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## Opinion

### Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

## Electricity in Kuwait is like camels dying of thirst while carrying water

WHEN the poet Tarafa Ibn Al-Abd, born in 543 AD, wrote: "Like camels in the desert dying of thirst while carrying water on their backs", he was perhaps referring to a scenario much like Kuwait's current situation in terms of shortage of not only in electricity but also in other sectors. The country, despite carrying many solutions on its back, suffers from a severe thirst for effective decision-making.

The government, the National Fund for Economic Development, and other institutions involved in international charitable work have traditionally allocated generous grants and loans to fund development projects and power plants in other countries. However, when it comes to spending on projects in Kuwait, there is a noticeable reluctance to invest.

If we assume the best of intentions, these institutions are awaiting approval from various bodies, each imposing stringent conditions that are often difficult, if not impossible, to meet. This bureaucratic delay is one of the reasons why Kuwait has been grappling with an ongoing electricity crisis since the late 1960s.

I remember being at Kuwait's embassy in Beirut in 1970 when the power went out. A citizen, who happened to be in the building, asked in surprise, "Has Al-Sumait's authority reached Beirut?" He was referring to the late Minister of Electricity and Water Abdullah Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Sumait.

Indeed, we cannot deny Al-Sumait his due. He did his best, but was constantly thwarted by challenges, including opposition from the National Assembly, powerful businessmen looking to secure their share of power plant contracts, the Public Tender Committee, the State Audit Bureau, and other bureaucratic hurdles.

Since then, many ministers have taken office, but little progress has been made, either due to these persistent obstacles or because many preferred to play it safe and enjoy their exceptional salaries.

The electricity crisis in Kuwait recurs every

summer. Recently, Kuwaiti officials have come up with a solution in the form of scheduled power cuts.

With the arrival of each summer, and even before it begins, we hear about proposed solutions to the crisis. Yet, they remain nothing more than ink on paper, quickly erased by the scorching summer winds.

It seems that ordinary citizens are being urged to rationalize their electricity and water consumption, while ministries, government institutions, mosques, and many other public facilities remain exempt from these campaigns. Lights stay on, and air conditioners run continuously, even after working hours have ended. As a result, Kuwait looks like a city where the sun never sets, especially to air travelers at night. This is a prime example of blatant waste, which directly contradicts the government's statements. No wonder, then, that citizens have lost trust in government statements.

Because "Kuwait is different", the government has not taken the initiative to adopt any of the plans implemented in neighboring countries to solve this crisis.

The plan is very simple: it starts with rationalizing consumption, followed by achieving self-sufficiency for each city and region. Power stations are allocated to each region and are managed by specialized and competent companies. In Kuwait, each governorate could manage its own electricity, water, and even sewage systems, with the proceeds being reinvested to benefit low-consumption individuals. This model is already in place in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

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## Kuwait hosts Egypt's president



Amiri Diwan photo

His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi upon his arrival to Kuwait.

### Historic visit reflects depth of bilateral ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi arrived in Kuwait Monday on a state visit.

His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, received the Egyptian President and his accompanying delegation at the Amiri Airport. Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shireedah Al-Mousherji and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya were also among the audience. Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah is heading the Mission of Honor accompanying the distinguished guest.

Upon arrival, the national anthems of both countries were played. His Highness the Amir greeted the Egyptian delegation before artillery fired a 21-gun salute for

President El-Sisi.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem, earlier described the upcoming visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to Kuwait as historic, emphasizing that it comes at a time of great sensitivity for the region.

In a statement to KUNA today, Ambassador Al-Ghanem said the visit reflected the depth and strength of the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Egypt.

He added that the relationship was formally institutionalized following Kuwait's declaration of independence, with the exchange of ambassadors and the establishment of official diplomatic relations.

Cooperation has since expanded to include political, economic, cultural, and other areas under the framework of the Joint Higher Committee, which held its 13th session in Cairo last September, chaired by the foreign ministers of both countries.

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# New traffic era starts with amnesty

GTD frees 75 vehicles, clears 5,700 violations on-site

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Assistant Director of the Traffic Awareness Department at the General Traffic Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan says the department's awareness exhibition at Grand Avenues will include the unblocking of traffic violations. Violators can**

**have their impounded vehicles immediately released upon payment of the required fines and fees.**

He described this initiative as a new chapter for violators ahead of the implementation of the new traffic law amendments on April 22, 2025.

In a press statement to the daily, Lieutenant Colonel Bu Hassan said the recent awareness exhibition at Al-Khiran Mall witnessed the clearing of around 5,700 violations and the immediate release of around 75 vehicles.

Regarding the new surveillance cameras, he explained that they are strategically

installed on highways where speeding and traffic accidents are more frequent. The cameras are battery-powered, thus eliminating the need for an external power source, and can function on remote, unlit roads. They are also portable and can be relocated quickly as needed.

Meanwhile, in line with the instructions and directives of the Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and as part of ongoing security efforts to enforce the law and enhance public safety, a total of 419 violators of residency and labor laws were arrested during extensive security campaigns carried out by the General Department of Residency Affairs Investigations in various governorates during the period from April 6 to April 8.

### Day by Day

TO be frank, the one who won the bet is U.S. President Donald Trump. He shook the global economy for a week. The world asked for a reprieve, and he granted a 90-day deadline. Most countries, if not all, will eventually agree to his terms.

President Trump has his own calculations, nerves of steel, and plausible justifications.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

### Newswatch

**CAIRO:** Permanent Representatives at the Arab League held on Monday a preparatory meeting for the 20th session of the Arab-Chinese Cooperation Forum and the 9th session of the Arab-Chinese Strategic Political Dialogue, to be held in Morocco May 21.

The meeting discussed draft recommendations to be issued, as well as the annual follow up meeting, an Arab League statement pointed out. Ambassador Talal Al-Mutairi represented Kuwait at the meeting. (KUNA)



**DUBAI:** Suspected U.S. airstrikes around Yemen's rebel-held capital killed at least seven people and wounded 29 overnight, the Houthi said Monday as they also claimed shooting down another American MQ-9 Reaper drone.

Since its start nearly a month ago, the intense campaign of U.S. airstrikes under President Donald Trump targeting the rebels over their attacks on shipping in Mideast waters - related to the Israel-Hamas war - has killed over 120 people, according to casualty figures released Monday by the Houthi's Health Ministry.

Footage aired by the Houthi's al-Masirah satellite news channel showed firefighters spraying water on a raging fire they described as being sparked by the airstrikes. (AP)



Ministry of Information photo

Kuwait's Minister of Information and Culture Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi listens to a briefing on the features of Kuwait's pavilion at Expo Osaka 2025.

Pearls, progress ... partnership

## Kuwait navigates from 'tradition' to tomorrow at Expo Osaka 2025

OSAKA, April 14, (KUNA): Taking part in Osaka's 2025 World Expo reflects deep-seated ties with Japan, a potpourri of heritage and innovation, said Kuwait's Information and Culture Minister Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi on Sunday.

His remarks to KUNA came after inaugurating Kuwait's pavilion at Osaka's 2025 World Exposition, which in opened earlier in the day.

"The pavilion sheds light on Kuwait's role in supporting arts, culture and education, as well as its commitment to backing innovation, entrepreneurship, especially amongst the younger generation.

"Kuwait and Japan are keen on sustaining sturdy friendship and enduring partnership in a manner that would be beneficial for both nations," noted Al-Mutairi, who doubles as

Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

The 2025 World Exposition in Osaka officially is kicking off a six-month event through October 13 with a record 158 countries and regions.

Under the theme of "Designing Future Society for our Lives," the participants showcase their cultures and technologies in the Expo on the artificial island of Yumesima in Osaka Bay, western Japan. According to the Japan Association, about 28.2 million people are expected to visit the event.

The pavilions are located inside the Grand Ring, the world's largest wooden structure with a circumference of 2km that demonstrates the expo's concept of "Unity in Diversity."

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## Amiri decree forms CMA Board of Commissioners

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a decree on Monday assigning the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) Board of Commissioners for a period of four years.

The Board, whose mandate can be renewed once, included:

- 1 - Chairman Emad Tifoni
  - 2 - Vice Chairman Rayyan Al-Zaid
- And Members:
- 3 - Tareq Shihab
  - 4 - Hessa Al-Roumi
  - 5 - Thamer Al-Nisf

The decree ordered Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Askar to execute the decree upon publication in the official gazette.

## Kuwait, Iraq in 9th round of maritime border talks

BAGHDAD, April 14, (KUNA): Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah headed the Kuwaiti delegation at the 9th joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi technical legal committee meeting on demarcation of maritime borders beyond the 162 mark, on Sunday.



KUNA photo

Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah leads Kuwait's delegation during the 9th joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi meeting on maritime border demarcation beyond mark 162.



**5 Cultural diplomacy on display as Francophonie celebrations begin**

**8 Boursa Kuwait closes in red**



**9 Burgan Bank publishes its sixth Sustainability Report**



Prayer Timings			
Fajr .....	04:01	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:24	Maghrib ..	18:14
Zohr .....	11:48	Isha .....	19:34

# Local

## Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

**By Day:** Rather hot and dust will subside gradually with light variable wind to light to moderate northwesterly wind, with speeds of 10-32 km/h and some scat-

## Weather

tered clouds will appear.

**By Night:** Mild with light to moderate freshening at times northerly wind to northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-40 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	38	23
Abdaly	38	17
Jahra	38	22
Salmiyah	33	23
Jal Aliyah	36	18
Nuwaisib	34	20

## Program seeks to bridge gap in employment by offering training and support

# MoSA launches ‘Partners for Their Training’ for disabled job seekers

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah has announced the launching of a new initiative titled “Partners for their Training,” in cooperation with the Human and Social Development Society.

The objective of this initiative is to develop the capabilities and skills of people with disabilities -- a new step toward greater success and excellence for these people.

In her speech at the opening of the second career fair for graduates of the sixth batch of the national initiative, “Partners for their Employment”; Al-Huwailah revealed that the initiative was launched in 2018 with the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs. She said “the aim is to empower our sons and daughters to join the labor market. We celebrate this enormous success, which is the success of the will of our sons and daughters who have proven that challenges cannot stand in the way of those with determination. These graduates are clear evidence that Kuwaitis are capable of excellence and success, regardless of the circumstances.”

She added “the fair is not just a recruitment event; it is a message that affirms our commitment to provide equal employment opportunities for our children with disabilities and support them to become true partners in building the nation.”

Addressing the graduates, she said “today, you are making an exemplary history and building a bright future that your country will be proud of. You are capable of facing challenges, innovating and succeeding with your abilities and talents. We stand with you, hand in hand, toward a future worthy of you and Kuwait.”



Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah during the launching of a new initiative titled ‘Partners for their Training’.

Meanwhile, Head of the Office of the Representative of the Secretary General and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Nasser Al-Shatti confirmed that this initiative supports the integration and empowerment of persons with disabilities, in institutional partnership with the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) and the Human and Social Development Society.

He disclosed that the sixth batch of the job fair includes

123 persons with disabilities who have various needs; as well as the distinguished presence of government and private sectors, specifically the banking sector, to conduct job interviews through which Kuwaiti women and men with special needs will be employed.

He believes this will greatly contribute to ongoing efforts to increase the employment rate among people with special needs, empower them, and provide them with the job skills

that will help them meet the requirements of employers who hire them.

Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies Abdullah Al-Terkait asserted “we continue to encourage companies to invest in people, especially the people of determination, as they are an integral part of the national fabric and possess capabilities whenever the opportunity arises.”

He disclosed that the total number of participants in the previous five batches of the initiative reached 258; for whom 212 jobs were provided, including 45 in the government sector, 143 in the private sector and 24 in the cooperative sector.

Dean of Student Affairs at Kuwait University Dr. Jassim Al-Hamdan confirmed that the university has made significant strides in adopting children with intellectual disabilities, training them and granting them internationally accredited certifications that enable them to work in and outside Kuwait, in cooperation with relevant authorities. He said this is a step towards enhancing Kuwait’s presence in the field of supporting and caring for people with disabilities.

He explained that Kuwait University’s hosting of this event is an extension of its mission to support all segments of society, promote equal opportunities, and consolidate the principles of justice and empowerment.

Vice President of the Human and Social Development Society Dr. Ghaleb Al-Osaimi pointed out that this cooperation played a major role in the graduation and employment of 258 young people with disabilities; indicating that 82 percent of them were employed.

He added “we are participating in this forum to employ 123 students enrolled in the sixth batch of the initiative, including 103 customer service graduates and 20 laboratory technician assistant students.”

# Kuwait partners with Google Cloud for comprehensive digital platform

Project aims for seamless, smart services

By Abdullah Al-Dabbous

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): Kuwait is joining forces with Google Cloud to develop an all-inclusive platform aiming to push forward a national digital drive, Communications Minister Omar Al-Omar said on Monday, highlighting the expansive nature of the initiative.

The project in the works promises users a “digital journey” marked by convenience and simplicity, while also being an integrated and effective system. Al-Omar KUNA after a roundtable discussion organized by his ministry in conjunction with Google Cloud, bringing together a bevy of government leaders and decision-makers.

The success of this national endeavor largely hinges on the level of cooperation among state bodies, all of which represent a “pillar” of the country’s digital infrastructure, the minister said, highlighting such digital expansion plans as falling in line with Kuwait’s Vision 2035 development scheme.

Offering her input on the project, Director of Google Cloud in Kuwait, Shaima Al-Terkait, said she was “proud” of taking part in efforts to accelerate Kuwait’s national digital drive, which in turn, would help build a “flourishing” digital-based economy.

On the project’s primary objective, she said it aims to ratchet up the quality of digital services provided by the state, which can be



Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar during his attendance at the discussion panel.

achieved through the establishment of a central and unified platform that is both user-friendly and seamless.

Google Cloud’s Vice President of Platforms

and Applications, Rao Surapaneni, was optimistic that the project would meet its objectives, allowing the state to offer quality services to the public through a fully functional digital system, he said.

## Other Voices

## The cave of unknown charities

By Ahmad alsarraf

I have repeatedly called on various government agencies to modernize their administration, reform their systems, and implement the provisions of several international treaties that Kuwait has signed, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and agreements concerning charities, children’s rights, the status of women, and care for the elderly. We have also called for a thorough review of many outdated and inhumane laws. Unfortunately, only a few agencies have taken our warnings seriously.

Nevertheless, the recent shift in response is remarkable, mostly due to increasing international pressure and warnings, particularly from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This organization works to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, protect the global financial system, monitor adherence to its recommendations, and penalize non-compliant countries by placing them on gray or black lists and enforcing strict, costly economic sanctions on them.

As a result, decisions have been issued to close down many money exchange offices and several charitable organizations that have been under scrutiny for more than a quarter of a century.

The Minister of Social Affairs, like many of her predecessors over the years, has issued stern warnings to some charities that have strayed from the right path. However, these warnings pale in comparison to the gravity of the violations committed by some of these organizations.

This time, the warnings were prompted by both domestic and international pressure, stemming from the ministry’s ongoing hesitation and inability to control some charitable organizations or track how their funds are being spent abroad. This failure is largely due to the powerful influence wielded by those managing these organizations and the vast sums of money under their control, funds that remain completely unmonitored. Anyone who denies this reality is either misinformed or deliberately turning a blind eye.

Charitable work in its current state does not require development, adjustment, or guidance; it demands a complete overhaul.



alsarraf

Years ago, I wrote an article in which I accused some of these organizations of embezzling more than \$50 billion in donor funds, an amount whose fate remains unknown. At the time, two charities filed lawsuits against me, but I was acquitted after presenting the documents in my possession.

The situation is dangerous, and our international reputation is on the line. The enormous, unsupervised funds in the hands of some organizations have the potential to corrupt even the most honest individuals.

How can the Ministry of Social Affairs expect cooperation from these charitable organizations, which are entrusted with millions of dollars?

Recently, one organization raised nearly \$13 million in just a few days for a hospital project. Does anyone truly believe that such a project will be completed before those funds disappear?

During Ramadan, despite all the restrictions, charities managed to raise over \$70 million to fund more than 300 projects in 75 countries. Yet, no one knows who will actually benefit from this wealth!

The ministry’s optimism is meaningless at this point. A decisive response is required, and charities must be immediately banned from collecting any further funds.

The Ministry of Social Affairs’ announcement to suspend all donation collections for overseas projects and mandate approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for such donations is misleading. To prove my point, I personally made a donation yesterday to one of these external projects, which, like many others, continues its questionable operations.

These are not mere errors or oversights that can be easily fixed, but a dangerous process that harms the country’s financial standing and reputation, while enabling illicit enrichment for some individuals overseeing dubious charitable organizations. How much money was raised during the debt repayment campaign, which the state mobilized all its resources for, compared to the funds raised by most charitable organizations for overseas projects during the same period? The answer is clear... The funds raised by charities for external projects far exceed the amount collected for debt repayment. The reason? The first campaign does not serve the interests of the charities involved, while fundraising for external projects guarantees huge profits for them.

I can state with a clear conscience that no one in Kuwait truly knows what these charities are doing abroad.

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## Italy’s timeless splendor shines

## Elegance and tradition mark Italian Cultural Day celebration

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Embassy of Italy in Kuwait, in collaboration with the International Women’s Group (IWG), hosted a vibrant cultural event titled “Murano Glass and the Venice Carnival” at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The event highlighted the rich artistic and cultural heritage of Italy, focusing on the Region of Veneto and its intricate beauty of Murano glass and enchanting traditions of the Venice Carnival.

The event began with opening remarks by Mrs. Layla Boulos, Public Relations Coordinator, followed by a welcome speech from IWG President Mme Polina Dlamini, spouse of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Guests were then addressed by H.E. Lorenzo Morini, the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, and his spouse Mrs. Maria Lorena Morini, who warmly expressed their pride in showcasing Italy’s cultural treasures in Kuwait.

Among the esteemed attendees was the honorary president of IWG, Sheikha Hanouf Al-Bader Al-Sabah, along with the U.S. and Lesotho Ambassadors to Kuwait, as well as other dignitaries, underscoring the strong diplomatic and cultural ties between nations.

A captivating video presentation titled “Venice and the Art of Murano Glass” took the audience on a visual journey through Venice’s glassmaking traditions, followed by a talk from guest speaker Mrs. Alessia Fuga, a renowned Italian Murano glass artist, who offered insights into the craftsmanship behind handcrafted glass jewellery.



H.E. Lorenzo Morini, Italian Ambassador to Kuwait



Mme Polina Dlamini, IWG President



Sheikha Hanouf Al-Bader Al-Sabah poses for a group.

The event was further enriched by live musical performances from Quintetto Denner, a distinguished Italian jazz ensemble, performing revisited Italian classical masterpieces. Another video, “The Venice Carnival”, transported guests into the

heart of one of Italy’s most iconic celebrations, evoking the magic and grandeur of Venetian culture. Guests were treated to a thrilling raffle draw with prizes generously provided by event sponsors. The celebration concluded with a buffet lunch inspired by traditional

Veneto’s cuisine, offering a delightful taste of Italy.

The event was a true celebration of culture, art, and international friendship, and served as a memorable reminder of the enduring beauty and creativity of Italian heritage.

Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

## Phase 1 begins

## MPW starts major road maintenance

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan has announced the commencement of major maintenance work on Mohammad Saif Al-Barrak Street in Egaila.

This is part of the new major maintenance contracts for highway and internal roads, which include 18 road maintenance projects in the six governorates.

In a press statement on Monday, Al-Mashaan disclosed that the maintenance work started in the most affected areas, followed by the least affected. She affirmed that the road maintenance project is under the supervision, monitoring and follow-up of the Public Works Ministry.

She said the concerned ministry teams are monitoring the implementation of the road

maintenance projects, while a committee has been formed to select supervising engineers and conduct tests.

She affirmed the continuation of road maintenance projects throughout the country, with full commitment to ensuring the quality as per the international standards. She stressed that investment in infrastructure boosts the economy, improves the quality of life, and supports sustainable development.

On the other hand, Supervisor of Contract 15-First Zone-Ahmedi Governorate Eng. Talal Mohammad Al-Hujailan confirmed the presence of the concerned teams to monitor the latest developments in the implementation of the road maintenance project on Mohammad Saif Al-Barrak Street that includes laying six-centimeter thick layer of Type 2 asphalt. He added the five-centimeter thick layer of Type 3 asphalt will be applied on Tuesday.

Moreover, Eng. Abdullah Al-Kandari stated that the radical maintenance work on main roads, including Road 245, will be completed soon. He added the road maintenance work will also be conducted in Mangaf-Block Four, Fahad Al-Ahmad-Block One and Egaila-Block One in the coming weeks.



Dr. Al-Mashaan



## Violence in public education ... A growing crisis demanding action

“A CULTURE of violence and incitement among students in public schools have become prevalent. The source of this abnormal phenomenon -- a social problem and a complex educational dilemma -- must be determined!” Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

“The Public Prosecution has once again sounded the legal and social alarm in light of the rise in cases of assault, fighting and violence in public schools. This alarm was sounded based on a survey of 300 children -- 66 percent of whom were subjected to violence in 2024.

“The prosecution’s warning was preceded by an official letter from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Education regarding the spread of incitement and terrorist behavior in schools, and the affiliation of some high school students with jihadist ideology and terrorist organizations.

“The Interior Ministry published the letter in the form of an official statement. It did not compromise on the procedure or the request of the Ministry of Education to tighten oversight and monitor what is happening in public schools.

“The culture of violence, incitement, terrorist behavior and affiliation with terrorist groups has spread throughout society and higher education institutions to an alarming degree. This is the evidence of the existence of a ‘source’ that feeds and drives this deadly phenomenon in public education, including teachers and school staff.

“The common factors in violence, incitement and terrorist ideology in public schools are distorted religion, jihadist temptations, jurisprudential misinformation, behavioral agitation, and religious and social panic due to various developments. This is in addition to the social factors associated with family disintegration and the spread of strange phenomena within society and the family as well!

“The dilemma can be limited to the curricula, their modesty and the educational fear of amendment, review and modernization. Curricula may be directed toward non-educational and non-instructional purposes. There is no doubt about the Ministry of Education’s laxity and its professional and religious fear of evaluating public education, and teachers above all others; and scrutinizing the behavior, conduct and affiliations of these individuals in and outside the school walls.

“The culture of incitement, intellectual extremism and excommunication has headline religious and political sources. Numerous religious and intellectual references, as well as events in and outside Kuwait, have documented this. But who dares to breach the walls of schools and curricula, review and scrutinize them, with the help of those with cultural expertise and intellectual and religious moderation?

“Discussing incitement literature and media, ‘takfir’ (excommunication), and jihadist thought is not a popular, stimulating or permissible topic in society, particularly in public and professional organizations. In fact, it is considered a taboo in public education forums such as schools, and even in civil society institutions. The opposite is welcomed and embraced in public benefit organizations and State agencies, including public schools!

“There are many solutions and opportunities to export, spread and consolidate tolerance, and to explain religion from a moderate perspective. This is to instill a spirit of tolerance, rather than encourage students to rush towards jihad and fighting in the name of religion.

“The window of joy and its distribution among students and in schools is almost nonexistent in the school curricula and educational environment, if not completely absent, compared to other subjects with jihadist and controversial educational dimensions in public education!”

“Kuwait has become a safe haven for political Islam like the Muslim Brotherhood, extremist religious movements, intellectual extremism, and religious fanaticism. Public schools are not a stranger to what is happening in Kuwait.”



Khaled Al-Tarrah

consumption in Kuwait has reached five percent, along with a doubling of the shortage”. This statement alone deserves a moment of reflection, and let me say, “there is a lack of awareness regarding rationalization and an underappreciation of the incredibly low cost of electricity and water in Kuwait.”

“I hope the rationalization committee in the Ministry of Electricity and Water, which was formed by the minister, will consider proposing the involvement of the private sector in a wide-reaching, creative rationalization campaign that directly engages consumers. This would go beyond the traditional messages we have been hearing since childhood, which no longer inspire any real motivation within us.

“Just as Kuwaiti investment companies, banks, and telecommunications companies participate in successful, competitive, and creative advertisements at the beginning of Ramadan and Eid to offer greetings, the same approach could be applied in campaigns to rationalize electricity and water consumption.

