), while Al-Qadsia holds third place with 35 points. Al-Salmiya is in fourth with 29 points, followed by Al-Fahaheel (28 points), and Al-Nasr (20 points).

Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi have been the league leaders in previous rounds, but the "Green" team faltered in the last round with a 1-1 draw against Al-Salmiya. This allowed Kuwait Club to take the top spot following a 3-1 win over Al-Tadamon.

Kuwait Club is eager to extend its dominance over Al-Tadamon, having previously defeated it 3-0 in the first division and eliminated



Al-Tadamon player tackles Kuwait Club player during Zain Premier League match.

it 5-0 in the Crown Prince Cup preliminary round.

The "Whites" know that every point is crucial in these final matches, especially with other clubs having nothing left to lose and looking to make an impact before the season ends. Kuwait Club is also aware that Al-Tadamon, is a tough opponent, having led in their previous encounter before Kuwait Club made a strong comeback in the second half.

Kuwait Club's Montenegrin coach, Nebojsa Jovovic, acknowl-

edges the importance of tonight's three points to keep the team's momentum toward securing a fourth consecutive title and its 20th overall.

On the other hand, Al-Tadamon is hoping to improve its standing and end its losing streak against Kuwait Club. Under the guidance of Jamal Al-Qabandi, the team is also focused on preparing for the Amir's Cup, which will begin with a match against Al-Fahaheel on April 12 in the competition's preliminary round.

Al-Qurain eyes revenge against Kazma

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 2: Kazma Club's first basketball team faces a challenging matchup against Al-Qurain at 7:30 pm today in the 17th round of the "Merged" League at the Basketball Association Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The game will be preceded by a 5:00 pm encounter between Al-Sulaibikhat and Al-Yarmouk, also at the same venue.

Al-Sulaibikhat enters today's match with renewed hopes of securing a semi-final spot following its victory over Al-Qadsia in the previous round. Their focus is now firmly on collecting as many points as possible. Coach Fahad Barjas aims to guide his team to a straight-forward win over Al-Yarmouk, in preparation for the more challenging match against Al-Qurain next Monday. In contrast, Al-Yarmouk, having endured several recent defeats—including a heavy 49-118 loss to Kazma—enters today's game with no pressure and little to lose.

The second game of the day is expected to be the most significant and closely contested, as Kazma and Al-Qurain are tied on 23 points each. Both teams have impressed this season and feature a number of standout players, both local and professional. Kazma is relying on its captain,



Players fighting for the ball.

Ahmed Al-Balushi, Youssef Burhama, the Al-Saho brothers—Abdulrahman and Saho—and Abdullah Ibrahim, along with American professionals Dwayne Jackson and Jackson. Meanwhile, Al-Qurain's coach, Yahya Kuleib, is well aware of his team's capabilities and those of its opponent. He's eager for another major victory following its historic 96-80 win over Al-Qadsia in mid-March. Al-Qurain boasts several promising young talents, including the standout Adel Al-Saeed. In their first-round match, Kazma triumphed 101-89.

Prosecutors seek a 4-year prison sentence

Tax evasion trial for Real's Ancelotti opens in Spain

Prosecutors disagree.

"I already paid the fine, the money is with them, and now the lawyers are talking to try to find a solution," Ancelotti said in March 2024. "Let's see what the judge says."

The 65-year-old Ancelotti is one of soccer's most successful

coaches. He has won the Champions League a record five times, three with Madrid and twice with AC Milan, and is the only coach to have won domestic league titles in England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France.

He coached Madrid from 2013-15 before starting his current stint

in 2021.

Ancelotti is the latest in a string of major soccer profiles to face a crackdown by Spanish authorities over unpaid taxes, although none have actually been sent to prison so far.

Former Madrid coach Jose Mourinho received a one-year suspended sentence after reaching a guilty plea for tax fraud in 2019. Star players Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo - among others - have also been found guilty of tax fraud in Spain. Similar to Ancelotti, Mourinho, Ronaldo and Messi were also accused of using shell companies outside Spain to hide revenue from image rights.

Ronaldo agreed to pay a fine of nearly 19 million euros (then \$21.6 million) in 2019, and was handed a two-year suspended sentence that he didn't have to serve.

Messi and his father were found guilty of defrauding tax authorities of 4.1 million euros (then \$4.6 million) but also avoided a jail sentence by paying hefty fines.

In Spain a judge can suspend a sentence of less than two years for first-time offenders.

Many of those accused of fraud reached deals with the tax authorities and accepted guilt to reduce their sentences.



Real Madrid's head coach Carlo Ancelotti, center, arrives at the National Court in Madrid, Spain. (AP)