“Private TV channels should collaborate with Kuwait TV to broadcast these rationalization advertisements, ensuring they reach the highest possible audience in Kuwaiti society.

“With combined efforts, this approach will undoubtedly succeed in overcoming this challenging phase.

“I was struck by the news that Kuwait purchased electricity worth \$23.5 million, and I wondered: What if this money were invested in supporting solar panels to encourage citizens to install them, as a step toward reducing electricity consumption? After all, we are a country where the sun never truly disappears, except in rare cases.

“Many people complain that they tried to buy solar panels but found them too expensive compared to what they pay for their electricity bills at home.

“It is well known that the cost of electricity each household pays is only a small fraction of the total cost, and this, in itself, calls for a reevaluation of electricity and water prices in a way that respects and preserves these blessings, calculating them down to the fils.”

“Public debt refers to the money borrowed by governments from institutions, banks, and individuals through the issuance of bonds, which are due for repayment with an agreed-upon interest rate, or through direct borrowing by the government. The definition does not differentiate between borrowing from domestic or foreign sources, nor does it distinguish between issuing bonds in local currency or international currencies,” columnist **Dr. Walid Al-Tunaib** wrote for **Al-Rai** daily.

“One of the main reasons for borrowing is to finance development projects and infrastructure development. Governments also borrow to fund commercial projects. When countries resort to public debt, it is not always due to a revenue shortfall. Some countries borrow even when they have a revenue surplus. A prime example of this is Japan, a country with a strong economy, yet it is one of the heaviest users of public debt despite its large revenues.

“The new U.S. president discovered that the U.S. public debt had reached such a level that it had become difficult to manage due to its enormity. As a result, he decided to increase customs duties, which triggered an economic spiral across the globe. He understands that the balance of military power is in his favor and that the United States wields significant influence over the decisions of many countries around the world.

“However, what can countries that have become deeply entangled in public debt do if the debt grows uncontrollably, and they are unable to repay it due to financial and administrative corruption, as well as poor planning? In such cases, selling natural resources and minerals, while still in their natural sources, could become one of the bitter solutions.

“While public debt does have its advantages, experiences have shown that it also carries huge risks that may be difficult to manage. A current example is the United States, which is home to a wealth of economists, economic and financial research centers, and institutions dedicated to fighting corruption and curbing the theft of public funds. Yet, despite these resources, it still appears unable to effectively confront the challenges of repaying its public debt.”



Dr. Al-Tunaib

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyy/Simi K. Kutty

# MEW undersecretary holds talks with workers union on work environment

Al-Zamel vows to address safety and shift system concerns

By Mohammed Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Representatives of the Workers’ Union of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy held a meeting with the ministry’s Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel in the presence of Assistant Undersecretary for the Power Plants Sector Eng. Haitham Al-Ali, and Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs Ahmed Al-Nama.**

In a press statement issued yesterday, the union explained that the discussions during the meeting focused on the most prominent issues related to the work environment for the employees. Dr. Al-Zamel began the meeting by affirming his great concern for the health and safety of workers, as well as his keenness to enhance performance efficiency through a balanced work environment that ensures continuous productivity and employee safety.

Emphasis was placed on maintaining the current shift system of 12-24-12-48 hours to stay in line with the technical nature of work in various sectors of the ministry.



MEW photo

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, during a meeting with representatives of the Ministry’s Workers’ Union.

Switching to an 8-hour workday could lead to serious negative consequences, including a higher likelihood of occupational accidents due to fatigue and frequent commutes in high-pressure work environments, as well as disruptions to the operational safety system.

The union revealed that Undersecretary Dr. Al-Zamel expressed his understanding of their concerns, indicating about the directives of the Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem to

study the matter and consult with relevant authorities to explore options for adopting the current shift system.

It stated that the fingerprint attendance system at external work sites was discussed, with particular emphasis on the need to remove obstacles facing workers, especially regarding the implementation of the third finger scan, which could impede the progress of emergency technical operations.

The union added that they also

explored ways to develop and qualify Kuwaiti employees by expanding technical and specialized training programs both inside and outside Kuwait with the aim of enhancing job performance and creating a positive work environment.

It expressed its gratitude to Minister Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem for his directives to overcome the challenges faced by employees, and to Undersecretary Dr. Adel Al-Zamel for his understanding and constructive cooperation.



KFF photo

Direct supervision by KFF’s Chief Major General Talal Al-Roumi.

### KFF holds safety inspection campaigns

As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance public safety and prevent fire accidents, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) carried out a wide-scale inspection campaign in various buildings and facilities throughout the country. Several citations were issued against facilities and buildings that were found to be non-compliant with technical standards and posed potential risks to lives and property.

According to a press release issued by KFF, the team carried out an in-

spection campaign at the basement of a commercial building in Bneid Al-Gar on Sunday evening under the direct supervision of the Director General of KFF Major General Talal Mohammed Al-Roumi. The basement was being used to store flammable materials and chemicals. As a result, the establishment was administratively closed.

These campaigns are aimed at ensuring compliance with approved safety regulations.

### News in Brief

## Elderly Kuwaiti falls victim to bank fraud

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14:** An elderly Kuwaiti citizen was defrauded of his entire bank balance -- amounting to KD37,000 (about \$120,000) -- after falling victim to a phone scam perpetrated by an unknown individual or fraud network, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a security source, the 69-year-old victim, residing in the Capital Governorate, received a call from a local Kuwaiti number. The caller claimed to be a detective officer investigating a hacking attempt targeting the citizen’s bank account. Under the pretense of protecting the account, the scammer deceived the victim into providing sensitive banking details, including his card number, PIN and one-time password (OTP).

The victim complied, believing he was cooperating with authorities to secure his funds. Shortly after, he received a notification stating that his account balance went down to only KD4. It remains unclear whether the funds were withdrawn through a purchase or transferred elsewhere.

The victim reported the incident to the public prosecutor, who ordered that a formal case be opened and investigations initiated.

A security official reiterated that legitimate bank representatives or Ministry of Interior officers will never request personal banking information or OTPs over the phone. The public is urged not to respond to suspicious calls -- whether through regular phone lines or messaging apps like WhatsApp -- and to report any such incidents immediately.

**PACI deletes 325 addresses:** The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced the deletion of the residential addresses of 325 individuals from its records, either with the property owner’s consent or due to the demolition of the building, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PACI has urged those affected by the decision, which has been published in the official gazette ‘Kuwait Al-yom’, to visit its offices with the necessary supporting documents to update their information and register their new residential address within 30 days from the date of the announcement.

PACI warned that failure to update personal data within the specified timeframe will result in penalties outlined in Article 33 of Law No. 32/1982, which imposes a fine of up to KD 100 per individual.

### Maintenance on track

## Lower temps drop power demand, keep grid stable

By Mohammad Ghanem  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14:** The eight-degree drop in temperature on Sunday led to a 2,383-megawatt decrease in power consumption, compared to the highest load recorded by the index last Thursday -- 12,640 megawatts -- at 40 degrees Celsius.

The highest power consumption reached 10,257 megawatts at 32 degrees Celsius on Sunday, so the index to remain in the green zone.

Sources disclosed that the drop in temperatures and the lower load index gave the ministry a chance to complete the maintenance of power generation units to operate them in the coming days; hence, avoiding the programmed power cuts in residential, industrial and agricultural areas.

On the same day, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy revealed that the main ‘Salmiya W’ transformer station went out of service resulting in a partial power outage in some areas in Hawally Governorate.

Sources said the emergency teams of the ministry worked hard to restore power in less than an hour by operating the station and repairing the causes of the outage, indicating that the electricity grid lost 250 megawatts due to the power outage.

## Islamic Affairs Ministry forms panel to address employee attendance issues

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

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14:** According to informed sources, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has formed a committee to investigate and study issues related to employee attendance and departure.

They explained that the committee is tasked with reviewing administrative decisions related to salary deductions

for absences, monitoring their implementation, and dealing with challenges tied to the employees’ attendance and departure procedures of the ministry.

This step is part of the ministry’s broader efforts to enhance workplace discipline and promote greater efficiency and commitment in the work environment with the aim of improving overall administrative performance.



# Private schools prepare for dust storm with e-learning

Grades 6-9 final exams scheduled for May 21-29

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: In light of weather warnings issued by the Meteorological Department, a number of private schools have issued urgent directives to their educational and administrative staff to take necessary precautionary measures ahead of the dust storm on Monday, according to an official notice from the department.



Al-Dhafiri

The directives include activating e-learning via the Teams platform in anticipation of a possible suspension of in-person classes. They also stressed the importance of securely closing windows and doors in school buildings and staying updated on any decisions issued by the Ministry of Education in this regard.

The Meteorological Department previously issued a notice stating that Kuwait will be affected by a dust storm start-

ing at 10:00am on Monday, April 14 until April 15.

The department forecasted a significant drop in horizontal visibility, potentially falling below 1,000 meters and even reaching zero in some areas. Strong winds are expected, shifting from southerly to northwesterly, with speeds possibly exceeding 60 km/h, resulting in rough seas and high waves.

Some private schools have urged the community to closely follow official alerts and comply with preventive measures to ensure the safety of students and staff in educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the final exams for intermediate students (Grades Six to Nine) in private and specialized educational institutions for the 2024/2025 academic year will be from May 21-29, 2025 as per the schedule approved by the Ministry of Education.

Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Private and Special Education Mansour Al-Dhafiri released the schedule, detailing the exam dates and timings for core subjects in each grade. All exams will start at 8:00 am and most of them will end at 10:15 am; while some will end at 9:45 a.m., depending on the grade and subject.

The first day of exams will include Mathematics for Grade Six, Science for Grade Seven, Arabic for Grade Eight and English for Grade Nine.

Students are required to wear their school uniform and bring the necessary equipment for the exams. Any form of cheating or disruption will result in disciplinary action.

## Initiative aids schools in managing disruptions

# ACERG conducts crisis planning training for educators in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): The Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States (ACERG) held a training program on Monday titled "Education during Crises and Emergencies" in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The program, which runs until April 16, aims to strengthen the preparedness of leadership cadres in handling crises and emergencies.

Director of the Center, Dr. Mohammad Al-Sharika, told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the program is in response to directives from the ministers of education in the member states of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS). He expressed his gratitude to Minister of Education, Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, for his continuous support of the Center's activities.

Dr. Al-Sharika emphasized the importance of developing comprehensive strategies and plans to enhance the technical and leadership capacities of education cadres in addressing challenges during crises.

He added that the program aims to build the capabilities of education sector workers through strategic planning and emergency response, ensuring the safety of students and teachers and the



KUNA photo  
Director of the Arab Center for Educational Research for the Gulf States, Dr. Mohammed Al-Sharika, delivers the opening speech of the training program.

continuity of education in a secure environment.

Twenty-five officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education participated in the program, along with experts from the Queen Rania Teacher Academy and ACERG.

The program is part of a series of training initiatives organized by the Center across the Gulf countries. Similar training sessions have previously been held in Oman, Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar, and Yemen, aiming to enhance the readiness of education ministries and develop their strategic planning capabilities in crisis situations.

## Sabah Hospital project nears final stages

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The new Sabah Hospital project is an added value to the healthcare sector in the country, as it is part of a strategy to develop medical services in accordance with the highest international standards, reports Al-Anba daily.

The hospital is located in Sabah Health District – an integrated medical district comprising of a group of specialized hospitals and healthcare facilities with the aim of enhancing the integration of treatment services and providing a modern and advanced medical environment.

The project consists of several

buildings, including the main hospital building that consists of a basement, a ground floor and 12 upper floors with a capacity of 617 beds; in addition to the clinic and pharmacy building. It includes an administrative building for operational and technical services, a multi-storey parking building with a capacity of 1,457 cars, and a services building to support the hospital's infrastructure and operations.

This project is part of Kuwait's development plan and aims to improve the quality of healthcare services by establishing modern hospitals equipped with the latest

international medical systems. It will contribute to raising the efficiency of the healthcare system, and providing an integrated treatment environment that meets the needs of citizens and expatriates.

The implementation of the project commenced on Aug 3, 2014. Data released in December 2024 stated that the actual completion rate reached 85.53 percent compared to the planned completion rate of 100 percent -- 14.47 percent variance from the schedule. Despite this variance, work is ongoing to complete the project soon to improve health services in the country.

## Jahra Educational Zone appoints 545 teachers for seven new schools to tackle overcrowding

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: As part of the preparations to open seven new schools in the upcoming 2025/2026 academic year, educational sources revealed that the Human Resources Department of the Jahra Educational Zone has completed the appointment of 545 teachers, along with a number of administrative staff.

They explained that the seven new schools include one kindergarten, one boys' elementary school, one girls' elementary school, one boys' intermediate school, one girls' intermediate school, one boys' high school, and one girls' high school.

In a letter sent to the Assistant Undersecretary for Public Education Affairs, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education said the responsibility for preparing the new schools, including staffing them with administrative

personnel and teachers, furnishing the facilities, and providing the necessary technical equipment, has been assigned to the Jahra Educational Zone in coordination with other relevant sectors within the ministry.

The sources said the opening of these schools is a direct response to the major challenges currently facing schools in Mutlaa City, particularly the high student density, as there are more than 45 students in some classrooms.

# APRIL

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### Review phase starts after April 14 closure

## Debt relief campaign raises nearly KD13 mln as deadline approaches

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: With just a few hours remaining for its conclusion, the campaign for debt relief has raised nearly KD 13 million, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to sources from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the campaign is expected to end on April 14, with total proceeds anticipated to exceed KD 14 million.

The number of applications submitted through the central platform is expected to surpass 8,000.

Following the campaign's end, the six committees involved will begin reviewing and assessing each application on a case-by-case basis. After all eligible cases have been referred and reviewed by charitable organizations, they will be transferred to the General Department for Sentences Enforcement

for necessary action.

The ministry has set clear criteria for debt repayment, ensuring that Sharia provisions are adhered to in the repayment process. To maximize the number of eligible beneficiaries, a maximum debt limit of KD 20,000 has been set.

The beneficiaries of the debt relief campaign include Kuwaiti families facing financial hardship due to difficult economic conditions, elderly individuals without sufficient income to settle their debts, and those affected by emergency situations, such as illness or job loss, that have hindered their ability to repay. The campaign also targets citizens imprisoned due to financial debts, with the aim of securing their release and facilitating their reintegration into society.

Over 6,000 applicants registered

## CSC wraps up job registration drive

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: More than 6,000 job applicants registered in the Central Recruitment System of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) during the 90-day registration period and the extended period from March 28 to April 11, reports Al-Anba daily.

In line with the established procedures, the submitted data will undergo the two-week verification and sorting process to ensure that the employment registration criteria are met. During this phase, applications will be approved, rejected if they fail to meet requirements or returned for submission of missing documents within a designated timeframe.

Once the verification is complete, eligible applicants will be categorized and added to job lists according to their qualifications and areas of expertise. Notifications will then be sent by email or SMS.

In a related development, sources told the daily that there is no link between permits granted to employees for periodic medical checkups at government hospitals and the four leave requests every month. Each is governed by a separate clause under a decision ratified by the Civil Service Council.

They clarified that if the Medical Authority at the Ministry of Health deems that regular doctor visits are necessary -- daily, on alternate days or weekly -- for treatments in various departments; the supervising entity must grant per-

mission for such absences during official working hours. Therefore, government employees are entitled to go on leave for periodic checkups at public health institutions.

This applies to recurring medical appointments such as physiotherapy, obstetrics and gynecology follow-ups, dental treatment and other cases requiring regular visits to doctors. To obtain this permit, employees must provide their employer with official documentation from the Ministry of Health confirming the necessity of the visits, in accordance with legal guidelines and specified appointment dates.

Responsibility for monitoring proper use of the permit falls on the direct supervisor, and appropriate action will be taken in case of misuse. This type of permit does not impact the employee's salary.

Sources also emphasized that the regulation for standard leave stipulates a maximum of four days per month, not exceeding 12 hours. Such leave may be granted at the start, during or at the end of the workday. Employees who are unable to clock in or out due to approved leave are exempt from doing so, provided they sign in or out when possible.

Sources commended the convenience offered by the 'Sahel' app, which allows employees to request medical leave for one to three days per month without the need to visit a doctor.

## KU completes graduation record review

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The acting Dean of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University Dr. Fadhel Aziz affirmed that the Deanship of Admissions and Registration has completed the review of academic records for students expected to graduate in the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year

to ensure they meet all graduation requirements, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, Dr. Aziz said the deanship is committed to publishing the names of students expected to graduate each semester to ensure that every student is accurately included in the list for the current semester.



Falling temps ahead

Health warning issued as dust storm and winds slam Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): The Kuwait Meteorological Department issued a weather warning for Monday, forecasting high temperatures -- expected maximum is 38 degrees Celsius -- with active to strong southwestern winds of more than 60 km/h.

Acting Director of the Kuwait Meteorological Department, Dhrar Al-Ali stated to KUNA that the dust storm would be triggered by the passage of a cold front this afternoon, which will shift winds to northwest.

Visibility is expected to drop to less than 1,000 meters and may reach zero in some areas by the evening, sea waves may rise to over six feet, and the dust expected to gradually settle overnight.

Weather conditions are forecast to im-

prove by Tuesday morning, accompanied by a noticeable drop in temperatures, with lows reaching 20 degrees Celsius, and highs around 31 degrees Celsius.

The department advises the public, especially people with asthma or allergies, to stay indoors and avoid going out unless absolutely necessary.

Vehicle drivers are urged to exercise extreme caution on highways due to sudden drops in visibility, Sea-goers are also warned about the high wave activity, and the public is encouraged to stay updated by checking the official website, mobile app, and social media accounts of the Meteorological Department for the latest weather developments.

Continued from Page 1

Electricity in

Do we have to endure darkness and intense heat for an extended period because officials at the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy are unwilling to seriously pursue and implement practical solutions?

In most countries, the electricity sector operates independently, and is managed by joint-stock companies in which citizens hold shares. However, due to the ongoing chaos in Kuwait over the years, it seems that the situation will remain unchanged until qualified experts take charge of this critical sector.

Unfortunately, it appears that there is little hope of achieving this goal soon.

The new Minister of Electricity has explicitly stated that the power outages are due to increased loads and consumption compared to last year. This statement suggests that the crisis will not be resolved in the foreseeable future.

Considering that the problem has been anticipated since last year, what actions has the ministry taken over the past months to prevent these power cuts? I would like to point out that we have not even reached the peak of the hot summer months yet.

Kuwait navigates

In his speech at an opening ceremony on Saturday, Emperor Naruhito said, "It is my sincere hope that Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan will serve as an opportunity for people around the world to respect not only their own lives, but also the lives of those around them and the various forms of life that exist in nature, and to be inspired to work together to create a sustainable future."

Kuwait's pavilion is a narrative of two parts with the base level telling a story of heritage and tradition, while the higher level is a display of aspirations.

The pavilion allows visitors to embark on an immersive journey through Kuwait's past, present, and future in four showrooms that combine tradition and cutting-edge technology.

The area where the two layers meet is known as 'the pearl' to commemorate role of pearl diving industry in Kuwaiti economy, and its deeply-rooted seafaring history.

Each space in the pavilion, which takes the name Visionary Lighthouse, tells a different story using interactive technologies and Artificial Intelligence techniques.

Kuwait was one of only four Arab countries that participated in the 1970 version of the Expo, also in Osaka; the first of its kind in the country back then, which drew more than 64 million visitors.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Japan, Sami Al-Zamanan stated on Monday that Kuwait's participation in Expo Osaka 2025 aimed to offer an inspiring experience that reflects the country's future vision and opens new horizons for international cooperation.

In a statement to KUNA, Al-Zamanan described Expo Osaka 2025 as a leading platform for exchanging expertise and showcasing national visions that contribute to building a more sustainable and cooperative future for humanity.

He emphasized that Kuwait's presence at the expo demonstrates its commitment to active engagement in global events that shape the future of humanity while promoting sustainable development and innovation.

The ambassador explained that Kuwait's pavilion serves as a living representation of the nation's identity, development goals, and achievements in the fields of innovation, clean energy, and human empowerment.

Al-Zamanan also noted that this participation aligns with the strong and longstanding bilateral relations between Kuwait and Japan, which span decades of cooperation and mutual respect, adding that the Expo provides an opportunity to strengthen these relations and expand areas of partnership.

This year's Kuwaiti pavilion features a rich cultural display that blends authentic Kuwaiti heritage with modern elements, reflecting a nation that harmonizes tradition and progress while emphasizing the role of culture in building bridges of dialogue and understanding between nations.

The pavilion consists of two floors: one tells the story of Kuwait's heritage and traditions, while the other embodies the country's aspirations for the future, it takes the visitors with a journey through Kuwait's past, present, and future across four exhibition halls that merge traditional themes with advanced technologies.

The intersection between the two floors has been named "The Pearl," in tribute to the historical role of pearl diving in Kuwait's economy and maritime legacy.

Every section of the pavilion tells a unique story using interactive features and artificial intelligence technologies.

Kuwait is one of only four Arab nations that participated in Expo 1970 in Osaka, the first such event hosted in Japan, which drew over 64 million visitors.

Expo 2025 Osaka officially opened to

the public on Sunday, launching a six-month event with record participation from 158 countries and regions, including Kuwait, and the Expo expects around 28.2 million visitors to attend.

Themed "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," the expo showcases the cultural and technological achievements of participating nations, it will run until October 13 on Yumeshima Island in Osaka Bay.

The event features the world's largest wooden architectural structure-the Grand Ring-measuring roughly two kilometers in circumference and symbolizing "unity in diversity."

Kuwait hosts

The ambassador highlighted Egypt's longstanding support for Kuwait's independence and sovereignty, as well as its prompt recognition of Kuwait as a state and its support for its membership in the Arab League, and he praised the consistent alignment and coordination between the two countries on key regional and international issues.

Al-Ghanem also recalled landmark moments in the bilateral relationship, noting Kuwait's unwavering support for Egypt during the 1967 and 1973 wars, and Egypt's stance during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

He emphasized that economic and trade relations have seen significant growth in recent years, with Egypt becoming a key destination for Kuwaiti investments in both the public and private sectors.

There are now over 1,000 Kuwaiti companies operating in Egypt, with investments exceeding USD 20 billion across sectors such as infrastructure, roads, tourism, and agriculture, making Kuwait Egypt's third-largest Arab trading partner.

The ambassador also highlighted the important developmental role of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in Egypt, which has completed 50 projects in various sectors, and adding that new projects are currently being studied for future implementation.

He praised Egypt's recent economic reforms and legislative modernization, which have made it an attractive destination for foreign investment, noting the growing presence of major international companies in Egypt, as well as the increasing number of Kuwaiti private sector projects and companies operating in the Egyptian market in recent years.

Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait, Osama Shaltout, praised the warm welcome extended by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the upcoming state visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to Kuwait.

In an interview with KUNA, the Ambassador noted that the visit comes at a particularly critical time, both in terms of the development of bilateral relations between Cairo and Kuwait, and amid ongoing regional and international developments that demand unity and solidarity among Arab and Islamic nations.

He stated that the meeting between the two leaders provides a valuable opportunity to exchange views and consult on ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in all fields, particularly investment and trade, which are key priorities for both countries.

The Ambassador highlighted the directives of the political leadership in both Egypt and Kuwait to boost investment, trade, and economic cooperation in a manner that benefits both nations and contributes to achieving their respective development goals.

Ambassador Shaltout added that the high-level meeting would also include the exchange of proposals and ideas on key regional issues, most notably the Palestinian cause, the Israeli occupation's aggression in Gaza and the West Bank, and the situations in Syria and Lebanon, as well as developments in Sudan, Libya, and Yemen.

He noted that Egypt and Kuwait hold near-identical positions on these matters, reflecting the alignment of their foreign policies with international law, principles of justice, and shared human values.

In response to a question regarding the key topics to be discussed during the visit, the Ambassador said the summit would include talks on ways to further enhance and develop bilateral relations, especially in light of favorable opportunities to expand investment and trade between Egypt and Kuwait.

He pointed to tangible progress in bilateral relations in multiple sectors, particularly investment and trade, as well as energy, tourism, culture, and labor, all of which are witnessing steady growth.

On the role both nations play in advancing joint Arab action amid ongoing challenges, Shaltout stated that Egypt and Kuwait pursue foreign policies defined by moderation and wisdom, "which creates a pivotal role for them in strengthening joint Arab action, especially in light of the multiple challenges facing the Arab region."

He added that both Kuwait and Egypt consistently work to unify Arab positions and bring together divergent views, whether through the Arab League or via independent initiatives, always emphasizing political solutions and dialogue over military confrontation.



Ambassadors pose for a group photo. Photos by Samer Shiqer

Cultural diplomacy on display as Francophonie celebrations begin

Macron visit likely before year-end: French envoy

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Francophonie Month commenced with a series of cultural activities conducted in the French language and it will continue until the end of April, with the participation of 44 diplomatic missions in the country.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin commended the bilateral relations between Kuwait and France, describing such relations as excellent. He also highlighted the historical context of this relationship, as well as the commonalities and cooperative endeavors of both countries.

Asked about the prospective official visits between the two nations, he stated that plans are underway to arrange visits by French dignitaries in order to strengthen bilateral ties.

On the possibility of President Emmanuel Macron visiting Kuwait, Gauvin is hoping this will happen. He affirmed that President Macron extended an invitation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and that an initial acceptance has been received. "Efforts are being made through diplomatic channels to finalize the date for this visit, preferably before the end of the year," he revealed.



French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin



Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms

He also affirmed an upcoming meeting with

the Minister of Defense to discuss military and security cooperation.

Citing a prior meeting with the Minister of Education when the expansion of French language education was discussed, he confirmed the desire of the minister to expand French language instruction.

He also announced the inauguration of an international French-language baccalaureate program in French high schools this September.

He then expressed his aspiration for Kuwait to be a member of the International Organization of La Francophonie, considering the substantial number of French speakers in here and the extensive teaching of French in educational institutions.

Meanwhile, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms lauded the role of Kuwait in promoting cultural awareness and embracing diverse cultures.

He is hoping that Kuwait will join the International Organization of La Francophonie; especially since there are half a million French speakers in Kuwait and 1,400 teachers in the public and private sectors are teaching French to 45,000 students.

He emphasized the value of cultural events in fostering dialogue, citing Belgium's early recognition of the independence of Kuwait in 1961 and the historic visit of HH the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad to Paris in 1969, which marked a significant point in Kuwaiti-French relations.

Ministry actively following up case

MoSA confirms arrest of co-op GM

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Ministry of Social Affairs confirmed that the individual arrested by security authorities, following recent social media reports, is the General Manager of a cooperative society, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued on Sunday, the ministry explained that he was appointed to the position of General Manager by the relevant four-member committee after he applied for the position through the "Fakharna" platform.

The case is currently under investigation by the Public Prosecution.

It urged everyone to verify the accuracy of information and rely on official, trustworthy sources to avoid legal complications.

The ministry revealed that the four-member committee responsible for appointing general managers of cooperative societies consists of representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Public Authority for Manpower, the Union of

Consumer Cooperative Societies, and the relevant association overseeing the appointment.

It affirmed that this incident is an isolated case and does not reflect the overall operations of the cooperative sector, which represents a pillar of community work in Kuwait.

The ministry confirmed that it is actively following up on the case through a specialized working group tasked with preparing a comprehensive report.



Interview with Dr. Mohamed El shredi  
Consultant General Surgery  
New Mowasat Hospital

1. Dr. Mohamed, sleeve gastrectomy has become one of the most popular weight-loss surgeries. What makes it so effective, and how do you determine if a patient is a good candidate for this procedure?

Initially all the patients must fall under the criteria of the indication for bariatric surgery and be generally fit for surgery. There are many bariatric procedures, all of them except sleeve gastrectomy involve redirection of the normal gastrointestinal tract anatomy with more than one anastomosis, which means slightly more risk of complication, sleeve gastrectomy involves one long stapler line in the stomach without any anastomosis.

Furthermore, depends on patient medical comorbidity, if the patient does not have diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia or reflux symptoms will be the ideal patient for sleeve gastrectomy, having said that, some patients with comorbidity want to go for sleeve gastrectomy although gastric bypass will be slightly more effective in curing the comorbidities, so all these facts need to be explained to the patient. It is important to mention that the patient with reflux symptoms is not a good candidate for sleeve gastrectomy as this symptom is likely to get worse.

2. Many patients worry about the permanence of sleeve surgery. Can you explain how the procedure works and why it's considered a long-term solution for obesity?

The basic principle of sleeve gastrectomy works by two mechanisms restrictive and hormonal, by leaving a measured tube size of the stomach,

it reduces the stomach capacity, results in feeling of early satiety, and by removal of the fundus which is the widest part of the stomach and the main source of production of the hunger hormone. All bariatric surgery procedures including sleeve gastrectomy need lifestyle modifications and changes in terms of dieting and exercise to maintain long-term weight loss.

3. Some patients fear complications after surgery. What are the most common risks associated with sleeve gastrectomy, and how do you minimize them in your practice?

With modern surgical practice and advanced inventions in the staplers, the risks become quite low, and the most serious complications include the leak or bleeding from the stapler line and the deep vein thrombosis. In our surgical practice take the recommended maximum measures to reduce these complications. We give prophylaxis for deep vein thrombosis using the most effective methods including mechanical and chemical, and with regards to the risk of leak and bleeding we use the most advanced stapler's technology that automatically measures the thickness of the stomach and adjusts the stapler size accordingly.

Other measures that we take involve the necessary investigations to identify and optimize any predisposed risks for surgery. Furthermore, patients will have nutritional assessment and support before and after the operation for the short and long term to avoid any nutritional disturbance.

4. Dr. Mohamed, gastric bypass is often seen as a more complex procedure than sleeve surgery. Can you explain how it works and why it might be the better choice for some patients?

Gastric bypass in principle has two main mechanisms, restrictive by making the stomach capacity of measured small size, this leading to early satiety and malabsorption mechanism by separating the early mix of the food and the bile salts, this will lead to decrease the amount of food absorbed, we achieve this by redirecting the food in a measured distance of small bowels before it gets in contact with the bile.

Gastric Bypass has better results in terms of diabetes cure, hyperlipidemia control, weight loss and furthermore it is a better choice for the patients with reflux symptoms.

5. What are the most common misconceptions about gastric bypass surgery, and how do you address them with your patients?

The main misconception is that this operation is permanent and can't be reversed, in fact it can be reversed if that needed and indicated in a rare situation where the patient becomes severely malnourished from the operation.

6. Recovery after gastric bypass can be challenging. What steps do you take to ensure your patients have a smooth and successful recovery process?

The peri-operative period is very important, and it starts well before the operation, psychological preparation, nutritional, all the necessary investigations, dietitian consultation, identifying and optimizing any other medical conditions. During the admission patient will have prophylaxis to infection and deep vein thrombosis, smooth post operative care includes good pain control so the patient can be early mobilized as well as nutritional advice and support. The patient will be fully looked after, will have frequent initial follows up after the operation, then three-monthly visits for two years, most of it will be inclusive care in our hospital.

7. Nutritional deficiencies are a concern after gastric bypass. How do you monitor and manage this in your patients post-surgery?

Nutrition can be a serious issue, for this reason we have full care starting preoperative and continue for two years, we check all the nutritional status before the operation and optimize the patient, and immediately after the operation patient will give the essential nutritional support and will be monitored on three monthly basis for two years.

8. What are the long-term results of gastric bypass, and how do you help patients maintain their weight loss over time?

The long-term results of weight loss and the remission of obesity related comorbidities are very good at 5 years statistically, committed patient will make all this permanent with lifestyle changes of diet and exercise, so patient life will be completely changed in terms of good general health, cure and prevent obesity related diseases and complications including heart disease, liver disease, cancers and statistically patients will live longer in good quality of life.

9. How do you handle patients who regain weight after gastric bypass? What strategies do you use to help them get back on track?

Weight regains is well known problem after bariatric surgery and after any kind of weight loss method, In principle as I mentioned earlier, patient preoperative preparation is key factor in successful outcome, include psychological preparation well informed preoperatively is the key factor in the successful of the operation, having said that, there is some factors that play role in this situation that may include; longer small bowels in some patients than the others increases the absorption rate, in some people the new created small stomach capsule becomes larger, others develop bad habits of bingeing eating large amount of sugar containing food. All this needs to be investigated properly to find the exact reason for the weight regained and treated or corrected accordingly.



‘Second term is just more powerful’

# US President Donald Trump goes with gut and world goes along for the ride

WASHINGTON, April 14, (AP): After US President Donald Trump reversed course on his tariffs and announced he would pursue trade negotiations, he had a simple explanation for how he would make decisions in the coming weeks.

“Instinctively, more than anything else,” he told reporters this past week. “You almost can’t take a pencil to paper, it’s really more of an instinct than anything else.”

It was the latest example of how Trump loves to keep everyone on edge for his next move. Trump has not only expansively flexed the powers of the presidency by declaring emergencies and shredding political norms, he has eschewed traditional deliberative procedures for making decisions. The result is that more of life around the country and the world is subject to the president’s desires, moods and grievances than ever before.

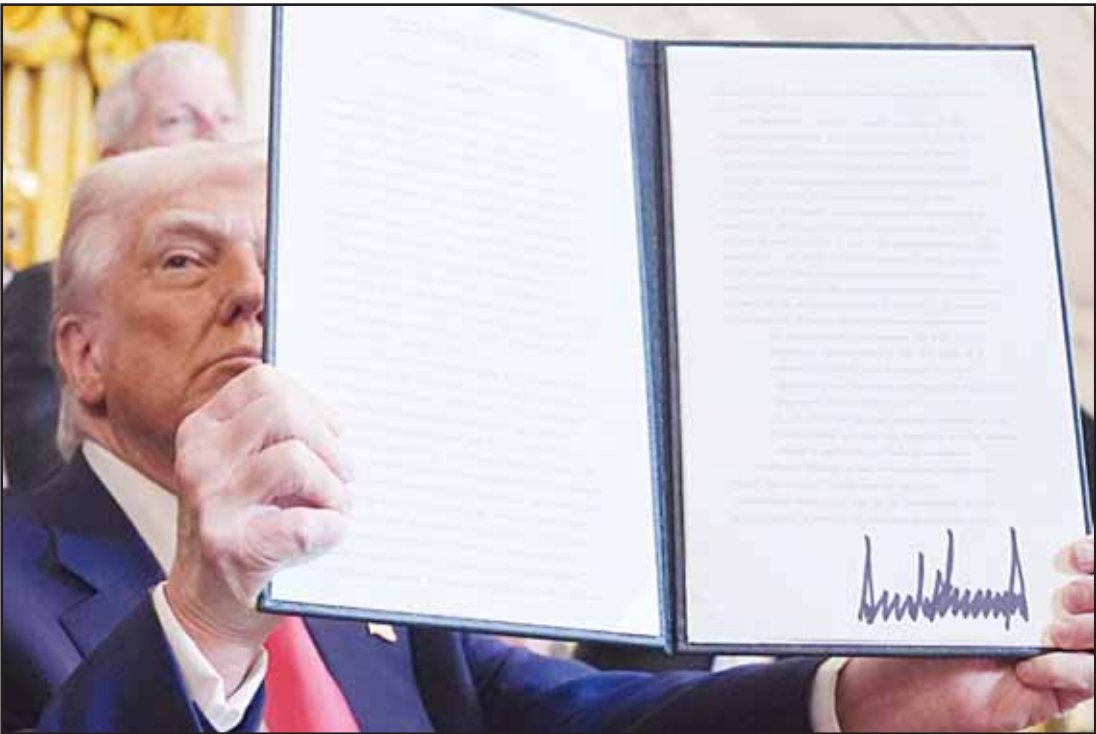
“We have a democratic leader who seems to have the authority to act as whimsically as a 19th century European autocrat,” said Tim Naftali, a historian and senior research scholar at Columbia University. “He sneezes and everyone catches a cold.”

The White House rejects criticism that Trump is overstepping his authority or improperly consolidating power. Administration officials frequently emphasize that the Republican president won a clear election victory and is now pursuing the agenda that he campaigned on. In this view, resisting his will, such as when courts block his executive orders, is the real threat to democracy.

“Trust in President Trump,” White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Friday while answering questions about economic policy. “He knows what he’s doing.”

The presidency has been accumulating power for years, long before Trump ran for office, and it is not unusual for administrations to veer in various directions based on political and policy priorities. But Trump’s new term has been different in the early months, and he seems to recognize it.

“The second term is just more powerful,” Trump marveled recently. “When I say ‘do it,’ they do it.”



US President Donald Trump holds a signed executive order during an event in the East Room of the White House on April 8, in Washington. (AP)

Although international trade offers the most extensive example of Trump’s inclination to act unilaterally since he returned to office in January the same approach has been

evident elsewhere.

He installed himself as chair of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to overhaul programming

at Washington’s premier cultural institution. He issued an order to purge “improper ideology” from the Smithsonian Institution’s network of museums. He punished law firms associated with his opponents. He directed the Justice Department to investigate former officials who crossed him during his first term.

When Trump decided to remove regulations on household water efficiency - he wants more water flowing in showers - his executive order said the normal public comment period “is unnecessary because I am ordering the repeal.”

“What the president ends up having is what he wants, which is everyone’s attention all of the time,” Naftali said.

Trump’s ambitions stretch beyond the United States, such as his goal of annexing Greenland. Vice President JD Vance visited the island last month to talk about its strategic location in the Arctic, where Russia and China want to expand their influence, but also its importance to Trump himself.

“We can’t just ignore the president’s desires,” Vance said.

Trump has spent decades trying to turn his impulses into reality, whether it’s skyscrapers in Manhattan or casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He once sued a journalist for allegedly underestimating his net worth. During a deposition, Trump said “it goes up and down with the markets and with attitudes and with feelings, even my own feelings.”

A lawyer for the journalist appeared puzzled. “You said your net worth goes up and down based upon your own feelings?”

Trump said yes. “I would say it’s my general attitude at the time that the question may be asked.”

He took a similar approach into the White House for his first term. While talking about the economy with The Washington Post, Trump said “my gut tells me more sometimes than anybody else’s brain can ever tell me.”

Leon Panetta, who was White House chief of staff under Democratic President Bill Clinton and later served in national security roles for Democratic President Barack Obama, said there normally is a more deliberative process for critical issues.

## Florida universities to deputize campus police for immigration enforcement

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., April 14, (AP): The police departments of at least three public universities in Florida are seeking agreements with the federal government to carry out immigration enforcement on campus.

It’s a significant shift in policy for schools that had previously been considered “sensitive locations” to be insulated from such law enforcement activities, under a federal policy the Trump administration rescinded.

The change comes as federal officials are revoking the visas of international students and using what critics say are new tactics with vague justifications to push some students out of the country.

Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, the University of Florida in Gainesville and the University of South Florida in Tampa are all seeking to deputize their campus police for immigration enforcement, representatives for the schools confirmed to The Associated Press.

Florida Gov Ron DeSantis has prioritized support for President Donald Trump’s mass deportation agenda, signing new laws requiring local and state agencies to use their “best efforts” to support federal immigration enforcement.

Joshua Glanzer, a spokesperson for FAU, said “all state schools” in Florida are expected to pursue the expanded immigration enforcement authority.

“We are simply following guidance from the Governor’s Feb. 19 directive to state law enforcement agencies, of which FAUPD and other state university police departments are included,” Glanzer said in a statement.

The schools are not yet listed in an online log of agencies participating in what’s known as the 287(g) program, which allows US Immigration and Customs Enforcement to train selected law enforcement officers and deputize them to help enforce immigration laws. If approved, the university police departments could be among the first in the country to be granted such authority.

Under a 287(g) task force model, such as the agreement being pursued by the University of Florida, participating officers



Law enforcement officers approach protesters as they congregate at MLK Plaza at the University of South Florida on April 30, 2024, in Tampa, Fla. (AP)

would have the authority to interrogate “any alien or person believed to be an alien” about their right to remain in the country, as well as the power to make arrests without a warrant in some cases. Jennica Charles, who’s studying political science at FAU, said the news was “shocking.” The daughter of Haitian immigrants said she found a welcoming community at the school in South Florida, a region that has long been a destination for first and second generation Americans. In recent years, FAU has billed itself as having the “most racially and culturally diverse student body” in Florida’s public university system.

“Who’s to say that someone doesn’t stop me and say, ‘oh I look like I don’t belong here?’” Charles said. “I definitely think it’s going to make people feel more unsafe, whether you are someone that has immigrant status or not.”

The Presidents’ Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration is among the organizations giving guidance to school administrators as they navigate this new level of government scrutiny of American college campuses.

## Suspect in arson at Pennsylvania Governor Shapiro residence planned to beat him: docus

HARRISBURG, Pa., April 14, (AP): A man who authorities said scaled an iron security fence in the middle of the night, eluded police and broke into the Pennsylvania governor’s mansion where he set a fire had planned to beat Gov Josh Shapiro with a hammer if he found him, according to court documents released Monday.

The fire left significant damage and forced Shapiro, his family and guests to evacuate the building early Sunday. The man, arrested later in the day, faces charges including attempted homicide, terrorism, aggravated arson and aggravated assault, authorities said.

During a police interview, authorities said Cody Balmer told them after he was taken into custody that he would have beaten Shapiro with a small sledge hammer if he had found him, the documents say. Balmer had walked an hour from his home to the governor’s residence, and during the police interview, “Balmer admitted to harboring hatred towards Governor Shapiro,” according to a police affidavit, but it wasn’t noted why.

Shapiro said he, his wife, their four children, two dogs and another family were at the residence on Saturday and were awakened by state troopers pounding on their doors at about 2 am Sunday. They fled and firefighters extinguished the fire, officials said. No one was injured.

At a Sunday evening news conference in front of the badly damaged south wing of the governor’s residence, Pennsylvania State Police Col Christopher Paris identified the man in custody as Balmer, 38, of Harrisburg.

Authorities did not say whether Balmer has a lawyer or where he was being held and calls to people believed to be relatives went unanswered or unreturned Sunday. One recent listed residence in Harrisburg was condemned in 2022. One recent listed residence in Harrisburg was condemned in 2022.

Paris emphasized that the investigation is continuing. Authorities did not disclose the man’s motive, but an emotional Shapiro, who is viewed as a potential White House contender for the Democratic Party in 2028, said he is unbowed.



Pennsylvania Gov Josh Shapiro speaks during a news conference at the governor’s official residence about a suspected arson fire that forced him, his family and guests to flee in the middle of the night on the Jewish holiday of Passover on April 13, in Harrisburg, Pa. (AP)

Shapiro said that if Balmer was trying to stop him from doing his job, then he’ll work harder.

Authorities said the suspect hopped over a nearly 7-foot-high (2.1-meter-high) iron security fence surrounding the property, eluded officers who became aware of the breach and forcibly entered the residence before setting it on fire. He used bottles filled with gasoline to make the Molotov cocktails, documents say.

Lt Col George Bivens said Balmer appeared to have carefully planned the attack. He was inside the residence for about a minute before he escaped, Bivens said.

Bivens said Balmer was later arrested in the area.

Balmer has faced criminal charges over the past decade including simple assault, theft and forgery, according to on-line criminal court records.

## Europe

**Paris denounces order:** France’s foreign minister said Monday that Algerian authorities gave 12 French state officials 48 hours to leave the country.



Barrot

Jean-Noël Barrot denounced the decision, saying it appeared as “a response to the arrest of three Algerian nationals suspected of serious offenses on French soil.”

French counterterrorism prosecutors said the Algerians were arrested Friday and handed preliminary charges of “kidnapping or arbitrary detention ... in connection with a terrorist undertaking.” They are allegedly involved in the April 2024 kidnapping of an Algerian influencer, Amir Boukhors, or Amir DZ, a known critic of the Algerian government with 1.1 million followers on TikTok.

An Algerian consular official is among the three arrested, according to French media. (AP)

**Ex-UK lawmaker charged:** A former Conservative lawmaker and 14 others have been charged with cheating when placing bets on the timing of Britain’s general election last year, the Gambling Commission said Monday.

Craig Williams was one of several people who had been investigated for cashing in on insider knowledge on the date then-Prime Minister Rishi Sunak would call the election. Other members of the Conservative Party that controlled government at the time and at least one of the prime minister’s police bodyguards were also under investigation in the scandal.

It’s legal for politicians to wager on elections, but the investigation was about whether they used inside information to gain an unfair advantage. One of the popular bets at the time was to wager on the date the prime minister would call an election. (AP)



Greek Defense Minister Nikos Dendias, (front left), and his French counterpart Sebastian Lecornu, (front right), inspect the guard of honour before their meeting in Athens, Greece on April 14. (AP)

## Greece signs missile deal

Greece signed a deal Monday to purchase anti-ship missiles from France as it seeks to bolster its defenses in a procurement program aimed mainly at addressing tensions with neighboring Turkey.

Greece’s Defense Minister Nikos Dendias signed the agreement for the 16 Exocet missiles with his French counterpart Sébastien Lecornu, who was on a one-day visit to Athens. The two did not disclose the cost of the deal.

It is the latest in a series of purchases of military equipment from France, with Greece having already bought two dozen Rafale warplanes and three Belharra-class frigates. Dendias said discussions are progressing for the addition of a fourth frigate, adding that France is also providing Greece with NH-90 military helicopters.

Athens has said it will spend 25 billion euros (\$27 billion) over the next decade to adapt its military to evolving high-tech warfare technologies.

Although NATO allies, Greece and Turkey have long-standing disputes over boundaries in the Aegean Sea and eastern Mediterranean that have brought them close to war several times in recent decades. (AP)

## Russia claims deadly attack on Ukraine’s Sumy targeted military forces as condemnation grows

BRUSSELS, April 14, (AP): Russia on Monday claimed its deadly missile attack on Ukraine’s Sumy that killed and wounded scores including children had targeted a gathering of Ukrainian troops, while European leaders condemned the attack as a war crime.

Ukrainian officials have said two ballistic missiles on Palm Sunday morning hit the heart of Sumy, a city about 30 kilometers (less than 20 miles) from Ukraine’s border with Russia, killing at least 34, including two children, and wounding 119. It was the second large-scale attack to claim civilian lives in Ukraine in just over a week.

Asked about the attack, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia’s military only strikes military targets. Russia’s Defense Ministry said the strike targeted a gathering of senior military officers

and accused Kyiv of using civilians as shields by holding military meetings in the city’s center.

The ministry claimed to kill over 60 troops. Russia gave no evidence to back its claims.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called for a global response to the attack, saying the first strike hit university buildings and the second exploded above street level. “Only real pressure on Russia can stop this. We need tangible sanctions against those sectors that finance the Russian killing machine,” he wrote Monday on social media.

Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, whose country holds the European Union’s rotating presidency, called the attacks “Russia’s mocking answer” to Kyiv’s agreement to a ceasefire proposed by the U.S. over a month ago.



A man cries as he leans on the bus that was hit by a Russian missile on Sumy, Ukraine on April 13. (AP)

## Hungarian opposition leader to restore Western alliances if he defeats Orbán

BUDAPEST, Hungary, April 14, (AP): The leader of Hungary’s largest opposition party on Sunday told thousands of supporters that he would guide his country out of its international isolation if he defeats Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in elections scheduled for next year.

Péter Magyar, the leader of the Respect and Freedom (Tisza) party, represents the most serious challenge to Orbán’s power since the right-wing populist leader took power in 2010. Recent polling suggests that Tisza has overtaken Orbán’s Fidesz party as Hungary struggles with a stagnating economy and has been politically sidelined in the European Union over Orbán’s policies.

Speaking at a rally in Budapest on Sunday, Magyar said that, if elected, he and his party would restore Hungary’s relationships and reputation among its allies that have suffered as Orbán has attacked the European Union and pursued close relationships with autocracies like Russia and China.

“We will finally put our common affairs in order,” Magyar said. “Our homeland, Hungary, will once again be a proud and reliable ally of NATO. Hungary will once again be a full-fledged member of the European Union.”

Orbán, a self-described “illiberal” leader, has been accused by critics of having led Hungary out of the community of European democracies by eroding democratic institutions, violating judicial independence and taking over much of Hungary’s media.

Since taking power in 2010, he and his Fidesz party have led the country with a two-thirds majority in parliament, and easily defeated any opposition.

But recent polls suggest that Tisza has pulled ahead of Fidesz in popularity as Magyar’s campaign focuses on economic and social issues facing the country like persistent inflation, a poor healthcare system and alleged government corruption.



Leader of the Hungarian opposition Tisza Party Peter Magyar waves a Hungarian flag before the results of the party’s public survey entitled ‘Voice of the Nation’ is announced in Budapest, Hungary on April 13. (AP)

On Sunday, Magyar said Orbán’s system “cannot be reformed, cannot be fixed, cannot be improved. This system can only be replaced, and that is what we will do - lawfully, democratically, but with determination, we will cut down the regime.”

Nóra Farkas, a supporter of Magyar at the rally, said she had hoped for Orbán’s defeat in Hungary’s last national elections in 2022, but that with around a year to go before the next ballot, she is more confident that change is possible.

“Anyone who thinks things are going well in this country is blind. Orbán and his circle are the main reason for the problems,” she said.



Yoon’s legal saga far from over

Rebellion trial opens for S.Korea’s ousted prez



Recently ousted South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol leaves the presidential residence in Seoul, South Korea on April 11. (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea, April 14, (AP): Yoon Suk Yeol’s legal saga is far from over.

Ten days after he was ousted from office over his martial law declaration, the former conservative South Korean president appeared for the first time at his criminal trial Monday on high-stakes rebellion charges.

Yoon’s baffling decision to declare military rule and send troops to Seoul streets in December made him the country’s first president to be indicted while in office. If convicted of rebellion, he could face a life sentence, or theoretically the death penalty.

Here is what to know about the trial, which could take as long as two to three years:

When the Constitutional Court upheld the parliament’s impeachment of Yoon and removed him from office, it stated Yoon’s violation of the constitution and other laws was too grave to be tolerated and “betrayed public confidence.” It said Yoon’s martial law enactment “caused confusion in the society, economy, politics, diplomacy and all other areas.”

Given the ruling, there is “a low possibility” for the criminal court to issue a different verdict so Yoon will likely be convicted on rebellion charges, said Park SungBae, a lawyer who specializes in criminal law.

The Seoul Central District Court is currently reviewing whether Yoon’s martial law imposition amounted to an act of masterminding a rebellion, a grave charge whose conviction carries only two sentences - the capital punishment or life imprisonment.

Yoon has denied the rebellion charges brought by prosecutors in January. Yoon maintained his decree was a desperate yet peaceful attempt to raise public awareness about how the “anti-state” liberal opposition was allegedly abusing its legislative majority to obstruct his agenda and complicate state affairs.

“The fact that they built a rebellion charge over an event that lasted only a few hours and was resolved non-violently after the National Assembly’s demand to lift the measures was immediately accepted ... doesn’t align with proper legal reasoning,” Yoon said Monday at the court, according to Yonhap news agency.

Some observers earlier said Yoon’s rebellion charges were debatable as his decree didn’t lead to major violence or cause any serious civilian casualties.

Former Malaysian prime minister Abdullah, who extended political freedoms, dies at 85



Malaysian former Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, (center), waves as he leaves prime minister’s office in Putrajaya, outside Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 3, 2009. (AP)

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, April 14, (AP): Former Malaysian prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, a moderate who extended the country’s political freedoms but was criticized for lackluster leadership, has died of heart disease. He was 85.

Abdullah entered the critical care unit at the National Heart Institute on April 25, 2024 after being diagnosed with spontaneous pneumothorax, a collapsed lung that occurs without any apparent cause.

Affectionately known as “Pak Lah,” Abdullah was admitted to Kuala Lumpur’s State Institute of Heart on Sunday after experiencing breathing difficulties where he was closely monitored by a cardiac specialists team, but he passed away on Monday at 7:10 p.m. despite all medical efforts, said the hospital in a statement.

Abdullah, Malaysia’s fifth leader, served from 2003 to 2009, when he was pressured to resign to take responsibility for the governing coalition’s dismal results in national elections. He kept a low profile after leaving politics.

In 2022, his son-in-law, Khairy Jamaluddin, disclosed that Abdullah had dementia that was progressively worsening. He said Abdullah had trouble speaking and could not recognize his family.

Abdullah took office in October 2003, riding a wave of popularity as he replaced Mahathir Mohamad, a domineering, sharp-tongued leader known for his semi-authoritarian rule during 22 years in office.

A seasoned politician who held many Cabinet positions, Abdullah was handpicked by Mahathir, who believed a soft-spoken, unambitious leader would maintain his policies.

Initially, Abdullah won support with promises of institutional reforms and

his brand of moderate Islam. He was known fondly as “Pak Lah” or Uncle Lah. He pledged greater political freedoms with more space for critics, and vowed to end corruption after a government minister was hauled to court on graft allegations.

“During his rule, the country transitioned from a very authoritarian rule under Mahathir to a more multifaceted regime. It provided some breathing space for many Malaysians after more than two decades of very suffocating rule,” said Oh Ei Sun from Singapore’s Institute of International Affairs.

Months after taking office, Abdullah led his National Front governing coalition to a landslide victory in a 2004 general election seen as a stamp of approval of his leadership. That helped him partially step out of Mahathir’s shadow, but the euphoria didn’t last.

In the following years, Abdullah faced criticism inside and outside his party for generally lackluster and ineffectual leadership. He didn’t follow through on promises to eradicate corruption, reform the judiciary and strengthen institutions such as the police and the civil service.

Critics slammed Abdullah for concurrently taking on the finance minister and internal security minister posts. He was often criticized for dozing off during meetings or at public events, which he blamed on a sleep disorder. Khairy, his son-in-law, led a team of advisers in the Prime Minister’s Office whom critics said influenced Abdullah’s decisions and controlled access to him.

Abdullah also fell out with Mahathir after he axed some of the former leader’s projects, including a proposed bridge to Singapore. Mahathir turned into one of his fiercest critics and accused Abdullah of nepotism and inef-

ficiency..

While Abdullah was viewed as a weak leader, he ushered in limited freedom of speech and allowing a more critical media. Conservatives in his party said that was his undoing as it bolstered a newly resurgent opposition led by reformist Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar, Malaysia’s current leader, became prime minister after 2022 elections.

In late 2007, Abdullah faced a series of massive street protests on issues including fuel hikes, demands for electoral reforms and fairer treatment for ethnic minorities. The protests shook his administration. Police cracked down on the rallies and Abdullah warned he would sacrifice public freedoms for stability.

In the March 2008 general election, his National Front suffered one of its worst results in a huge blow to Abdullah. It failed to secure a two-thirds legislative majority for the first time in 40 years, yielding 82 seats to the opposition in the 222-member Parliament. It also lost an unprecedented five states.

Abdullah initially refused to step down, but pressure grew. Mahathir quit the United Malays National Organization, the linchpin of the governing coalition, to protest Abdullah’s leadership. Dissidents within UMNO openly called on him to resign to take responsibility for the dismal election performance.

Abdullah caved in and handed over power to his deputy, Najib Razak, in April 2009.

Born in the northern state of Penang on Nov. 26, 1939, Abdullah came from a religious family. His grandfather was the first mufti, or Islamic jurist, of Penang. Abdullah received a bachelor’s degree in Islamic Studies from the University of Malaya.

Ecuador re-elects Noboa with divisive no-holds-barred crime fighting record

QUITO, Ecuador, April 14, (AP): Ecuadorian voters weary of crime reelected President Daniel Noboa, a conservative young millionaire with a divisive no-holds-barred crime fighting record, by a wide margin Sunday, but his opponent vowed to seek a recount over what she described as “grotesque” electoral fraud.

Figures released by Ecuador’s National Electoral Council showed Noboa receiving 55.8% of the vote with more than 92% of ballots counted, while leftist lawyer Luisa González earned 44%. Council president Diana Atamaint said those results showed an “irreversible trend” in favor of Noboa.

The win gives Noboa four years to fulfill the promises he first made in 2023, when he stunned voters by winning a snap election and a 16-month presidency despite his limited political experience.

“Ecuador is changing... and that path will mean our children will live better lives than we did,” Noboa told supporters during a brief speech in which he also criticized his opponent’s fraud allegations.

“I find it embarrassing that with an 11- or 12-point difference, they come out to question the will of the Ecuadorians,” Noboa added. “Ecuadorians have already spoken, now we have to get to work.”

Noboa, heir to a fortune built on the banana trade, is expected to continue applying some of his no-holds-barred crime fighting strategies that part of the electorate finds appealing but which have tested the limits of laws and norms of governing.

González’s defeat marks the third consecutive time that the party of Rafael Correa, the country’s most influential president this century, failed to return to the presidency. She told supporters that her campaign “does not recognize the results presented by the (National Electoral Council),” arguing among other issues that pre-election polls showed her ahead of Noboa.

The candidates advanced to Sunday’s contest after getting the most votes in February’s first-round election. Noboa led González by about 17,000 votes that time.

Voters were primarily worried about the violence that transformed the country, starting in 2021 - a spike in crime tied to the trafficking of cocaine produced in neighboring Colombia and Peru.

Both candidates promised tough-on-crime policies, better equipment for law enforcement and international help to fight drug cartels and local criminal groups.

“My vote is clear,” said Irene Valdez, a retiree who voted for Noboa. “I want to continue living in freedom.”

College student Martín Constanter said a different view.



Incumbent President Daniel Noboa holds his children’s hands after voting in the presidential election runoff in Olon, Ecuador on April 13. (AP)

“I think Luisa is going to change things because Noboa has been very authoritarian,” Constanter, 19, said near a voting center in Quito, the capital. “Our country needs a lot of changes.”

Much of González’s support comes from people who long for the low crime and unemployment rates of Correa’s presidency but gloss over his authoritarian tendencies, the huge debt he ran up and the corruption-related sentence handed down to him in absentia in 2020.

More than 13 million people were eligible to vote, which is mandatory for adults up to the age of 65. It is optional for people aged 16 and 17 and over 65. Failure to vote results in a \$46 fine.

Electoral authorities reported voter participation of more than 80%.

“The most important thing is that a comfortable result gives peace of mind to the country because it avoids a political confrontation, or even worse, a violent one due to accusations of fraud,” said Grace Jaramillo, an Andean region expert and professor at the University of British Columbia. “Noboa’s victory is clear, and that also reassures the international community in the face of a wave of uncertainty.”

Atamaint said several people, including voters and poll workers, were arrested over ballot anomalies. She said some cases involved double voting and others stemmed from reports of counterfeit, pre-marked ballots.

Atamaint added that 17 people were caught taking photos of their ballots, which the National Electoral Council banned for this election citing reports of voter coercion by criminal groups. The violation comes with a maximum fine of \$32,000.

Many Ecuadorians used their vote to express rejection of a candidate and not necessarily to endorse the candidate they voted for.

“Ecuador is polarized, which is a sign of rejection of the past, but also of the

recent policies of the Noboa administration,” political analyst Oswaldo Landázuri said, adding that the expected tight result “could become a major problem for the country” if one candidate does not recognize the other as the winner.

In 2023, Noboa and González were largely unknown to most voters as they sought the presidency for the first time. They were first-term lawmakers in May 2023, when then-President Guillermo Lasso dissolved the National Assembly, shortening his own mandate as a result and triggering that year’s snap election.

Noboa’s first foray into politics was his stint as a lawmaker. An heir to a fortune built on the banana trade, Noboa opened an event organizing company when he was 18 and then joined his father’s Noboa Corp., where he held management positions in the shipping, logistics and commercial areas.

González, 47, held various government jobs during the presidency of Correa, who led Ecuador from 2007 through 2017 with free-spending socially conservative policies and grew increasingly authoritarian in his last years as president.

Noboa, 37, declared Ecuador to be in a state of “internal armed conflict” in January 2024, allowing him to deploy thousands of soldiers to the streets to combat gangs and to charge people with terrorism counts for alleged ties to organized crime groups.

Under his watch, the homicide rate dropped from 46.18 per 100,000 people in 2023, to 38.76 per 100,000 people in 2024. But despite the decrease, the rate remained far higher than the 6.85 homicides per 100,000 people seen in 2019.

Some of Noboa’s heavy-handed crime-fighting tactics have come under scrutiny for testing the limits of laws and norms of governing. He has also been criticized for allegations of electoral irregularities he made after February’s vote.

Bangladesh court issues arrest warrant for British MP tied to ex-premier Sheikh Hasina

DHAKA, Bangladesh, April 14, (AP): A judge in Bangladesh issued an arrest warrant for British lawmaker and former government minister Tulip Siddiq, a niece of Bangladesh’s former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted in August last year in a mass uprising that ended her 15-year rule.

The country’s official Anti-Corruption Commission has been investigating allegations against Siddiq that she and her family members, including Hasina, illegally received land in a state-owned township project near the capital, Dhaka.

Senior Special Judge of Dhaka Metropolitan Zakir Hossain passed the order on Sunday, after considering charges in three separate cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, the leading Dhaka-based Bengali-language Prothom Alo newspaper reported.

Siddiq, 42, was named in the arrest warrant along with more than 50 others including her mother, Sheikh Rehana, and her brother, Radwan Siddiq, the newspaper reported.

Siddiq’s lawyers said the charges against Siddiq were baseless and “politically motivated.”

“Ms. Siddiq knows nothing about



From front left: Tulip Siddiq, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Russian President Vladimir Putin attend a signing ceremony in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Jan 15, 2013. (AP)

a hearing in Dhaka relating to her and she has no knowledge of any arrest warrant that is said to have been issued,” law firm Stephenson Harwood said in a statement.

“To be clear, there is no basis at all for any charges to be made against her, and there is absolutely no truth in any allegation that she received a plot of

land in Dhaka through illegal means,” it added.

The lawmaker, who represents the north London district of Hampstead and Highgate in Parliament, served in Britain’s center-left Labour Party government as economic secretary to the Treasury - the minister responsible for tackling financial corruption.

S.African leader Ramaphosa appoints special US envoy

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, April 14, (AP): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed a former deputy finance minister as a special envoy to the United States on Monday after the ambassador was expelled last month by the Trump administration.

Ramaphosa said Mcebisi Jonas’ appointment would help South Africa rebuild its relationship with the U.S., which has deteriorated swiftly since President Donald Trump took office.

Trump has accused the Black-led South African government of mistreating a white minority at home and also criticized its foreign policy as anti-American. He signed an executive order in February cutting US funding to South Africa over those issues.

Trump continued his criticism in a Truth Social post this weekend, when he said the U.S. did not want to attend the Group of 20 summit this year if it were held in South Africa, as scheduled. South Africa holds the rotational presidency of the G20 group of developed and developing nations and is due to host world leaders and top diplomats for a summit in Johannesburg in November.

“Is this where we want to be for the G20? I don’t think so!” Trump posted on Saturday. In his post, Trump repeated his claim that South Africa was allowing land to be seized from white farmers “and then killing them and their families.”



Ramaphosa



## CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq

The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the most recent issues of CBK Bonds and related Tawarruq at a total value of KWD (200) million for (3) months with Rate of Return (4.125%).

# Business

Held under patronage of CBK Governor Basel Al-Haroon

## KIBS launches executive program with Harvard Business School

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Under the patronage of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of the Board of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) Mr. Basel A. Al-Haroon, KIBS has officially launched the executive education program aimed at advancing the development of senior leaders in the banking and finance sectors. This program, titled “Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability”, will run from April 12-17, 2025, in collaboration with Harvard Business School (HBS).

Now in its 16th edition, this program is part of a successful series that has been presented for over 15 years across the GCC. This year’s session will be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait, marking an exciting milestone. The initiative is part of the Kafa’a program, led by CBK in partnership with Kuwaiti banks and managed by KIBS.

Focusing on two critical themes, “Financial Sustainability and Strategic Leadership”, the program is designed to equip participants with the necessary skills to navigate the evolving financial landscape, respond to market changes, and understand the importance of strategic leadership. Harvard’s renowned case-study method will be used throughout the program to enhance participants’ analytical abilities and provide practical tools to foster innovation and improve organizational culture.

First launched in 2010, HBS’s executive program has been held annually across the GCC. Last year, the program was successfully conducted in the UAE. Its consistent success has fueled its ongoing development, ensuring it remains relevant amidst the rapid changes in the business world. Participants have included local Kuwaiti banks, and various organizations within Kuwait.

The program adheres to HBS’s rigorous standards to deliver a top-tier learning experience. New case studies, chosen by Harvard’s faculty, focus on both the banking and financial sectors as well as other relevant industries. Participants will engage in collaborative group activities to strengthen their analytical skills, and upon completion, they will receive a certificate from HBS, verifying their successful participation.

At KIBS, the development of qualified talent within Kuwait and the broader GCC banking and finance sector remains a strategic priority. KIBS is also committed to fostering collaboration among GCC countries in training and development.

KIBS would like to express its sincere gratitude to all participants for their valuable involvement in this impactful program.

### Grace period ends on April 18, 2025

## CBK announces final deadline for fifth edition ‘banknote exchange’

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The Central Bank of Kuwait announced that the grace period for exchanging the fifth edition Kuwaiti banknotes with the sixth edition banknotes will expire in four days on April 18, 2025, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, CBK explained that holders of the fifth

edition banknotes will no longer be eligible for exchange after this date. The exchange can be completed by visiting the CBK headquarters in person between 8:00 am and 2:00 pm, presenting a valid personal identification card, and filling out the designated form.

## Boursa Kuwait closes in red

General index down 0.10%

**KUWAIT CITY, April 14, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Monday’s trading session in the red, with its General Index dropping 7.49 points, or 0.10 percent, to settle at 7,800.77 points. Trading activity saw 228.3 million shares exchanged through 16,089 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 67.2 million (approximately USD 241.9 million).**

The Main Market Index recorded a sharper decline, falling 21.30 points, or 0.30 percent, to

7,117.62 points. It saw 93.6 million shares traded via 6,386 deals, valued at KD 13.10 million (USD 40 million).

Meanwhile, the Premier Market Index dipped 4.42 points, or 0.05 percent, closing at 8,356.57 points, with 134.7 million shares changing hands through 9,703 transactions, worth KD 54.12 million (USD 165.6 million).

The Main 50 Index also saw notable losses, dropping 56.27 points, or 0.82 percent, to close at 6,843.59 points. It recorded a trade volume of 81 million shares across 5,579 transactions, with a total value of KD 11.8 million (USD 36.10 million).

### Competition aligned with Kuwait Vision 2035

## Gulf Bank launches third edition of Fekrety Innovation Competition

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: As part of its continued commitment to promoting innovation and creativity among its employees, Gulf Bank has introduced the third edition of the Fekrety Innovation Competition for 2025. The competition aims to inspire employees to submit creative ideas that will drive the development of banking services and products, in alignment with the Bank’s strategy and Kuwait Vision 2035. This vision prioritizes digital transformation, enhancing customer experience, and adopting advanced technologies to support the national economy and improve quality of life.

Gulf Bank views Fekrety as a platform to inspire employees across all departments to actively engage in improving the customer experience, under the theme “Innovation for All.” The competition invites employees from different departments to submit innovative and creative ideas that can positively impact both the Bank and the wider banking industry.

The Bank emphasized that the competition provides employees with the

opportunity to share their ideas without constraints, regardless of how unconventional or innovative they may be. The Digital Transformation and Innovation Unit will provide support to help employees refine and develop their ideas, ensuring they align with customer needs and contribute to delivering accessible, innovative banking services.

This initiative builds on the success Gulf Bank has achieved in its digital transformation journey, which plays a



pivotal role in driving employee performance and fostering collaboration across departments. The Bank believes that continuous innovation is only possible by empowering employees to turn their ideas into reality.

Furthermore, Gulf Bank highlights the importance of investing in its diverse and talented workforce, while also supporting the development of local skills within the community.

The bank remains committed to sup-

porting Kuwait Vision 2035 through initiatives such as the Datathon and Hackathon competitions, which equip future generations with the skills to leverage data and digital technologies in achieving sustainable development goals and boosting the national economy.

Gulf Bank aims to be Kuwait’s leading bank, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace to deliver exceptional customer service while contributing sustainably to the community. Through its extensive branch network and innovative digital services, the Bank empowers customers to conduct banking transactions conveniently and efficiently, ensuring a seamless experience.

In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, “New Kuwait,” and its commitment to fostering collaborative partnerships, Gulf Bank is dedicated to driving robust sustainability initiatives across environmental, social, and governance (ESG) dimensions. The Bank is committed to implementing strategically selected and diverse sustainability programs both internally and externally.

### Assets and workforce transferred

## KPC approves merger of KIPIC & KNPC

By Najeh Bilal  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: With the implementation of steps for the oil sector restructuring project, the procedures for dissolving Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) and merging it with Kuwait National Petroleum Corporation (KNPC) have been completed; including the transfer of its employees, projects and financial assets to KNPC.

A source from the oil sector affirmed that the mecha-

nism for transferring assets, liabilities and workforce was implemented in accordance with the procedures and requirements under the applicable laws, regulations and systems; and pursuant to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Board of Directors Decision No. 61/2024 issued on May 5, 2024 regarding the approval of the KIPIC-KNPC merger.

The source added that the decision included assigning the relevant stakeholders in both companies to immediately begin making all necessary preparations and arrangements to implement the merger.

In partnership with Mol and in conjunction with the kick-off of the 38th GCC Traffic Week

## Zain Kuwait unveils new TVC to promote the new traffic law

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Zain announced a new collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Directorate of Traffic, to launch a brand-new television production, coinciding with the 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week under the theme Driving Without a Phone, and in line with the upcoming implementation of the new traffic law starting from 22 April 2025.

The TVC was unveiled during the opening ceremony of the 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week and its accompanying exhibition, held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel and the Avenues Mall, under the patronage and presence of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf, with the attendance of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs, Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, Zain Kuwait’s Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer, Waleed Al-Khashti, senior security leaders from the General Directorate of Traffic, and representatives of partners and sponsors.

This collaboration reflects the ongoing strategic partnership between Zain and the Ministry of Interior over the past years, which has resulted in many joint efforts and initiatives to raise public awareness around important security topics,



Al-Nawaf and Al-Khadda honor Al-Khashti in recognition of Zain’s support.

including traffic safety and road security.

The television production, titled Salute to the Police Officer, aims to raise awareness about the new traffic law, which introduces several amendments designed to enhance road safety, strengthen adherence to traffic regulations, and protect road users. The production stars a group of Kuwaiti children expressing their admiration and respect for Ministry of Interior officers through various interactive scenes on the road, in the

operations room, and beyond.

The TVC specifically targets the next generation of road users, while key amendments to the new traffic law are displayed on-screen to inform adult viewers. The production features lyrics by Ahmed Al-Sharqawi, music by Abdullah Al-Shatti, and is produced by Joy Productions.

Zain’s participation stems from its ongoing commitment to collaborating with various governmental bodies, including the Ministry of Interior, in adopting initiatives and

projects that serve all segments of the community, contribute to the nation’s progress and prosperity, and support the country’s development goals.

The exhibition accompanying the ceremony aimed to promote awareness of the key amendments in the new traffic law, scheduled for implementation on 22 April 2025, raising awareness among visitors—particularly young people and parents—of the importance of adhering to these regulations to ensure the safety and

security of all road users. The exhibition also featured many interactive activities and awareness initiatives to deliver its message in a creative way.

The 38th Unified GCC Traffic Week seeks to spread traffic awareness, promote a culture of compliance with road regulations, and protect lives and property, while embedding safe driving behaviors within GCC communities. It also represents an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation between

security authorities and community institutions, helping to reduce traffic accidents and foster a safer, more disciplined traffic environment.

As one of the nation’s major economic entities, Zain consistently aligns with the state’s social, economic, and security development strategies. The company also expressed pride in being among the first organizations to collaborate with the Ministry of Interior in supporting this initiative, which it hopes will help save lives.



Scan the QR code to watch the TVC.



# Burgan Bank publishes its sixth Sustainability Report

Confirming its commitment to embedding ESG principles across its operations and culture



Mr. Fadel Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Burgan Bank has released its sixth annual Sustainability Report, marking a major milestone in its ESG journey and reinforcing its excellence in sustainable financial practices. As the first bank in Kuwait to publish its 2024 Sustainability Report, Burgan continues to demonstrate its commitment to transparency and proactive sustainability leadership. The report highlights the Bank’s key accomplishments across Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) domains, reflecting the deep integration of sustainable practices into its operations, culture, and stakeholder engagement. The Report was created in alignment with the Global Reporting Initiative’s (GRI) Universal Standards 2021, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), Kuwait Vision 2035, and Boursa Kuwait ESG Reporting Guidelines.

“This milestone reinforces Burgan Bank’s proactive and purpose-driven ESG strategy,” said Mr. Fadel Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer – Kuwait at Burgan Bank. “We are proud to celebrate the significant advancements we’ve made in 2024. Our ESG journey builds on a strong ESG foundation that began in 2019 and has since evolved into a strategic and bank-wide commitment. From achieving LEED Gold certification to empowering local talent and enhancing our governance framework, our progress reflects our mission to finance responsibly, promote ethical practices, minimize environmental impact, and deliver lasting value to our community.”

### Sustainability as a Strategic Pillar

Burgan Bank’s ESG strategy is anchored in a long-term vision to be a responsible financial institution that helps build a resilient and equitable future for all stakeholders. At the heart of our approach are four strategic pillars: Good Governance, Responsible Banking, Community Betterment, and Environmental Impact Reduction. These pillars guide the Bank’s operations, drive internal alignment, and support delivery of its ESG mission—to finance responsibly, achieve positive community impact, endorse ethical practices and transparency, and minimize environmental impact.

The ESG governance framework is spearheaded by the Board of Directors and overseen through the Management ESG Committee (MESGC), chaired by the CEO. Kuwait and composed of senior executives from across business and support departments. The Committee convenes quarterly to set direction, monitor performance, and support integration of ESG into core banking operations. This is underpinned by a comprehensive ESG roadmap, framework, and materiality matrix, which collectively ensure that the Bank’s initiatives remain adaptive, pertinent, and aligned with the evolving expectations of its stakeholders.

### Close-Up on 2024: Tangible Progress on All Fronts

Burgan Bank’s sixth Sustainability Report highlights a year of significant progress and performance in integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into its core operations. The Bank recorded continuous improvement in ESG ratings from top agencies such as MSCI, S&P, and Sustainalytics, reflecting continued commitment to sustainable development, demonstrating advancements in environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and transparent governance practices. It outlines key initiatives aimed at mitigating climate risks, fostering financial inclusion, and enhancing stakeholder engagement. Through this comprehensive report, Burgan Bank reaffirms its dedication to creating long-term value while aligning with global ESG standards and expectations.

### Environmental Sustainability

In 2024, Burgan Bank made significant headway in environmental sustainability, driven by a commitment to



Burgan Bank achieves LEED Gold certification for Operations and Maintenance.

tackling climate change and reducing its environmental footprint. A key highlight was achieving LEED Gold certification (O&M v4.1) for its head office—a recognition of energy-efficient design and sustainable operations.

The Bank initiated in 2023 a structured approach to mapping its Green House Gas (GHG) emissions across its value chain and continues to expand the scope every year to include Scope 3 emission categories. The bank is on track to design a long-term decarbonization strategy in line with Kuwait’s vision for a low carbon economy. Along with this, the Bank also introduced the ESG Risk Assessment Scorecard for systematic evaluation of ESG risks in lending activities. Further, the Bank is conducting climate-related risk stress testing covering physical as well as transition risks. It is noteworthy to say that in alignment with its sustainability agenda, Burgan bank was among the first banks in Kuwait to develop a Sustainable Financing Framework in line with internationally accepted principles.

As part of its broader decarbonization efforts, the Bank made strides in green operations and responsible resource consumption. This included the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at its head office to encourage cleaner mobility among staff and visitors, as well as the deployment of rooftop solar panels and motion-sensor lighting to optimize energy efficiency.

The Bank also reinforced its environmental stewardship through collaborative initiatives. In partnership with Tadwire, the first recycling facility of its kind in Kuwait, Burgan launched a head office waste management and recycling program targeting paper, plastic, and e-waste. Its participation in DHL’s GoGreen Plus program – aimed at reducing shipment-related emissions through sustainable aviation fuel – further supported its supply chain decarbonization efforts.

Additionally, Burgan played a role in community-based environmental efforts, which included the redevelopment and greenification of a public park in Daiya residential area and internal efforts to phase out single-use plastic water bottles, promoting a culture of environmental responsibility among employees.

### Social Sustainability

Burgan Bank’s social sustainability efforts in 2024 were centered on empowering its people, championing inclusion, and strengthening national talent. For the second consecutive year, the Bank earned the “Great Place to Work” certification, with employee participation rising to 89% – a clear indicator of improved engagement and workplace satisfaction, reinforcing its stance as an employer of choice.

The Bank boasts a gender-diverse workforce, with

women comprising 46% of total staff and 11% of leadership positions. Burgan launched the “Empower Her” initiative aimed to empower women with professional skills, mentorship and networking opportunities. Burgan’s human capital strategy is focused on developing our local talent which prioritizes recruitment and development of nationals contributing to Kuwait’s socio-economic development. Kuwaitization reached an all-time high of 86%. Burgan focused on investing in the development and career progression of Kuwaiti employees through mentorship programs, succession planning, and tailored leadership development all created to actively prepare high-potential talent for future roles. Programs like Ro’ya, the flagship leadership training initiative, and the Lab Academy – launched with CODED to cultivate future tech leaders – are shaping a pipeline of local expertise aligned with future banking needs.

The Bank continued to prioritize work-life balance and employee wellbeing by introducing innovative benefits such as reduced working hours on Thursdays, increased paternity leave to five days, and a birthday leave policy. It also launched wellness initiatives, including the “Rock Your Habits” challenge, and opened a new in-house medical clinic to support employee health and mental wellbeing. Fostering a culture of recognition and excellence, the Burgan Beacon program was launched to celebrate employees for outstanding performance.

Burgan’s commitment to employee development remained steadfast, with an average of 33 hours of training per employee in 2024. Learning opportunities were delivered through a blend of digital platforms and in-person sessions, supporting varied learning styles and ensuring inclusive development access.

### Community Engagement and CSR

Burgan’s commitment to the local community continued to grow in 2024 through a variety of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. It also actively participated in the Central Bank’s “Let’s Be Aware” (Diraya) campaign to enhance public financial literacy and banking awareness.

In addition, Burgan supported numerous initiatives across the areas of health, sports, education, and inclusion. Highlights included its continued support for Team Kuwait at the Paris 2024 Olympics, backing youth empowerment through sports and national pride. For 23 years, Burgan has also proudly partnered with the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) and Bayt Abdullah Children’s Hospice (BACCH), ensuring vital palliative care services for children in need. Further community contributions in 2024 included support for the Kuwait Association for Learning Differences,



The Kuwaiti athletes that participated in the 2024 Paris Olympics.

cancer awareness and treatment campaigns, and sponsorship of local sports events that promote wellbeing and social inclusion. The Bank also partnered with several NGOs to provide assistance to families in need, reinforcing its role as a community-first institution.

### Digitalization: Technology as a Driver

In 2024, Burgan Bank made significant strides in advancing its digital transformation strategy, emphasizing accessibility, efficiency, and a user-centric approach to services. The Bank introduced a range of enhancements to its mobile banking platform, offering a more seamless, intuitive, and secure experience that caters to the evolving needs of its customers, reflected in the 15% YoY increase in active online banking users. These improvements not only made banking more convenient but also reinforced the Bank’s commitment to providing innovative and reliable digital solutions.

Internally, the Bank focused on automating core processes, which streamlined operations and facilitated faster decision-making. By reducing manual errors and enhancing compliance and control mechanisms, the Bank improved its operational efficiency and risk management. These internal advancements also aligned with Burgan’s broader ESG goals by promoting greater inclusion, ensuring wider financial accessibility, and fortifying the Bank’s operational resilience in the face of an increasingly digital world. Through these efforts, Burgan Bank continues to demonstrate its commitment to innovation, sustainability, and customer-centric solutions.

### Governance Sustainability

In 2024, Burgan Bank further solidified the governance foundation underpinning its ESG agenda, ensuring sustained alignment with best practices and regulatory standards. The ESG materiality matrix was updated for 2024-2026 based on stakeholder input to enable more informed decision-making process on sustainability, emphasizing topics of shared importance to the Bank and our stakeholders, and a comprehensive review and expansion of ESG-aligned policies was completed. New and updated policies included those covering Human Rights, Sustainable Procurement, Climate Risk Management, ESG, Debt Collection, and Responsible Lending and Investment. These policies help embed ESG into every level of the Bank’s operations and risk management framework.

On cybersecurity, the Bank has implemented strengthened internal controls, advanced systems, and comprehensive employee training programs to enhance data protection, mitigate digital risks, and maintain customer trust. These initiatives focus on adopting cutting-edge technologies, AI-driven threat monitoring, and proactive incident response protocols to ensure the security of digital transactions and sensitive data. By prioritizing robust cybersecurity measures, Burgan Bank not only protects its clients but also reinforces its operational resilience in an increasingly digital landscape. These efforts demonstrate the Bank’s long-term commitment to ethical governance, responsible digital leadership, and maintaining the highest standards of security in the financial sector.

### Looking Ahead

With six reports published and a growing legacy of impactful initiatives, Burgan Bank continues to lead the way in ESG integration within Kuwait’s banking sector. In the years ahead, the Bank will continue to expand its impact across environmental action, inclusive growth, governance excellence, and community advancement across all our geographies. With clear direction, committed leadership, and a purpose-driven strategy, Burgan is poised to build a better future for its stakeholders, employees, and the wider community.

To access the full 2024 Sustainability Report, visit the Burgan Bank website.



Ro'ya Program trainees stand between Mr. Manaf Al-Menaifi, Acting General Manager – Retail Banking, and Mr. Nageeb Amin, General Manager – Human Resources and Development at Burgan Bank



Burgan Bank is the first bank to obtain the Great Place to Work certification.



A group photo featuring Sheikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, KIPCO Group CEO, and Mr. Tony Daher, Group CEO at Burgan Bank, alongside team members from various Burgan Bank subsidiaries at the ‘Empower Her’ Seminar.





Over 28,000 customer reviews power Service Hero rankings

# Xcite named Kuwait’s top electronics company in 2024 Service Hero Index

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Xcite, part of Alghanim Industries — one of the region’s largest private companies — has been named Kuwait’s top electronics company for 2024, according to the Service Hero Customer Satisfaction Index. Service Hero is the region’s only consumer-driven index for measuring customer satisfaction.

The award ceremony was held last Tuesday evening at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, in the presence of representatives from winning companies, media professionals, and industry specialists. Brands with the highest customer satisfaction scores across various sectors were honored during the event.

This marks Xcite’s fifth win in this category, reflecting the continued trust of customers in the company’s performance and reaffirming its leadership in the electronics sector — both in-store and through its digital platforms.

**Rashed Idrees**, Senior Manager – Customer Service at Xcite, said:

“We are pleased with this recognition, as it reflects the trust our customers place in us — something we view as a responsibility we are committed to upholding. Customer satisfaction is not a temporary milestone, but the result of structured work and ongoing



Service Hero recognizes Xcite at awards ceremony in Kuwait.

collective effort at all levels. This award motivates us to continue enhancing the customer experience, improving service quality, and staying closely attuned to customer needs and expectations. We greatly value the role played by our teams, who consistently place the customer at the center of everything they do.”

Service Hero’s results are based on more than 28,000 verified assessments from actual consumers in Kuwait. The index measures key performance indicators such as overall satisfaction, customer expectations, complaint handling, and loyalty. All results are independently reviewed to ensure transparency and credibility.

Xcite operates 45 showrooms across Kuwait, in addition to a robust e-commerce platform. Its services include flexible delivery options, 24/7 in-store pickup at select locations, and extended warranty coverage through its XCare program. The company offers a wide selection of products from leading international electronics brands—reflecting its ongoing commitment to delivering complete, customer-focused solutions.

For more information, please visit [www.xcite.com](http://www.xcite.com) or follow @xcitealghanim on Instagram, X, and other social media platforms.

## ‘Travel is about emotion, not just destination’

# Jazeera Airways launches largest-ever summer campaign in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait’s leading low-cost carrier, has launched its largest ever summer campaign to promote its exciting summer destinations. With 700,000 seats on offer and multiple direct routes to breath-taking destinations like Budapest, Sochi, Yerevan, Rize, Sarajevo, Hurgada, Prague, and Krakow, Jazeera is setting the stage for an exciting and vibrant summer season to offer great summer experiences across the network.

The “Summer Experiences” campaign highlights brand storytelling and travel marketing in a fresh and enticing style with a strong emotional appeal. It is backed by a multi-layered, country-wide activation that puts creativity at the heart of aviation.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer, Jazeera Airways said, “Our new ‘Summer Experiences’ campaign is an out of the box approach to the simple concept that – travel

is not only about the destination, it’s about the journey and more importantly, the experiences. Our latest campaign is more about invoking emotions. We want our passengers to feel the excitement of travel the moment they spot a Jazeera billboard or bus wrap or scroll past our ad online.”

**A Broad Multi-Channel Execution**

This campaign reflects Jazeera’s unwavering belief that every detail of travel – across the entire customer journey – should feel personal, seamless, and inspiring.

To ensure that the message hits home, Jazeera has launched a 360° campaign including social media and digital platforms, a visual takeover of billboards, digital screens, bus wraps, airport advertising, digital advertising and fresh video content – making the campaign unmissable.



Jazeera brings creative storytelling to aviation marketing.



# China’s Xi Jinping warns ‘no winners’ in trade war amid Southeast Asia tour

HANOI, April 14, (AP): China’s leader Xi Jinping said no one wins in a trade war as he kicked off a diplomatic tour of Southeast Asia on Monday, presenting China as a force for stability in contrast with U.S. President Donald Trump’s latest tariffs moves.

Although Trump has paused some tariffs, he has kept in place 145% duties on China, the world’s second-largest economy.

“There are no winners in a trade war, or a tariff war,” Xi wrote in an editorial jointly published in Vietnamese and Chinese official media. “Our two countries should resolutely safeguard the multilateral trading system, stable global industrial and supply chains, and open and cooperative international environment.”

Xi’s visit lets China show Southeast Asia it is a “responsible superpower in the way that contrasts with the way the U.S. under President Donald Trump presents to the whole world,” said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow at Singapore’s ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

Xi was greeted on the tarmac by Vietnam’s President Luong Cuong at the start of his two-day visit, a mark of honor not often given to visitors, said Nguyen Thanh Trung, a professor of Vietnamese studies at Fulbright University Vietnam. Students of a drum art group performed as women waved the red and yellow Chinese and Communist Party flags.

While Xi’s trip likely was planned earlier, it has become significant because of the tariff fight between China and the U.S. The visit offers a path for Beijing to shore up its alliances and find solutions for the high trade barrier that the U.S. has imposed on Chinese exports.

In Hanoi, Xi met with Vietnam’s Communist Party General Secretary To Lam, his counterpart. “In the face of turmoil and disruption in the current global context, China and Vi-

etnam’s commitment to peaceful development, and deepening of friendship and cooperation and has brought the world valuable stability and certainty,” he said.

He also met with Vietnam’s Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh. The two sides signed a series of memorandums, whose details were not made public. Nhan Dan, the official mouthpiece of Vietnam’s Communist Party, said that China and Vietnam will speed up a \$8 billion railway project connecting the two countries in a deal that was approved in February.

The timing of the visit sends a “strong political message that Southeast Asia is important to China,” said Huong Le-Thu of the International Crisis Group think tank. She said that given the severity of Trump’s tariffs and despite the 90-day pause, Southeast Asian nations were anxious that the tariffs, if implemented, could complicate their development.

Vietnam is experienced at balancing its relations with the U.S. and China. It is run under a communist, one-party system like China but has had a strong relationship with the U.S.

In 2023, it was the only country that received both U.S. President Joe Biden and China’s Xi Jinping. That year it also upgraded the U.S. to its highest diplomatic level, the same as China and Russia.

Vietnam was one of the biggest beneficiaries of countries trying to decouple their supply chains from China, as businesses moved here. China is its biggest trading partner, and China-Vietnam trade surged 14.6% year-on-year in 2024, according to Chinese state media.

That trade relationship goes both ways.

“The trip to Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia is all about how China can really insulate itself against the from Trump,” said Nguyen Khac Giang, an analyst at Singapore’s ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, pointing out that since Xi became the president in 2013, he has only visited Vietnam twice.

# Trump defends economic policies amid tariff shifts

Administration reverses course on some tariffs

ATLANTA, April 14, (AP): Trump administration officials were out in force across the television networks Sunday defending President Donald Trump’s economic policies after another week of reeling markets that saw the Republican administration reverse course on some of its steepest tariffs.

Trump, meanwhile, said on his social media platform that there ultimately will be no exemptions for his sweeping tariff agenda, disputing characterizations that he has granted tariff exceptions for certain electronics, including smart phones, whose production is concentrated in China. Rather, Trump said, “those products are subject to the existing 20% Fentanyl Tariffs, and they are just moving to a different Tariff ‘bucket.’”

White House advisers and Cabinet members tried to project confidence and calm amid Trump’s on-again, off-again approach to tariffs on imported goods from around the world. But their explanations about the overall agenda, coupled with Trump’s latest statements, also reflected shifting narratives from a president who, as a candidate in 2024, promised an immediate economic boost and lower prices but now asks American businesses and consumers for patience.

A week ago, Trump’s team stood by his promise to leave the impending tariffs in place without exceptions. They used their latest news show appearances to defend his move to ratchet back to a 10% universal tariff for most nations except China (145%), while seeming to grant exemptions for certain electronics like smartphones, laptops, hard drives, flat-panel monitors and semiconductor chips.

Here are the highlights of what Trump lieutenants said last week vs. Sunday:

Long before launching his first presidential campaign in 2015, Trump bemoaned the offshoring of U.S. manufacturing. His promise is to reindustrialize the United States and eliminate trade deficits with other countries.

**Last week**

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, interviewed on CBS’ “Face the Nation,” played up national security. “You’ve got to realize this is a national security issue,” he said, raising the worst-case scenarios of what could happen if the U.S. were involved in a war.

“We don’t make medicine in this country anymore. We don’t make ships. We don’t have enough steel and aluminum to fight a battle, right?” he said.

**Sunday**

Lutnick stuck to that national security framing, but White House trade adviser Peter Navarro focused more on the import taxes being leverage in the bigger economic puzzle.

“The world cheats us. They’ve been cheating us for decades,” Navarro said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” He cited practices such as dumping products at unfairly low prices, currency manipulation and barriers to U.S. auto and agricultural products entering foreign markets.

Navarro insisted the tariffs would yield broader bilateral trade deals to address all those issues. But he also relied on a separate justification when discussing China: the illicit drug trade.

“China has killed over a million people with their fentanyl,” he said.

Speaking before Trump’s Truth Social post disputing the notion of exemptions, Lutnick alluded to that coming policy. “They’re going to have a special focus-type of

tariff to make sure that those products get reshored,” he told ABC’s “This Week.”

**Last week**

With the higher rates set to be collected beginning April 9, administration officials argued that other countries would rush to the negotiating table.

“I’ve heard that there are negotiations ongoing and that there are a number of offers,” Kevin Hassett, director of the White House Economic Council, told ABC. He claimed that “more than 50 countries (were) reaching out,” though he did not name any.

**Sunday**

Navarro named the United Kingdom, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Israel as among the nations in active negotiations with U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, Lutnick and other officials.

Greer said on CBS that his goal was “to get meaningful deals before 90 days” -- the duration of Trump’s pause -- “and I think we’re going to be there with several countries in the next few weeks.”

Talks with China have not begun, he said. “We expect to have a conversation with them,” he said, emphasizing it would be between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Trump took an aggressive tone himself Sunday in his social media post, saying “we will not be held hostage by other Countries, especially hostile trading Nations like China, which will do everything within its power to disrespect the American People.”

Navarro was not as specific about Beijing. “We have opened up our invitation to them,” he said. Lutnick characterized the outreach as “soft entrees ... through intermediaries.”

Pressed on whether there is any meaningful back and forth, Navarro said, “The president has a very good relationship with President Xi.”

Then he proceeded to criticize several China’s policies and trade practices.

**Last week**

Navarro was bullish even after U.S. and global trading markets suffered trillions of dollars in losses.

“The first rule, particularly for the smaller investors out there, you can’t lose money unless you sell. And, right now, the smart strategy is not to panic,” he said on Fox News Channel’s “Sunday Morning Futures.”

**Sunday**

Navarro’s optimism did not waver despite another net-loss week for securities markets and rocky bond markets. “So, this is unfolding exactly like we thought it would in a dominant scenario,” he said.

Others confronted some of the more complex realities of trying to achieve Trump’s goal of restoring a bygone era of U.S. manufacturing.

Lutnick suggested the focus is on returning high-tech jobs, while sidestepping questions about lower-skilled manufacturing of goods such as shoes that could mean higher prices because of higher wages for U.S. workers. But some of that high-tech production is what Trump has, for now, exempted from the tariffs that he and his advisers frame as leverage for forcing companies to open U.S. facilities.

Hassett did acknowledge widespread angst.

“The survey data has been showing that people are anxious about the changes a little bit,” he said, before steering his answer to employment rates. “The hard data,” he said, “has been really, really strong.”

## US importers frontload products before tariff hikes, says ING

# China’s exports jump 12.4% in March as bigger US tariff hikes loom

BANGKOK, April 14, (AP): China’s exports jumped 12.4% in March from a year earlier in a last-minute flurry of activity as companies rushed to beat increases in U.S. tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump, and analysts forecast sharp setbacks ahead.

Imports fell 4.3% to \$211.3 billion in March, the customs administration reported, far exceeded by exports worth \$313.9 billion, leaving a trade surplus of \$102.6 billion. “But shipments are set to drop back over the coming months and quarters,” Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report. “We think it could be years before Chinese exports regain current levels.”

China’s trade surplus surged to a record \$992.2 billion in 2024 and its exports climbed 5.4%, helping to make up for sluggish growth at home as the country slowly recovers from a crisis in its property market and lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After taking office, Trump first ordered a 10% increase in tariffs on imports from China. He later raised that to 20%. Now, China is facing 145% tariffs on most of its exports to the United States, based on the most recent revisions in Trump’s trade policies. China has responded with 125% tariffs on U.S. products and other measures meant to pinch the U.S. where it hurts most, such as controls on exports of critical minerals needed in high-tech manufacturing, such as electric vehicle production.

China’s trade surplus with the United States was \$27.6 billion in March as its exports rose 4.5%. It logged a surplus of \$76.6 billion with the U.S. in January-

March even though exports were up only 2.3% the first two months of the year.

“Savvy U.S. importers likely saw tariff hikes coming in April onward and frontloaded imports,” ING Economics said in a report, but that trend is likely to fall off as importers use up their inventories while they watch for the latest twists and turns in unpredictable U.S. trade policy.

“As a result, it’s likely that direct trade between the U.S. and China will crater starting in April,” it said.

Trade data already show some impact from the higher tariffs, with exports of lower value-added items like shoes and clothing falling, while shipments of computer chips, household appliances and vehicles surged. China’s biggest exports in the first three months of the year were electronic machinery, a broad category that includes smart phones and laptops, and high-tech products, the report shows. China’s exports of rare earths fell nearly 11% in the first quarter of the year as Beijing tightened controls on the strategically vital materials used in electric vehicles and other high-tech products.

The customs data showed total exports from the world’s second largest economy rose 5.8% in the first three months of the year from a year earlier while imports sank 7%, leaving a trade surplus of \$273 billion.

Late Friday, Trump exempted most computer-related goods from the higher China-specific tariffs, including laptops, smartphones and the components needed to make them, though his administration says he plans to announce those within days. Such products accounted for nearly \$174 billion in U.S. im-

ports from China last year.

Still, the harsh U.S. tariffs on Chinese products have raised questions about whether exporters might end up diverting their goods to other overseas markets as they give up on selling to American consumers due to the more than doubling of import duties. The biggest increases in exports in March were to China’s Southeast Asian neighbors, which saw the dollar value of shipments from China jump 8% in March from a year earlier. Exports to Africa rose more than 11% and those to India by nearly 14%.

A customs administration spokesperson, Lyu Daliang, said China was facing a “complex and severe external situation” but that the sky would not fall. He pointed to China’s diversified export options and huge domestic market.

When asked about falling Chinese imports, he told reporters in Beijing that China has been the world’s second largest importer for 16 straight years, increasing its share of global imports from about 8% to 10.5%.

“At present and in the future, China’s import growth space is huge, and the large Chinese market is always a great opportunity for the world,” he said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was visiting Vietnam on Monday as part of a regional tour that also will take him to Malaysia and Cambodia, giving him an opportunity to firm up trade ties with other Asian countries that also are facing potentially steep tariffs, though last week Trump delayed enforcing them by 90 days. China’s exports to Vietnam jumped nearly 17% last month from a year earlier, while its imports fell 2.7%.



## President Trump slams CBS, calls for FCC action

## '60 Minutes must pay a big price for defaming me'

WASHINGTON, April 14, (AP): President Donald Trump bitterly attacked "60 Minutes" shortly after the CBS newsmagazine broadcast stories on Ukraine and Greenland on Sunday, saying the network was out of control and should "pay a big price" for going after him.

"Almost every week, 60 Minutes ... mentions the name 'Trump' in a derogatory and defamatory way, but this Weekend's 'Broadcast' tops them all," the president said on his Truth Social platform. He called on Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr to impose maximum fines and

punishment "for their unlawful and illegal behavior."

The network had no immediate comment.

Trump has an ongoing \$20 billion lawsuit against "60 Minutes" for how it edited an interview with Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris last fall. The president claims it was edited in a way to make Harris look good, something the newscast denies. But there are ongoing reports that Trump's lawyers and CBS' parent company are involved in settlement talks.

Carr and the FCC have launched a parallel investigation of CBS

News about the same case, one of several that it has undergone that also involve ABC News, NBC, PBS, NPR and the Walt Disney Co.

Despite the legal battle, "60 Minutes" has been unstinting in its coverage of Trump's administration since he took office for a second term, particularly correspondent Scott Pelley. He traveled to Ukraine to conduct an interview with that country's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on the site of a Russian attack where nine children were killed earlier this month.

In the interview broadcast on Sunday, Zelenskyy said he has

"100%" hatred for Russian President Vladimir Putin for the invasion of Ukraine, and invited Trump to visit his country to see what has been done.

Also Sunday, correspondent Jon Wertheim reported from Greenland on what some people in that nation are saying about Trump's desire to take control.

In his social media message, Trump said "60 Minutes" was no longer a news show but "a dishonest Political Operative simply disguised as 'News,' and must be responsible for what they have done, and are doing."



President Donald Trump talks to reporters as he walks on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Sunday, April 13. (AP)

## Obituary

## Peru's literary giant

## Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa dies at 89

LIMA, Peru, April 14, (AP): Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel literature laureate and a giant of Latin American letters, died Sunday. He was 89.

He was a prolific author and essayist with such celebrated novels as "The Time of the Hero" (La Ciudad y los Perros) and "Feast of the Goat," and won myriad prizes. The Nobel committee said it was awarding him in 2010 "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat."

"It is with deep sorrow that we announce that our father, Mario Vargas Llosa, passed away peacefully in Lima today, surrounded by his family," read a letter signed by his children Álvaro, Gonzalo and Morgana, and posted by Álvaro on X.

"His departure will sadden his relatives, his friends and his readers around the world, but we hope that they will find comfort, as we do, in the fact that he enjoyed a long, adventurous and fruitful life, and leaves behind him a body of work that will outlive him," they added.

The author's lawyer and close friend, Enrique Gheri, confirmed the death to The Associated Press and recalled the writer's last birthday on March 28 at the home of his daughter, Morgana. "He spent it happy; his close friends surrounded him, he ate his cake, we joked that day that there were still 89 more years to go, he had a long, fruitful, and free life," Gheri said. Vargas Llosa published his first collection of stories "The Cubs and Other Stories" (Los Jefes) in 1959. But he burst onto the literary stage in 1963 with his groundbreaking debut "The Time of the Hero," a novel that drew on his experiences at a Peruvian military academy and angered the country's military. A thousand copies were burned by military authorities, with some generals calling the book false and Vargas Llosa a communist.

## Subsequent

That, and subsequent novels such as "Conversation in the Cathedral," (Conversación en la Catedral) in 1969, quickly established Vargas Llosa as one of the leaders of the so-called "Boom," or new wave of Latin American writers of the 1960s and 1970s, alongside Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes.

Vargas Llosa started writing early, and at 15 was a part-time crime reporter for La Crónica newspaper. According to his official website, other jobs he had included revising names on cemetery tombs in Peru, working as a teacher in the Berlitz school in Paris and briefly on the Spanish desk at Agence France-Presse in Paris.

He continued publishing articles in the press for most of his life, most notably in a twice-monthly political opinion column titled "Piedra de Toque" (Touchstones) that was printed in several newspapers.

Vargas Llosa came to be a fierce defender of personal and economic liberties, gradually edging

away from his communism-linked past, and regularly attacked Latin American leftist leaders he viewed as dictators.

Although an early supporter of the Cuban revolution led by Fidel Castro, he later grew disillusioned and denounced Castro's Cuba. By 1980, he said he no longer believed in socialism as a solution for developing nations.

In a famous incident in Mexico City in 1976, Vargas Llosa punched fellow Nobel Prize winner and ex-friend García Márquez, whom he later ridiculed as "Castro's courtesan." It was never clear whether the fight was over politics or a personal dispute, as neither writer ever wanted to discuss it publicly.

## Trajectory

As he slowly turned his political trajectory toward free-market conservatism, Vargas Llosa lost the support of many of his Latin American literary contemporaries and attracted much criticism even from admirers of his work.

Jorge Mario Pedro Vargas Llosa was born March 28, 1936, in Peru's southern city of Arequipa, high in the Andes at the foot of the Misti volcano.

His father, Ernesto Vargas Maldonado, left the family before he was born. To avoid public scandal, his mother, Dora Llosa Ureta, took her child to Bolivia, where her father was the Peruvian consul in Cochabamba.

Vargas Llosa said his early life was "somewhat traumatic," pampered by his mother and grandmother in a large house with servants, his every whim granted.

It was not until he was 10, after the family had moved to Peru's coastal city of Piura, that he learned his father was alive. His parents reconciled and the family moved to Peru's capital, Lima.

Vargas Llosa described his father as a disciplinarian who viewed his son's love of Jules Verne and writing poetry as surefire routes to starvation, and feared for his "manhood," believing that "poets are always homosexuals."

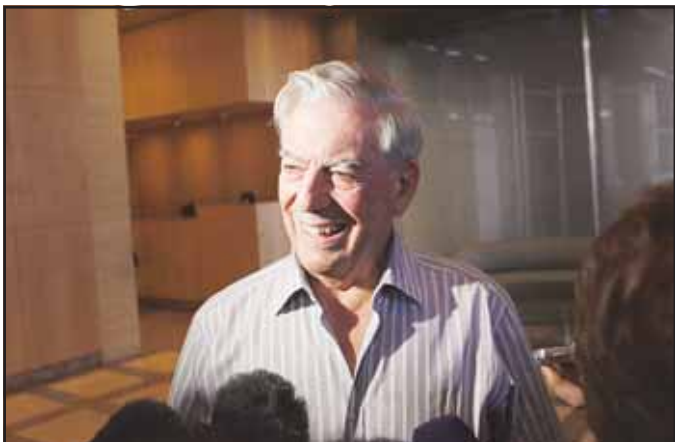
After failing to get the boy enrolled in a naval academy because he was underage, Vargas Llosa's father sent him to Leoncio Prado Military Academy - an experience that was to stay with Vargas Llosa and led to "The Time of the Hero." The book won the Spanish Critics Award.

The military academy "was like discovering hell," Vargas Llosa said later.

He entered Peru's San Marcos University to study literature and law, "the former as a calling and the latter to please my family, which believed, not without certain cause, that writers usually die of hunger."

After earning his literature degree in 1958 - he didn't bother submitting his final law thesis - Vargas Llosa won a scholarship to pursue a doctorate in Madrid.

Vargas Llosa drew much of his inspiration from his Peruvian homeland, but preferred to live abroad, residing for spells each year in Madrid, New York and Paris.



Writer Mario Vargas Llosa speaks to reporters in New York, Oct. 7, 2010. (AP)

## Film



Hailee Steinfeld poses for photographers during the photo call for the film 'Sinners' on Sunday, April 13, in London. (AP)

## 2025's top grossing film

## 'Minecraft' continues strong run

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): After just two weeks in theaters, "A Minecraft Movie" is already the highest grossing Hollywood release of 2025.

The Warner Bros. videogame adaptation followed up its blockbuster opening with a second weekend of \$80.6 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. Worldwide, it's quickly surpassed \$550 million.

After doubling expectations in its \$300 million global debut, "A Minecraft Movie" continued to draw audiences unlike anything else this year. The film, directed by Jared Hess and starring Jack Black and Jason Momoa, slid 50% in its second go-around in US and Canadian theaters - an impressive hold after such a big debut.

Though critics slammed the movie (46% "fresh" on Rotten Tomatoes) and audience scores were merely good (a "B+" CinemaScore), "A Minecraft Movie" latched on with moviegoers who have increasingly turned out in droves for big-budget videogame adaptations.

"A Minecraft Movie," a \$150 million co-production of Warner Bros. and Legendary Entertainment, has helped -- at least for now -- reinvigorate theaters after a dismal start to the year. Overall ticket sales were double that of the same weekend in 2024, according to Comscore. Before "A Minecraft," box office revenues trailed last year's by 11%, but have now virtually pulled even. (2025 grosses still trail 2019's by 31%, according to Comscore.)

None of the weekend's new releases - Angel Studios' "The King of Kings," the Walt Disney Co.'s "The Amateur," Universal Pictures' "Drop" or A24's "Warfare" - came close to challenging "Minecraft," but several films outperformed expectations.

"The King of Kings," an animated tale of Jesus' life aimed at Christian audiences, came in second with \$19.1 million in 3,200 theaters. The film, loosely based on a children's book by Charles Dickens, includes a starry voice cast led by Oscar Isaac, Kenneth Branagh and Uma Thurman.

With an enviable "A+" CinemaScore from audiences, "The King of Kings" is poised to capitalize in the coming week before Easter. Part three of Fathom Entertainment's TV series, "The Chosen: Last Supper," also looked to appeal to Christian audiences. It launched with \$6.2 million



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Jennifer Coolidge in a scene from 'A Minecraft Movie.' (AP)

from 2,296 cinemas.

"The Amateur," a 20th Century production starring Rami Malek as a CIA cryptographer hunting down his wife's killers, debuted with \$15 million domestically, plus another \$17.2 million overseas. Critics deemed the revenge thriller an awkward star vehicle for Malek, who also produced. "The Amateur" cost \$60 million to make.

"Warfare," director Alex Garland's follow-up to 2024's "Civil War," opened with \$8.3 million in ticket sales from 2,670 theaters. Garland co-wrote and co-directed the A24 release with Iraq War veteran Ray Mendoza, who based the film on 2006 mission he and his fellow Navy SEALs undertook during the war. "Warfare," which cost about \$20 million to make, was lauded by critics as an uncommonly realistic portrait of combat.

"Drop," the latest thriller from Blumhouse Productions, debuted with \$7.5 million from 3,085 theaters. Christopher Landon's film stars Meghann Fahy ("The White Lotus") as a single-mom widow on a first date (Brandon Sklenar) who's being terrorized by an unknown person by messages to her phone. "Drop," which premiered at SXSW, cost less than \$10 million to produce.

## Variety

NEW YORK: A retrial is set to begin Monday for Sarah Palin's libel lawsuit claiming The New York Times libeled her in an editorial eight years ago.

The onetime Republican vice presidential candidate and ex-governor of Alaska gets another chance to prove to a federal jury that the newspaper defamed her with the 2017 editorial falsely linking her campaign rhetoric to a mass shooting. Palin said it damaged her reputation and career.

The Times has acknowledged the editorial was inaccurate but said it quickly corrected an "honest mistake."

The trial, expected to last a week, comes after the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals restored the case last year. Jury selection is scheduled to begin Monday morning.

In February 2022, Judge Jed S. Rakoff in Manhattan rejected Palin's claims in a ruling issued while a jury deliberated. The judge then let jurors deliver their verdict, which went against Palin.

In restoring the lawsuit, the 2nd Circuit said Rakoff's dismissal ruling improperly intruded on the jury's work. It also cited flaws in the trial, saying there was erroneous exclusion of evidence, an inaccurate jury instruction and an erroneous response to a question from the jury.

The retrial occurs as President Donald Trump and others in agreement with his views of news coverage have been aggressive toward media outlets when they believe there has been unjust treatment.

Trump sued CBS News for \$20 billion over the editing of a "60 Minutes" interview with his 2024 opponent, former Vice President Kamala Harris, and also sued the Des Moines Register over an Iowa election poll that turned out to be inaccurate. ABC News settled a lawsuit with Trump over its incorrect claim the president had been found civilly liable for raping writer E. Jean Carroll.

Kenneth G. Turkel, a lawyer for Palin, did not return a request for comment. Charlie Stadtlander, a spokesperson for the Times, said Palin's claim stemmed from "a passing reference to an event in an editorial that was not about Sarah Palin." (AP)



BEIJING: During Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's visit to China on Friday, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on film cooperation, injecting new momentum into bilateral cultural exchanges.

China and Spain will deepen collaboration in the film industry, including joint participation in festivals, mutual screenings, co-productions, and personnel exchanges, according to the MOU inked between China's National Film Administration and Spain's Institute of Cinematography and Audiovisual Arts.

The enhanced film partnership between China and Spain stands in sharp contrast to Beijing's announcement of its plan to moderately reduce the number of US films imported. A spokesperson for the China Film Administration said on Thursday that the adjustment follows market principles and reflects audience preferences, as the United States' recent hikes in tariffs on Chinese imports are bound to impact Chinese audiences' interest in U.S. films.

Following China's signal to cut Hollywood imports, shares of several major U.S. film and media companies fell sharply. The Walt Disney Company and Warner Bros. Discovery, Inc. saw their stock prices drop by 6.79 and 12.53 percent, respectively.

Analysts attribute the decline to growing fears of being shut out of the world's second-largest film market. Data shows U.S. film releases in China totaled 63 in 2018 and 52 in 2019, generating 19.9 billion yuan (\$2.72 billion) combined and commanding over 80 percent of all foreign film revenue in this period. This was one of the best runs for U.S. films in the Chinese box office. (AP)



Home to centuries of heritage

Sudan’s biggest museum looted, wrecked by a 2-year war

CAIRO, April 14, (AP): Inside Sudan’s biggest museum, the exhibition halls once filled with statues and relics from centuries of ancient civilizations are trashed, littered with debris. The display cases stand empty and shattered. A mummy lies exposed in an open storage box. All the gold artifacts have been looted.

The Sudan National Museum has been wrecked by two years of war in Sudan, with most of its artifacts stolen. Authorities blame the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, which held this district of Khartoum along the banks of the Nile River for most of the conflict.

Since the Sudanese military regained control of the capital last month, officials have been working to assess the damage and loss in hopes of one day restoring the museum.

“The losses are extremely big and saddening. A significant number of antiquities were stolen,” Gamal ElDeen Zain al-Abdeen, a senior official at the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, told The Associated Press. “The RSF destroyed everything ... concerning the civilization of the Sudanese people.”

The National Museum had thousands of pieces, dating back to the Paleolithic era well before the development of agriculture, and through the kingdoms of ancient Sudan. Many came from the Napatan era in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., when pharaohs from Sudan ruled over much of ancient Egypt, or from the later Meroitic kingdom that built pyramids in Sudan. Other halls had later Christian and Islamic material.

Some pieces too heavy to carry remain in place. In the museum’s garden, a line of stone lions remains, as do the Colossi of Tabo, two large pharaonic-style statues. Also remaining are three pharaonic temples that were moved from northern Sudan and reassembled at the museum in the 1960s to escape the rising waters of Lake Nasser from Egypt’s construction of the High Dam.



A Meroitic lion statue is seen in the garden of Sudan National Museum, the home to the country's largest artifacts that date to different eras of Sudanese history, after nearly two years of war between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), in Khartoum, Sudan, Thursday, April 3. (AP)

But many objects are gone. Looters broke into the locked storerooms and made off with all the gold artifacts, Zain al-Abdeen said. But it was too early to know how much of the museum’s collection had been stolen, he said.

He blamed the RSF for the destruction, saying they had fighters in the museum at some point during the war.

The war in Sudan broke out in April 2023, after tensions between the Sudanese army and the rival RSF turned into battles in the streets of Khartoum and rapidly spread around the country. The RSF held much of Khartoum during the war, including the district of the museum.

Now that they have been driven out, the extent of the destruction from fighting and looting is coming clear.

“Khartoum in general has been destroyed, particularly the center of Khartoum,” Zain al-Abdeen said. “No building was spared from the bloodshed and theft, and this is what I saw

with my own eyes.” He said all the city’s museums were damaged, particularly the Ethnography Museum, where walls were demolished and halls and offices burned.

The ransacking is a blow to a country with a rich heritage, one that has deep resonance among Sudanese but is often overlooked abroad because of Sudan’s decades of instability.

UNESCO said in September it was concerned about looting at the Sudan National Museum, which it helped renovate in 2019. It warned that sale or removal of artifacts “would result in the disappearance of part of the Sudanese cultural identity and jeopardize the country’s recovery.”

A UNESCO spokesperson said Friday that damage, looting and destruction of museums and cultural sites happened across Sudan’s states of Khartoum, River Nile, Northern State, Gezira and the Darfur region. An accurate assessment isn’t possible due to the ongoing fighting.

Monument

Hagia Sophia’s iconic domes undergo renovation



People visit Byzantine-era Hagia Sophia mosque, in Istanbul, Turkey, Sunday, April 13. (AP)

Turkey’s historic landmark reinforced against earthquakes

ISTANBUL, April 14, (AP): Turkey has begun a new phase in sweeping restorations of the nearly 1,500-year-old Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, focusing on preserving the monument’s historic domes from the threat of earthquakes.

Officials say the project will include reinforcing Hagia Sophia’s main dome and half domes, replacing the worn lead coverings and upgrading the steel framework while worship continues uninterrupted in the mosque.

A newly installed tower crane on the eastern façade is expected to facilitate the efforts by transporting materials, expediting the renovations.

“We have been carrying out intensive restoration efforts on Hagia Sophia and its surrounding structures for three years,” said Dr. Mehmet Selim Okten, a construction engineer, lecturer at Mimar Sinan University and a member of the scientific council overseeing the renovations. “At the end of these three years, we have focused



Scaffolds are installed in Byzantine-era Hagia Sophia mosque for restoration work, in Istanbul, Turkey, Sunday, April 13. (AP)

on the seismic safety of Hagia Sophia, the minarets, the main dome and the main arches, especially due to the expected Istanbul earthquake.”

In 2023, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkey, destroying or damaging hundreds of

thousands of buildings and leaving more than 53,000 people dead. While Istanbul was not impacted, the devastation in southern Turkey heightened fears of a similar quake with experts citing the city’s proximity to fault lines.

Okten said a “new phase” of

work is about to begin, one that he describes as the most significant intervention in over 150 years and in the totality of the structure’s long history.

“A tower crane will be installed on the eastern facade, and then we will cover the top of this unique structure with a protective frame system,” he said. “That way, we can work more safely and examine the building’s layers academically, including damage it suffered from fires and earthquakes in the 10th and 14th centuries.”

Built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian in 537, Hagia Sophia was turned into a mosque with the 1453 Ottoman conquest of Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding leader of the Turkish republic, converted it into a museum in 1934.

Although an annex to Hagia Sophia, the sultan’s pavilion, has been open to prayers since the 1990s, religious and nationalist groups in Turkey had long yearned for the nearly 1,500-year-old edifice they

regard as the legacy of Ottoman Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror to be reverted into a mosque.

Turkey’s highest administrative court overturned the 1934 decree in 2020, allowing it to reopen as a mosque.

“We have completed our work on the four minarets and the main structure,” Okten said. “But for this unique cultural heritage (of the domes), we plan to use modern, lightweight materials and keep the building open to the public.”

Visitors to the site expressed approval of the plan.

“Hagia Sophia is amazing, it’s one of the world’s most important monuments,” said Cambridge University lecturer Rupert Wegerif. “It seems really important that they are going to strengthen it in case of earthquakes and preserve it.”

Okten said that while it wasn’t clear when the renovations will be finished, the process would be open to the public to be “monitored transparently.”

Variety

**LONDON:** One of four women suing influencer and self-styled misogynist **Andrew Tate** for sexual assault said he whipped her with a belt and once stuck a gun in her face, according to court documents that have been filed in London.

The allegations were filed last year but emerged Thursday, a few days before the first hearing in the civil case next week in the High Court.

Tate, 38, will not be present as he and his younger brother Tristan Tate face charges in Romania over human trafficking and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

The woman alleging Tate stuck a gun in her face said the former professional kickboxer told her “you’re going to do as I say or there’ll be hell to pay” when doing so. It was unclear whether the gun was real or a replica. She also said Tate whipped her with a belt if she did not get out of bed and do work for his webcam business.

Two of the women involved in the civil lawsuit worked for his webcam business, and two were former girlfriends. Their identities have not been revealed in line with legal practice in England. The incidents are alleged to have taken place between 2013 and 2015.

A spokesperson for Tate, who has amassed millions of followers online, many of them young men and boys drawn in by the luxurious lifestyle he projects, said the allegations outlined in the documents are “unproven and untested” and “categorically” denied.

“Specifically, he denies ever threatening anyone with a firearm, engaging in non-consensual acts or subjecting any individual to physical or psychological harm,” according to a response submitted by his lawyers.

The UK’s Crown Prosecution Service decided not to prosecute Tate over sexual assault allegations in 2019. Three of the accusers in the current suit were the subject of the investigation by police that prosecutors chose not to pursue. (AP)



Tate

**NEW YORK:** One month shy of his 88th birthday, Thomas Pynchon is set to publish his first book in 12 years.

“Shadow Ticket” is scheduled for Oct. 7, Penguin Press announced recently.

You could call the book, set in Milwaukee in 1932, Pynchon-esque.

“Hicks McTaggart, a one-time strikebreaker turned private eye, thinks he’s found job security until he gets sent out on what should be a routine case, locating and bringing back the heiress of a Wisconsin cheese fortune who’s taken a mind to go wandering,” the publisher’s announcement reads in part. “Before he knows it, he’s been shanghaied onto a transoceanic liner, ending up eventually in Hungary where there’s no shoreline, a language from some other planet, and enough pastry to see any cop well into retirement – and of course no sign of the runaway heiress he’s supposed to be chasing.”

The famously expansive, and press-averse author has not released a new book since “Bleeding Edge” in 2013. He is best known for the classic “Gravity’s Rainbow,” and his other works include “V.,” “Mason & Dixon,” “Against the Day” and “Inherent Vice.” (AP)

A tradition uniting all walks of life

Frankfurt’s water houses serve as a social hub for all

FRANKFURT, Germany, April 14, (AP): Frankfurt has become Germany’s financial capital, known for the country’s only high-rise skyline. But look closer to the ground and you’ll find a tradition that brings rich and poor, bankers and punks, together.

The humble “Wasserhäuschen,” or little water houses, have been a distinctive feature of the city since they started springing up in the second half of the 19th century.

Back when drinking unboiled tap water wasn’t advisable, the little kiosks offered bottles of mineral water. They encouraged workers, with the city’s approval, to drink affordable water rather than beer and schnapps.

They thrived as they weren’t subject to the official closing hours imposed on shops. And

they were useful supply stations again in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of World War II.

These days, there’s more on offer at the water houses: a quick beer, candy, the newspaper, cigarettes, sometimes cafe service, with tables and the odd sofa on the sidewalk.

Laura Poellath, a 27-year-old student who works at the “Fein” water house, says the little kiosks are “like a living room in the city.”

“The people are very varied, from young to old, all the different groups are here,” she says.

“Water houses are social meeting points,” says Hubert Gloss, who offers tours of the houses that are spread around the city. “They are accessible; everyone is welcome here, it’s a democratic place ... without these meeting points, the city

would lose something in human terms.”

There were once 800 of the freestanding kiosks, but their numbers have diminished as a result of new building and other factors, Gloss says. City authorities say there are now about 300, most of them leased by breweries or distributors of drinks to their operators.

Photographer Stefan Hoening says today’s water houses are a place where “everyone, no matter where they come from and no matter what their pay grade, can come together and feel at ease without being judged.”

“That’s the good thing about water houses,” the 42-year-old says. “With kiosks, you usually go there, buy something and go back home. Here, people from all the different classes meet.”



A woman walks past a former water house, a small shop that sprung up in the 19th century to encourage workers to drink affordable water rather than beer or schnapps, that is now a kiosk in Frankfurt, Germany, on March 31, 2025. (AP)



HMC launches ambitious vision for patient-centered care

‘Health for All’: Qatar’s nat’l strategy for world-class healthcare

DOHA, April 14, (KUNA): The National Health Strategy 2024-2030, according to officials at the Ministry of Public Health, carries a bold and clear vision, as it aspires to create a community focused on clinical excellence, sustainability, and innovation.

The National Health Strategy aligns with the long-term vision for Qatar’s healthcare system, how public and private stakeholders will contribute to its success, and the focus on projects and their implementation over several phases over the coming years, providing a roadmap for future healthcare delivery.

The main provider of emergency and specialized healthcare services in the State of Qatar Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) launched the HMC’s Healthcare Strategy 2024-2030, closely aligned with the Third National Development Strategy and the National Health Strategy 2024-2030, setting an ambitious vision for HMC that enhances its role as a leading institution in providing medical services.

HMC’s Healthcare Strategy 2024-2030, launched in October 2024, focuses on three key objectives: Lead and Shape, which focuses on working proactively with partners to set clinical standards and ensure patients receive safe and reliable treatment anywhere in Qatar; Deliver Best Value aims to achieve the best clinical outcomes and patient experience, ensuring value for patients and the system; and Learn and Create leverages its vast research and education capacity to continue to innovate and drive improvements in patient care.

For its part, the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) also launched its third strategic plan (2024-2030) in October 2024 under the slogan “1st Choice for Our Community’s Health,” which represents an important stage in line with the Third National Health Strategy and the Third National Development Strategy.

The PHCC’s strategic plan is based on key pillars, such as Qatar National Vi-

sion 2030 (QNV 2030) and the Third National Health Strategy. These strategies focus on several pillars of the health sector, most notably the focus on population health, setting ambitious goals to improve health outcomes, enhancing the quality of health services and facilitating access to them for patients, and a renewed focus on the sustainability of services provided. These pillars have been incorporated into PHCC’s new plan.

PHCC continues to support priority population groups nationwide, aligning its services with the needs of priority groups to provide them with greater attention, focusing on increasing innovation in community healthcare delivery, integrated health services, and preventive health.

**Objectives**

Its strategic objectives address the health needs of these priority population groups, including children and adolescents, women and pregnant women, and employees, as well as mental health, improving the health of people with multiple chronic conditions, in addition to the health and well-being of people with disabilities, and the health of the elderly.

The launch of these national health strategies and their supporting plans comes at a time when the health sector in the State of Qatar has made significant achievements, particularly in the expansion of public health facilities.

The number of hospitals and long-term care facilities in the public sector has reached 19, while the number of health centers including those affiliated with the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) and centers managed by the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) under an agreement with the Ministry of Public Health has increased to approximately 35, spread across the country, including six health

and wellness centers.

Meanwhile, the total number of health workers in the public sector reached approximately 29,960 health workers.

As a result of this development, the State of Qatar achieved a remarkable medical milestone about a month ago, with the country’s first successful heart transplant performed by a local team specializing in heart transplantation.

This achievement represents a significant step forward in Qatar’s healthcare sector and highlights the excellence of its organ transplant program. HMC’s National Center for Cancer Care and Research (NCCCR) has become a leading cancer treatment destination, not only in Qatar but also in the Gulf region, attracting patients from across the region while continuing to provide world-class patient care in Qatar.

NCCCR continues to set standards for oncology services through advanced technology, personalized treatment plans, and a highly qualified multidisciplinary medical team.

Reflecting Qatar’s success in establishing a strong health system through a visionary national strategy, the country’s organ donor registry has exceeded 580,000 registered donors, representing about 28 percent of Qatar’s adult population, and the number of living kidney donors to relatives is doubling annually, increasing kidney transplants.

The number of organ transplants performed in 2024 was approximately 60 kidney transplants, 12 liver transplants, and one lung transplant. All these recent achievements in the public health sector in the State of Qatar are the fruits of previous national health strategies and the result of massive investments made by the state to develop a flexible and smart healthcare system that works to achieve well-being and health for all residents.

Drug trials reveal liver risk

Pfizer ends development of potential obesity drug

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): Pfizer is ending the development of its potential once-daily pill treatment for obesity after venturing into the biggest and most expensive level of clinical testing.

The drugmaker said Tuesday that it would stop studying danuglipron after a participant in one of its trials experienced a possible drug-induced liver injury that was resolved once the person stopped taking the drug. Danuglipron was in phase three testing, which is generally the last phase of development before a company submits the potential treatment to government regulators for approval.

A company official said in a statement that Pfizer still plans to develop

other potential obesity treatments in earlier stages of testing.

Obesity treatments have become one of the more promising and lucrative sectors of drug development for pharmaceutical companies. Eli Lilly and Co.’s Zepbound, for instance, brought in nearly \$5 billion in sales in 2024, its first full year on the market.

But leading treatments like Zepbound and Novo Nordisk’s Wegovy are injectable, and drugmakers are eager to develop an easier-to-take pill version.

Pfizer had announced in late 2023 that it would abandon a twice-daily version of danuglipron after more than half the patients in a clinical trial stopped taking it.

Breakthrough study

Simple blood test spots preeclampsia risk early

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., April 14, (AP): Mirvie has announced results of a breakthrough study published in Nature Communications, revealing new advances in the biological understanding of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDP), including preeclampsia - a leading cause of maternal morbidity and mortality as well as preterm birth. Researchers used data from more than 9,000 pregnancies within the multi-center Mirvie-sponsored Miracle of Life prospective study to discover and validate RNA signatures capable of distinguishing between severe and mild hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, including preeclampsia, months before symptoms occur. The paper also validates the predictive performance of Mirvie’s simple blood test to predict preeclampsia early, at 17.5 to 22 weeks gestational age, in pregnancies without any pre-existing high-risk conditions.

“By the time a patient is symptomatic, it’s a race against the clock to try to get the baby to term and not risk the mother’s health,” said Dr. Kara Rood, a maternal-fetal medicine physician, one of the principal investigators of the study, and Clinical Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. “Current guidelines are not helping us identify which patients are truly at high risk and we need better tools. Mirvie’s preeclampsia

risk prediction test can now improve risk assessment, helping women and their care teams be informed and take actions with the potential to delay onset or prevent the disease.”

Despite current guidelines from U.S. Preventive Services Taskforce and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that use general maternal characteristics to identify pregnant women at increased risk for preeclampsia, rates of the disease have nearly doubled in the last decade and now affect 1 in 12 pregnancies. Mirvie’s blood test uses RNA signatures to resolve this ambiguity, helping pregnant women and their providers focus on the 1 in 4 pregnancies that are truly at high risk, ensuring optimal care for the right patients. The results of this study demonstrate that relying on molecular signals from the underlying biology is far more effective in determining whether risk for preeclampsia is high or low.

Validation results show the simple blood test can identify 91% of pregnancies that will develop preterm preeclampsia in women aged 35+ without pre-existing high-risk conditions, months ahead of symptoms. Those with a low-risk result have 99.7% probability of not developing preterm preeclampsia. The clinically validated blood test will soon be broadly available under the brand name Encompass™.

New cuts threaten the same across the US

Measles exploded in Texas after vaccine funding stalled: experts

NEW YORK, April 14, (AP): The measles outbreak in West Texas didn’t happen just by chance.

The easily preventable disease, declared eliminated in the US in 2000, ripped through communities sprawling across more than 20 Texas counties in part because health departments were starved of the funding needed to run vaccine programs, officials say.

“We haven’t had a strong immunization program that can really do a lot of boots-on-the-ground work for years,” said Katherine Wells, the health director in Lubbock, a 90-minute drive from the outbreak’s epicenter.

Immunization programs nationwide have been left brittle by years of stagnant funding by federal, state and local governments. In Texas and elsewhere, this helped set the stage for the measles outbreak and fueled its spread. Now cuts to federal funding threaten efforts to prevent more cases and outbreaks.



Cesar Acevedo, (left), holds his infant son, Adriel Acevedo, as a nurse Tracey McElroy, (right), prepares to give him a vaccination that included a polio dose at the Dallas County Health and Human Services immunization clinic in Dallas, Friday, April 4. (AP)

**Influx**

Health departments got an influx of cash to deal with COVID-19, but it wasn’t enough to make up for years of neglect. On top of that, trust in vaccines has eroded. Health officials warn the situation is primed to get worse.

Recent cuts by the Trump administration have pulled billions of dollars in COVID-19 related funding - \$2 billion of it slated for immunization programs for various diseases. Overseeing the cuts is Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who rose to prominence leading an anti-vaccine movement. While Kennedy has said he wants his agency to prevent future outbreaks, he’s also declined to deliver a consistent and forceful message that would help do so - encouraging people to vaccinate their children against measles while reminding them it is safe.

At the same time, lawmakers in Texas and about two-thirds of states have introduced legislation this year that would make it easier to opt out of vaccines or otherwise put up barriers to ensuring more people get shots, according to an analysis by The Associated Press. That further undercuts efforts to keep infectious diseases at bay, health officials said.

The more than 700 measles cases reported this year in the U.S. have already surpassed last year’s total. The vast majority - more than 540 - are in Texas, but cases have popped up in 23 other states. Two Texas children have died. A 6-year-old girl from Gaines

County, the center of the outbreak, died in February, the first measles death in the U.S. in a decade. An 8-year-old girl from the same town, Seminole, died earlier this month.

Children in the US are generally required to be vaccinated to go to school, which in the past ensured vaccination rates stayed high enough to prevent infectious diseases like measles from spreading. But a growing number of parents have been skipping the shots for their kids. The share of children exempted from vaccine requirements has reached an all-time high, and just 92.7% of kindergartners got their required shots in 2023. That’s well below the 95% coverage level that keeps diseases at bay.

**Vigilance**

Keeping vaccination rates high requires vigilance, commitment and money.

Though the outbreak in Texas started in Mennonite communities that have been resistant to vaccines and distrustful of government intervention, it quickly jumped to other places with low vaccination rates. There are similar under-vaccinated pockets across the country that could provide the tinder that sparks another outbreak.

“It’s like a hurricane over warm water in the Caribbean,” said Dr. Peter Hotez, co-director of the Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development in Houston. “As

long as there’s warm water, the hurricane will continue to accelerate. In this case, the warm water is the unvaccinated kids.”

Lubbock receives a \$254,000 immunization grant from the state annually that can be used for staff, outreach, advertising, education and other elements of a vaccine program. That hasn’t increased in at least 15 years as the population grew.

It used to be enough for three nurses, an administrative assistant, advertising and even goodies to give out at health fairs, Wells said. “Now it covers a nurse, a quarter of a nurse, a little bit of an admin assistant, and basically nothing else.”

Texas has among the lowest per capita state funding for public health in the nation, just \$17 per person in 2023, according to the State Health Access Data Assistance Center.

Vaccines are among the most successful tools in public health’s arsenal, preventing debilitating illnesses and lowering the need for expensive medical care. Childhood vaccines prevent 4 million deaths worldwide each year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which says the measles vaccine will save some 19 million lives by 2030.

US immunization programs are funded by a variable mix of federal, state and local money. Federal money is sent to every state, which then decides how much to send to local health departments.

Precision med

Next-gen cancer therapy in focus

BARCELONA, Spain, April 14, (AP): Reveal Genomics and Ona Therapeutics have announced a strategic collaboration aimed at accelerating the clinical development of ONA-255, a next-generation ADC designed to enhance the precision and efficacy of cancer treatment across multiple tumor types.

ONA-255 is positioned to be a first-in-class molecule against a novel ADC target present in multiple, prevalent solid tumor types. Ona has privileged insight of the target as a hallmark of molecular adaptation in advanced diseases and its unique function as a universal driver of resistance to various therapies. ONA-255 is an ADC tailor-made to match the design of the molecule to the extraordinary biology of the target to deliver exceptionally potent drug against recalcitrant tumors, especially resistant clones for deeper and more durable responses.

**Expert**

At the heart of this collaboration is Dr. Aleix Prat, Co-Founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Reveal Genomics. A globally recognized expert in precision oncology and drug development, Dr. Prat played a key role in identifying the ONA-255 drug target and generating, in collaboration with Ona Therapeutics and Dr. Roger Gomis, the critical preclinical data necessary for its clinical advancement. He also serves as the head of Ona Therapeutics’ advisory board.

As a leader in genomic innovation, REVEAL GENOMICS will conduct a comprehensive molecular analysis of tumor and blood samples from the ONA-255 phase 1-2 clinical trial as part of this strategic collaboration. Leveraging proprietary technologies and advanced computational algorithms, the company will decode key molecular and genomic biomarkers to reveal insights into tumor biology, the immune microenvironment, and response mechanisms to ONA-255. This pioneering work will help define patient populations, identify predictive biomarkers, and deepen the understanding of ONA-255’s mechanism of action - accelerating its clinical development and opening new therapeutic avenues.

To advance this partnership, Ona Therapeutics - working in collaboration with the U.S. subsidiary of Reveal Genomics - has been awarded a grant from CDTI (Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico y la Innovación), a public entity under the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities that promotes technological innovation and development. The grant is funded by the Plan de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia - Funded by the European Union NextGenerationEU.

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Hamlin finishes second in his 400th consecutive Cup start

# Larson claims emotional Cup victory at Bristol Motor Speedway

BRISTOL, Tenn., April 14, (AP): With added motivation to honor a late friend, Kyle Larson seemed to have an extra gear Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway.

The Hendrick Motorsports star led 411 of 500 laps in a victory that was dominant as it was emotional.

Larson, racing just days after the death of Jon Edwards, his former public relations representative, picked up his second Cup win of the season. It was his 31st Cup victory and third at Bristol.

“This one is definitely for Jon,” Larson said. “He is just a great guy, so we’re going to miss him. Wish he was going to be here with us to celebrate, but I know he’s celebrating with us in spirit. Just a flawless race at Bristol for the team. Really, really good car. That was a lot of fun.”

Denny Hamlin finished second in his 400th consecutive Cup start, falling one spot short in his bid for a third consecutive win. The Joe Gibbs Racing driver was gracious in defeat, noting Larson’s victory came after a somber week that also included the deaths of longtime motorsports journalist Al Pearce and championship truck owner Shigeaki Hattori.

“You’ve got to give that team their due and Kyle his due,” Hamlin said. “Just a dominant performance. Looked like a pretty flawless day for him. It was all I had to try to keep up. Glad we were able to give him a little bit of a run, but this weekend we’re all thinking about Jon Edwards and his family. Al Pearce, Shigeaki Hattori. We’ve lost a lot of great people in our sport over this past week. So our thoughts are with them.”

Ty Gibbs was third, followed by Chase Briscoe and Ryan Blaney, who led 48 laps but faded to fifth after pitting late and betting on catching a caution. The final 235 laps were run under the green flag in a race with only three yellow flags, the fewest at Bristol since August 1982.

Larson’s No. 5 Chevrolet was one of several cars sporting a decal in the memory of Edwards, the Hendrick Motorsports director of communications whose death was confirmed in a Thursday statement from the team. The cause of death was not announced.

The 53-year-old Edwards was a PR specialist during Jeff Gordon’s four Cup championships. After becoming Gordon’s right-hand man, Edwards also

worked closely with Larson since the star joined Hendrick Motorsports in 2021 and won his first championship. On Saturday at Bristol, Larson dedicated an Xfinity Series victory to Edwards, who took vacations with the driver and became his closest friend on the No. 5 team.

Gordon, who retired from driving in 2015 and since has become the vice chairman of Hendrick Motorsports, was emotional when talking about Edwards before and after the race.

“It’s been a rough week,” Gordon said. “I lost somebody who was like a brother to me and so many other people that he impacted. I just want to say thank you to everybody that has been sending messages, making phone calls. Kyle was obviously very close to him, and Jon did a lot for him. You could tell he was driving with a passion out there.”

Larson also finished second in Friday’s truck series race, nearly completing a tripleheader sweep to honor Edwards, whom he said was always a happy person.

“He wouldn’t want us to be sad,” Larson said of Edwards. “I’m happy to see the smiling faces and everybody talking positively of Jon this week.”



Kyle Larson (5) passes Riley Herbst (35) during a NASCAR Cup Series auto race in Bristol, Tenn. (AP)

# Piastri cruises to win at Bahrain Grand Prix



McLaren driver Oscar Piastri of Australia holds the trophy after winning the the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix, in Sakhir. (AP)

Verstappen recovers to finish 6th

**SAKHIR, Bahrain, April 14, (AP):** In a race with plenty of drama, Oscar Piastri made sure to stay ahead of trouble.

Piastri took his second win of the Formula 1 season in dominant style at the Bahrain Grand Prix on Sunday, slashing the points gap to his teammate Lando Norris, who could only manage third after an eventful race.

Piastri started on pole and kept Mercedes’ behind him, fending off a challenge for the lead after a safety-car restart.

Russell held on to second after defending his position on the last lap from Norris, who had started sixth.

“It’s been an incredible weekend,” Piastri said after claiming McLaren’s first-ever win in Bahrain. “To finish the job today in style was nice.”

Norris keeps the lead of the championship with a three-point advantage over Piastri. Defending champion Max Verstappen, who finished sixth, is five points further back in third.

Piastri had a no-drama run to the checkered flag, except for a drinks system which wasn’t working in the desert heat. Norris’ race was a roller-coaster.

Norris made up three places off the start but was then handed a five-second penalty for starting too far forward on his grid space. After going down as far as 14th, he made up places and won a lengthy battle with the Ferraris of

Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton before falling short in his attempt to beat Russell for second.

“A messy race for me and disappointed not to bring home the one-two for McLaren,” Norris said.

Russell had to deal with electrical problems on his car and was facing an investigation into his use of the DRS overtake aid system. Russell said it had opened by accident when he pressed the button to use the radio but said he eased off and didn’t gain an advantage. The stewards agreed and didn’t give him a penalty.

Russell’s second place was the best result for Mercedes since Russell won the Las Vegas Grand Prix in November.

Leclerc was fourth for Ferrari after losing a hard-fought battle to Norris while his teammate Hamilton started ninth but cut through the field to finish fifth.

After last week’s race in Japan resembled a procession, with all of the top six finishing in the order they started, Bahrain offered a festival of overtaking.

Verstappen won last week but was never in contention in Bahrain and was even last at one stage. He survived an overheating car and a slow pit stop to place sixth, passing Pierre Gasly, who was seventh for Alpine.

Esteban Ocon of Haas was eighth, with Yuki Tsunoda ninth for his first points since joining Red Bull - and the team’s first for any driver other than Verstappen since November - and Oliver Bearman 10th in the other Haas.



Mercedes driver George Russell of Britain in action during the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix, in Sakhir. (AP)

# Resurgent Lyon beats Auxerre to move up to fourth

PARIS, April 14, (AP): Forward Georges Mikautadze scored one goal and set up another as resurgent Lyon won 3-1 at Auxerre to climb into fourth place in Ligue 1.

It was Lyon’s fifth win in the last six league games and moved it one point behind Marseille in third place, and one point above Lille in fifth. The top three get an automatic spot in next season’s Champions League while the team in fourth enters qualifying.

Mikautadze tucked away a penalty in the 54th minute after being fouled by goalkeeper Donovan Léon as he went clean through.

Right back Saël Kumbedi and midfielder Corentin Tolisso then combined to set up Rayan Cherki for a neat curled finish in the 62nd.

After Auxerre striker Lassine Sinayoko pulled one back, the fleet-footed Mikautadze pinged over a low cross from the left to give veteran striker Alexandre Lacazette an easy finish in the 84th.

Lyon visits bitter local rival Saint-Etienne next Sunday, with Mikautadze facing countryman Zuriko Davitashvili and much at stake for both sides at opposite ends of the table.

Saint-Etienne earlier came from behind three times to draw 3-3 with Brest in Ligue 1 and earn a valuable point in its relegation fight.

The draw moved 17th-placed Saint-Etienne three points behind Le Havre in the relegation-playoff spot with five rounds left.

The manner of the performance may give Saint-Etienne fans hope, although the club has a difficult run-in. Saint-Etienne also faces high-flying Monaco and Strasbourg - with those sides chasing a Champions League spot next season.

Eighth-placed Brest led 3-2 after a thrilling first half where striker Ludovic Ajorque scored twice for the visitors and Abdallah Sima got the other goal, while lively forwards Lucas Stassin and Irvin Cardona netted for Saint-Etienne.

Cardona made it 3-3 with 10 minutes to go and

Saint-Etienne went close to winning when Davitashvili’s header hit the crossbar five minutes into stoppage time.

Rennes raced into a 3-0 lead inside 15 minutes on the way to a 5-1 win at Le Havre.

Dutch midfielder Azor Matusiwa scored after 37 seconds following a huge blunder by goalkeeper Mathieu Gorgelin, who passed the ball straight to a Rennes player. Striker Arnaud Kalimuendo then set up Matusiwa for an empty-net goal.

Defender Lorenz Assignon and Kalimuendo netted soon after. Le Havre pulled one back before the break but Jordan forward Mousa Tamari and substitute Andrés Gomez grabbed completed a rout as Rennes moved up to 11th.

Striker Esteban Lepaul scored twice as Angers beat rock-bottom Montpellier 2-0 and pushed it closer to relegation.

Montpellier is 12 points behind Le Havre with only 15 points available.

Timbers down Sporting KC

# Chicago contains Messi in goalless draw with Miami

CHICAGO, April 14, (AP): Lionel Messi missed on four chances but Inter Miami remained unbeaten after Sunday’s scoreless draw against the Chicago Fire.

Messi earned a free kick in the 62nd minute but his try struck the crossbar. Another free kick 13 minutes later went a foot above the upper corner. A free kick in the 86th minute grazed the far corner.

Messi did not play because of injuries the past two times Inter Miami visited Chicago, but Sunday’s match drew 62,358 fans, many of them clad in the visiting club’s pink home tops. It’s the largest home crowd in Fire history.

Chicago (3-2-3) goalkeeper Chris Brady deflected Messi’s left-footed shot in the fourth minute.

The Fire’s best chance came in the 88th minute when Jonathan Bamba’s point-blank shot was stopped by Inter Miami keeper Oscar Ustari.

Ustari finished with seven saves for Inter Miami (4-0-3). Brady had three stops.

Kevin Kelsy scored in each half as the Portland Timbers upped their unbeaten streak to five with a 4-2 victory over Sporting Kansas City.

The Timbers jumped in front in the 10th minute when David Ayala used an assist from David Da Costa to score his first goal this season and his second in 63 appearances with the club. Da Costa’s assist was his second in his first season in the league.

Sporting KC evened the score six minutes later on an unassisted goal by Shapi Suleymanov - his first netter in his first season.

Portland regained the lead when Ayala set up Kelsy’s first goal. The assist was the first for Ayala this season and the second of his career.

Sporting KC again answered with the equalizer - tying it at 2-2 at the half on a penalty-kick goal by Dejan Joveljic in the 33rd minute. Joveljic’s team-high fifth goal in his first season with the club came after the Timbers’ Antony Alves Santos fouled Suleymanov.

Portland took the lead for good four minutes into the second half when Antony notched an assist on Kelsy’s third goal of the campaign. Kelsy scored six goals in 23 appearances as a 19-year-old rookie last season.

Diego Rossi scored in the 55th minute and Steven Moreira added a goal and Patrick Schulte had five saves on Sunday night to help the Columbus Crew beat St. Louis City 2-1 for their third win in a row.

Patrick Schulte finished with five



Chicago Fire forward Omari Glasgow, left, defends Inter Miami midfielder Telasco Segovia during the first half of an MLS soccer game in Chicago. (AP)

Kirkwood triumphs

# Palou finally loses as champ's 2-race winning streak snapped

LONG BEACH, Calif., April 14, (AP): Kyle Kirkwood showed that Alex Palou can be beat this IndyCar season and returned Andretti Global to the top of the podium with his second career victory at the Grand Prix of Long Beach.

Kirkwood has won the most prestigious street course race in the United States twice in the last three years and Sunday’s win ended the early run of Palou dominance. Palou, a three-time IndyCar champion including the last two consecutive seasons, won the first two races this year.

Palou, the current points leader, instead finished second.

“You never feel amazing when you finish second,” Palou said. “I tried, I tried. I think we did the best we could.”

Palou’s dominance has started to irritate other drivers in the field, but the Spaniard doesn’t care. He was an unknown from a racing series in Japan when he arrived in IndyCar in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic when competition was in a bubble and few got a chance to interact with Palou.

He moved to Chip Ganassi Racing in 2021 and, in top-notch equipment, won three races and his first IndyCar championship. He was polite, always smiling, and used the descriptor “it’s amazing” for nearly everything good that was happening to him.

Palou’s demeanor was endearing and he presented himself as very eager to please. It wasn’t an act, but as he collected three championship trophies, there’s been a shift in Palou’s approach - he’s still smiling and nice, but he’s calculated and unconcerned about the competition. When told this weekend he should give his rivals a chance to win a race, Palou used an expletive in declining and said to publish his words.

He said he planned to win the first six races of the season before he’d give another driver a chance - a run that would include Palou’s first victory in next month’s Indianapolis 500. Alas, his streak came to an end on the downtown streets of Long Beach, which hosted the caution-free race for the 50th year.

“I am not disappointed, 100% I am happy to be here,” Palou said. “It sucks we couldn’t make it more interesting for the fans, but I am happy to be here.”

Palou joined his Ganassi teammate Scott Dixon as the only drivers in the last 14 seasons to win the first two races of the year - Dixon did it in 2020, when he won the first three races and eventually his sixth IndyCar title.

Will Power (2010), Sebastian Bourdais (2006), Paul Tracy (2003), Sam Hornish Jr. (2001), Rick Mears (1982) and Johnny Rutherford (1980) are the only drivers to also win the first two races of the season. All but Power went on to win the championship.



Kuwaiti team triumphs over Qatari team in regional round

# Warba Bank wins 1st place in final round of 2nd GR Yaris Cup

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Warba Bank earned the first place in the fifth and final rounds of the second season of the GR Yaris Cup, concluding a highly competitive and dynamic season. The GR2 team, representing Kuwait, also emerged victorious in the championship, defeating the Qatari team in the regional round.

Held in Kuwait with the participation of racers from both Kuwait and Qatar, the cup concluded last weekend and witnessed exceptional performances from the talented young drivers, as Warba Bank celebrated this national achievement as a testament to the dedication and potential of Kuwaiti youth, an achievement that aligns with the bank's social responsibility and its vision to empower the youth and support them across diverse fields.

Warba Bank's sponsorship of the cup affirms its ongoing commitment to supporting sports initiatives that showcase the passion, discipline and advanced skills of Kuwaiti youth. These platforms provide young individuals with the opportunity to compete, grow and realize their ambitions in a stimulating environment.

On this occasion, Chief Marketing and Corporate Communication Officer at Warba Bank, Dr. Mohammad Barakat, said: "We are proud to have supported this outstanding sporting event, which reflects the spirit of competition and enhances Kuwait's reputation on the regional sports stage. This victory underscores the importance of investing in youth and providing them with opportunities to express their full potential, an objective that Warba Bank continues to uphold through its diverse initiatives focused on human development and empowerment."

Dr. Barakat concluded by congratulating the winners, organizers and all participants, reaffirming Warba Bank's ongoing support for initiatives that combine excellence and innovation.

He added: "This cup reflects the values we believe in at Warba Bank, values captured in our slogan: 'We Hear You, Let's Own Tomorrow.'"

Warba Bank places strong emphasis on its social responsibility, demonstrated through its consistent support for initiatives that leave a positive and lasting impact on society. Warba is particularly focused on empowering the youth by investing in their creative, professional and athletic potential. It also sponsors events that combine innovation and excellence whether in education, technology or sports, believing that investing in youth is a direct investment in the future of Kuwait.

The bank's support for events such as the GR Yaris Cup aligns with its vision of enabling local talent and fostering a spirit of competition, creativity and achievement among the next generation.

Building a Better Tomorrow

Guided by its slogan "We Hear You, Let's Own Tomorrow," Warba Bank remains committed to setting new standards for the future of Islamic banking. Through digital innovation, service excellence and sustainable development, the Bank is reshaping customer experience while promoting a comprehensive and inclusive financial system.

With one of the largest shareholder bases and being one of the fastest-growing Islamic banks in Kuwait, Warba continues to reinforce its position as a trusted partner for individuals and businesses alike. Its notable success in a short period has positioned it at the forefront of digital Islamic banking, offering Sharia-compliant products and services that are accessible, innovative, and aligned with the aspirations of a modern society.



Dr. Barakat



GR Yaris Warba car



Warba Bank team with officials.

## Qadsia tops Al-Shabab

# Burgan upsets Kuwait Club in five-set thriller

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Burgan Club's first volleyball team pulled off a major upset by defeating defending Premier League champion Kuwait Club 3-2 (25-19, 21-25, 19-25, 25-20, 15-13) in a thrilling five-set match at the Volleyball Association Hall at Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. The encounter, part of the Premier League's first round, showcased intense competition and high-level play.

In another first-round fixture, Qadsia secured a 3-1 win over Al-Shabab (25-15, 25-19, 16-25, 25-20), collecting three points to top the early league standings.

With this win, Burgan made a bold statement about its championship ambitions, overcoming both the league and recent Super Cup champion, Kuwait Club. Burgan's players showed grit and determination, pushing Al-Ameed's star-studded squad to the decisive fifth set and emerging victorious.

Assistant Coach Abdullah Talib attributed Kuwait Club's loss to a string of health issues among key players. "Several players have been suffering from a cold, especially Abdullah Jassim and Brazilian star Joao," Talib explained. "Additionally, Iranian player Saber Kazemi played through an elbow injury and was far from his best."



Players fighting for the ball during the league game between Burgan and Kuwait Club.

Talib also noted the team's heavy schedule, saying, "We played 12 matches before facing Burgan and won all of them. A dip in performance was expected."

He praised Burgan's performance, acknowledging, "It played at a high level and were well-prepared. It deserved the win."

Looking ahead, Talib confirmed that Kuwait Club has already begun preparations for their next match against Al-Arabi. He also announced the return of trainer Abdullah Bouftin from injury, while second trainer Adhbi Al-Enezi is still recovering but played through his injury against Burgan.

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## Al-Enezi seeks re-election as a member of Arab Basketball Federation in Dubai

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Secretary-General of the Kuwait Basketball Federation, Thamer Al-Shenfa, along with Assistant Secretary-General and Arab Basketball Federation member, Owaid Al-Enezi, will travel to Dubai this evening to attend the General Assembly meeting of the Arab Basketball Federation, scheduled for tomorrow. The agenda includes the election of a new board of directors for the Arab Federation.

Al-Shenfa will officially represent the Kuwait Federation at the meeting, while Al-Enezi is seeking re-election to the Arab Basketball Federation for a second consecutive term.

Al-Shenfa expressed that the Kuwait Basketball Federation supports Al-Enezi's candidacy to reinforce Kuwait's presence and influence in the regional basketball scene. He described the electoral competition with the Omani candidate as a fair and sportsmanlike contest.

Al-Enezi, for his part, stated that he is eager to earn the continued trust of the Arab federations to further advance basketball competitions and development across the region.

Meanwhile, two key matchups will take place today in the final round of the basketball league at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex Hall. Al-Arabi will face Al-Qadsia at 5:00 pm, followed by a highly anticipated clash between Kazma and Kuwait Club at 7:30 pm.

In the opening match, Al-Qaisiya (25 points) is expected to secure an easy win



Owaid Al-Enezi

over Al-Arabi (19 points), using the game as preparation for its upcoming encounter with Kuwait Club and the championship semi-finals. Al-Arabi, having missed out on a semifinal spot, will focus on fine-tuning its squad ahead of the Cup competition.

The second matchup pits Al-Abyad (27 points) against Kazma (27 points) in a showdown for top position. Kuwait Club aims to repeat its dominant performance from the first round, where it won 98-70, and finish the second half undefeated. With standout players like Hamad Adnan, Hussein Al-Khabbaz, Mohammed Adnan, Alexander Al-Ghais, Turki Hamoud, Imran Jawhar, and Yousef Al-Hamdan, Kuwait Club is poised for a strong finish.

Kazma, however, promises to be a formidable opponent, boasting experienced talent including captain Ahmed Al-Balushi, Yousef Burhana, the Al-Saho brothers—Abdulrahman and Saho—and Abdullah Ibrahim, setting the stage for a thrilling and competitive encounter.

# Clippers clinch West No. 5 seed

Timberwolves land No. 6 spot as Warriors sent to play-in

SAN FRANCISCO, April 14, (AP): The Los Angeles Clippers worked overtime to clinch a playoff spot - and send the Golden State Warriors to the NBA's play-in tournament.

The final game to end the regular season was a big one for seeding in the Western Conference, with the Clippers beating the Warriors 124-119 in overtime Sunday to clinch the No. 5 seed.

The Warriors fell to No. 7 and will host No. 8 Memphis on Tuesday, with the winner earning the No. 7 seed.

Had Golden State won, the Clippers would have fallen to seventh. But James Harden prevented that with 39 points, 10 assists, and seven rebounds to cap an All-Star season for the former NBA MVP and give the Clippers an eighth straight win and a 50-32 record.

"We're a good team, and we're excited to show the world, but we're a good team," Harden said in a postgame interview with ESPN on the court.

The West bracket wasn't set until the final day and had numerous teams in the running for numerous positions after the top three of Oklahoma City, Houston, and the Los Angeles Lakers were already determined.

The Denver Nuggets regrouped after their chaotic final week that included the firing of coach Michael Malone and general manager Calvin Booth to secure the No. 4 seed and home-court advantage in the first round against the Clippers by beating the Rockets 126-111.

The Lakers, Nuggets, and Clippers all finished 50-32, with Los Angeles having the tiebreaker

to finish No. 3 and start a series in Los Angeles for the first time since 2012.

The Timberwolves - who could

have slipped all the way to eighth in some scenarios - instead landed in the No. 6 spot at 49-33 following their 116-105 victory over

Utah. Anthony Edwards scored 43 points after stressing to his teammates the urgency to avoid having to play at least one more game.

"Like, we don't want to play in the play-in because I've been in both situations," the All-Star guard said. "We want to be fully prepared going into the playoffs. We want that whole week."

So did the Warriors, who have never won a game in the play-in tournament. They would have finished sixth to set up another marquee matchup between Stephen Curry and LeBron James in the postseason and have just two days to shake off the disappointment.

"We're right where we want to be," forward Jimmy Butler said. "We've still got an opportunity and we control our own fate. We're going to be just fine."

Sacramento is No. 9 and Dallas No. 10 in the West. They will play Wednesday in Sacramento, with the winner having to beat the loser of the Golden State-Memphis game to face the top-seeded Thunder in the first round.

There was no final-day drama in the East, where everything had already been decided.

Cleveland is No. 1, and Boston is No. 2, and they will await the two teams to advance from the play-in. The No. 3 New York Knicks will face the No. 6 Detroit Pistons, and No. 4 Indiana will meet No. 5 Milwaukee.

Orlando is No. 7 and will host eighth-seeded Atlanta on Tuesday, with the winner advancing to face the Celtics. The loser will get another shot against the winner of the game between No. 9 Chicago and No. 10 Miami.

Besides the victories by the Nuggets and the Clippers, the Indiana Pacers beat Cleveland in two overtimes to finish 50-32. That gave the NBA nine teams with at least 50 wins for the first time since 10 teams did it in 2014-15.



Los Angeles Clippers guard Norman Powell (24) moves the ball while defended by Golden State Warriors guard Brandin Podziemski (2) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)



Minnesota Timberwolves center Rudy Gobert (27) goes up for a shot as Utah Jazz forward Kyle Filipowski, right, defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Minneapolis. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Organizers unveil sleek metallic torches: Organizers for the Milan-Cortina Olympics on Monday unveiled a sleek and minimalistic metallic design for the torches that will be used in the traditional relay ahead of next year's Winter Games. The torches will be made primarily out of recycled materials, with a design system that lets the fuel canister be refilled up to 10 times - reducing the number of torches that will be needed, organizers said. Made from an aluminum and brass alloy, the Olympic torch features a blue-green hue while the Paralympic version is bronze colored. "The design of the torch is intended to enhance the flame itself, the true essence of the torch relay," organizers said. "The idea is to direct focus towards the flame, leaving the torch almost in the background. By concentrating on the simplicity of the design, the flame becomes the main protagonist." (AP)

Alekna sets world record: Mykolas Alekna surpassed his world record in the discus twice. The Lithuanian star threw a discus 247 feet, 9 inches (75.56 meters) at the Oklahoma Throws Series World Invitational. In his first attempt, he also had a record-breaking throw of 245-7 (74.89 meters). The record is subject to ratification. Last year at the same event, he broke a world record that had stood since 1986 and went on to earn a silver medal at the 2024 Paris Games. The 22-year-old Alekna is in his fourth year at the University of California. His father, Virgilijus, is a two-time Olympic champion in the discus. (AP)

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NEWS





Kuwaiti shooter aims for a target during the International Shooting Championship.

# Sports

## Sheikh Ahmed Al Maktoum praises Kuwait's shooting excellence at Amir Championship

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: The men's and women's trap competitions of the His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Shooting Championship are set to begin today at the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club. Around 220 male and female shooters, along with their technical and administrative teams from 18 Arab and international countries, will participate. Official training for the event will begin at 9:00 am., with the competition scheduled to start at 2:30 pm.

The championship promises high-level competition, featuring numerous shooters with previous experience in the Olympics and various world and continental tournaments. The His Highness the Amir Championship is widely respected and

recognized for both its technical expertise and its exceptional organization, earning admiration from national shooting federations worldwide.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Hasher Al Maktoum, President of the UAE Shooting Federation, expressed his enthusiasm for attending the event in Kuwait. He noted the significance of the championship and shared his appreciation for Kuwait's success in shooting sports on the global stage.

He remarked, "As always, my connection to Kuwait and its shooting achievements is personal. Kuwait has consistently raised its flag in international competitions, including the Olympics and regional tournaments."

Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Hasher Al Maktoum continued, "When it

comes to hosting major championships, Kuwait has continually excelled. The His Highness the Amir Championship stands as a prime example of this success. The organizing team has not only maintained a high standard but continues to set new benchmarks in creativity and excellence, garnering widespread praise from participants."

He also commended the athletes competing in the championship, acknowledging their commitment to competing at the highest level. "I look forward to meeting many of the Kuwaiti shooters during my visit," he added, emphasizing the strong bonds he shares with them and wishing success for all competitors in their pursuit of top results.

### Ravija and Anudeep shine

## Kuwait stuns Nepal in nail-biter to clinch historic T20I title

HONG KONG, April 14: In a pulsating final at the Mission Road Ground, Kuwait scripted history by clinching a thrilling 3-run win over Nepal, becoming the champion of the Hong Kong Men's T20I Series 2025, powered by India Club and presented by Hong Kong China Cricket.

Opting to bowl first, Nepal made early breakthroughs, but Clinto Anto (26 off 14) and Ravija Sandaruwan (63 off 36) laid a solid foundation with aggressive stroke-play. Their efforts were backed by Usman Ghani (23 off 15) and a handy finish by skipper Mohamed Aslam (13\* off 15), guiding Kuwait to a competitive 174/7 in 20 overs. Among Nepal's bowlers, Sompal Kami (2/26) and Nandan Yadav (2/34) impressed, while Yasin Patel, playing his 50th T20I, kept things tight with 2 economical wickets.

Nepal's chase got off to a horror start, collapsing to 92/8 despite a lone warrior effort from Basir Ahmad, who smashed a brilliant 80 off 43 balls. Debutant Naveenraj Rajendran (2/26) and Anudeep Chandamara (3/18) triggered a top-order collapse, with Yasin Patel's miserly spell (2/24) putting a stranglehold in the powerplay.

However, a late resurgence led by Nandan Yadav (37 off 14) and Basir brought Nepal right back into the contest. Needing 11 off the final over, a no-ball six from Anudeep swung the pendulum, but



Champion of the Men's T20I Series Kuwait.

the bowler held his nerve, delivering two dots and the final wicket, as Clinto Anto took the catch to seal an epic win. Anudeep Chandamara was deservedly named Player of the Final for his match-turning spell.

This result is all the more significant given Nepal's impressive stature in world cricket. Having played in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 — where it came within a whisker of defeating South Africa, losing by just 1 run



Man of match Anudeep Chandamara.

— Nepal entered this series ranked 17th in the world, compared to Kuwait's 24th. Since the T20I ranking system was officially introduced in 2019, this victory marks one of Kuwait's biggest scalps and a giant leap forward. With the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 on the horizon, set to be played in India and Sri Lanka, Kuwait will be eyeing the Asia Qualifiers in September 2025 with renewed belief and purpose.

## Al-Kharafi wins sixth round of equestrian championship



Al-Kharafi on the podium with other winners.

KUWAIT CITY, April 14: Kuwait Club's elite jockey Ali Al-Kharafi claimed victory in the sixth round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League Championship, held at the Kuwait Equestrian Center.

Al-Kharafi topped the 145 cm differentiation round, clocking the fastest time of 38.03 seconds, outperforming a competitive field that included Steven Daniels, Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Fawaz Rashid, Anaz Al-Anaz, Fawaz Al-Subaie, and Sayed Adnan Al-Alawi. The winners were crowned by international referee and equestrian commentator Lama Ahmed Abdel-Aal.

In the 135 cm intermediate category, Abdullah Al-Awadhi of Al-Masayel Club took the lead, followed by Marshoud Al-Marshoud, Nick Channing, and Rakan Al-Hasawi.

Hamad Jaber Al-Hajri, representing the Equestrian Sports Club, continued his strong league performance by winning the 125 cm junior category.

On the tournament's opening day, world champion Ali Al-Kharafi also claimed wins in the third and fourth rounds, held at heights of 130 cm and 140 cm, further solidifying his dominance in the league.

## Kuwait's Ramadan secures 2nd place in opening round

FUJAIRAH, UAE, April 14: Kuwait Marine Sports Club athlete and world champion Fares Ramadan clinched second place in the opening round of the Stock R category at the Motosurf World Championship, organized by the International Marine Sports Union (UIM) in Fujairah, UAE.

Chairman of the Kuwait Marine Sports Club, Mohammed Al-Zanki, praised the achievement, stating: "We are extremely proud of Fares Ramadan's performance in the Motosurf World Championship. Finishing second in such a prestigious international event is a testament to his skill and determination, and a proud moment for Kuwait."

Al-Zanki continued, "This result highlights not only Fares' personal dedication but also the commitment of the Kuwait Marine Sports Club to nurturing top-tier athletes. We extend our congratulations to Fares and eagerly anticipate more successes from Kuwaiti champions in upcoming global competitions."



Fares Ramadan

# McIlroy wins Masters playoff, completes career Grand Slam

'My dreams have been made today'

AUGUSTA, Ga., April 14, (AP): The closer Rory McIlroy came to fulfilling his lifetime dream - winning the Masters - the more it kept slipping away. Sunday at Augusta National felt like his last 11 years in the majors, blunders mixed in with sheer brilliance.

A two-shot lead gone in two holes. A four-shot lead gone in three holes with a shocker of a mistake. A 5-foot putt on the final hole to win narrowly missed.

And then McIlroy turned what could have been another major collapse into his grandest moment of all when he hit wedge to 3 feet for birdie in a sudden-death playoff against Justin Rose to become - finally - a Masters champion and take his place in golf history as the sixth player with the career Grand Slam.

"There were points in my career where I didn't know if I would have this nice garment over my shoulders," McIlroy said, that Masters green jacket looking like a perfect fit. "But I didn't make it easy today. I certainly didn't make it easy. I was nervous."

"It was one of the toughest days I've ever had on the golf course."

The reward was greater than he imagined, and it showed. He rapped in that final putt, raised both arms in the air and let the putter fall behind him. He covered his head, dropped to his knees, and before long his forehead was on the green as his chest heaved with emotion.

That was 11 years of pent-up emotion from his last major, when he began to carry the burden of getting the final leg of the Grand Slam. It was 14 years of remembering the time he wasted a four-shot lead with an 80 on the final day as a 21-year-old.

"I started to wonder if it would ever be my time," he said.

The thought could have easily crossed his mind during the final round.

What could have been a coronation for McIlroy along the back nine turned into a heart-racing, lead-changing, jaw-dropping finish at golf's greatest theater that ended with McIlroy sobbing with joy and disbelief.

It ended with more heartache for Rose, who lost to Sergio Garcia in a playoff in 2017 and forced this one with a clutch 20-foot birdie on the 18th hole for a 6-under 66. He wound up joining Ben Hogan as the only players to lose twice in playoffs at Augusta National.

"It's the kind of putt you dream

about as a kid, and to have it and hole it, it was a special feeling," Rose said. "And unfortunately, the playoff, they always end so quickly. If you're not the guy to hit the great shot or hole the great putt, it's over. But not really anything I could have done more today."

The joy on McIlroy's face never left him from the time that putt dropped - on the green, in Butler Cabin when defending champion Scottie Scheffler first helped him into the green jacket, and during the trophy presentation on the 18th green.

"My dreams have been made today," McIlroy said.

Moments later, speaking to 4-year-old daughter Poppy, he told her: "Never

give up on your dreams. Never, ever give up on your dreams."

This was shaping up as another horror show for McIlroy, who in 2011 lost a four-shot lead on the final day with a 43 on the back nine, a highlight reel that now can start collecting dust.

"I didn't make it easy today," McIlroy said. Right when it looked as though he would throw away another major, McIlroy delivered two majestic shots when nothing less would do, two birdies that sent him to the 18th hole with a one-shot lead. That still wasn't enough. He hit a wedge into the bunker and wound up missing a 5-foot par putt for a 1-over 73 and the first Masters playoff in eight years.



Winner Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, holds the trophy at the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Ga. (AP)

### Best of the Rest

**Indians halt Delhi streak:** Mumbai Indians ended Delhi Capitals' unbeaten run with a 12-run victory in the Indian Premier League.

Mumbai was propped up by Tilak Varma's 59 off 33 balls, finishing on 205-5. Its spinners choked the home side with impact player Karn Sharma taking 3-36 in four overs.

Mitchell Santner claimed 2-43, plus a sensational fielding effort, as Delhi lost its last three wickets to consecutive run-outs. Delhi was dismissed for 193 in 19 overs.

Put into bat, Rajasthan lost skipper Sanju Samson for 15 runs. He was stumped off Krunal Pandya (1-29) in the seventh over, after putting on 49 off 41 balls with Jaiswal.

Jaiswal made a quick start and raced to 50 off 35 balls, his second half-century of the season. (AP)

**Pakistani bowler reported:** Quetta Gladiators' off-spinner Usman Tariq of Pakistan was reported for a suspect bowling action during the Pakistan Super League T20 tournament.

Tariq was reported by on-field umpires Ahsan Raza and Chris Brown after Quetta lost to Lahore Qalandars by 79 runs at Rawalpindi on Sunday. Tariq bowled his quote of four overs and returned figures of 1-31.

He also picked up 2-26 against Peshawar Zalmi as Quetta began its campaign with a thumping 80-run win.

"As per the rules, Usman can continue to bowl in future (PSL) matches," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement. "However, if he is reported again, he will be suspended from bowling and will need to obtain clearance from an ICC-accredited lab before he can resume bowling."

Last year, Tariq was also reported for a suspect bowling action during Quetta's match against Karachi Kings at the same venue before the franchise voluntarily pulled out the off-spinner from the tournament to undergo the bowling test. Later in last August, an ICC-accredited laboratory in Lahore cleared the off-spinner's bowling action and he competed in domestic tournaments without being reported. (AP)