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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Sisi has put Egypt back on the right economic track

THE Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's recent tour of several Gulf states, including Kuwait, carries significant implications that can only be viewed with optimism, despite the sensitive international and regional challenges the region is currently facing. Egypt remains a cornerstone of joint Arab action, and its role in this context is vital.

For 12 years, the Gulf states have been closely monitoring Egypt's progress in various fields, including the performance of the new administration led by a man who took it upon himself to rescue his country from the turmoil and devastation left by the Muslim Brotherhood Group. The rule of the "Brotherhood", which lasted just one year, resulted in the systematic destruction of the economy and society, and severely strained Egypt's relations with countries worldwide, as well as diminished its presence on both the Arab and international stages.

Under President El-Sisi's leadership, the administration worked tirelessly on multiple fronts over the past years to restore stability, beginning with securing the country, revitalizing the economy, addressing long-standing social issues, and ultimately restoring Cairo's influential role in regional affairs.

Yes, Egypt has gone through difficult years, and no president of a country facing such crises could have overcome them so quickly without a strong belief in the ability to overcome challenges and a deep faith in the national spirit of the people.

This is why we witnessed the establishment of an extensive railway and road network, a new capital, modern housing cities in Ras El-Hikma, El-Alamein, and the North Coast, as well as other major projects through Arab, international, and private partnerships, particularly those from the Gulf. This policy had a profound impact on Egypt's recovery from its economic slump.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) believed that supporting Egypt would also support the stability of the GCC countries, given the deep, historic ties between them. The GCC understood that any setback in Egypt would ripple across the entire Arab world due to Egypt's strategic geographical and demographic position.

This experience has proven that Arab partnerships are an important factor in strengthening cooperation between Arab countries,

and in contributing significantly to the revival of their local economies. Similar to the American partnerships with Vietnam, Japan, and China, these partnerships have bolstered investment activities in these countries and helped them overcome several crises.

Using sovereign funds among Arab countries has profound positive social and political implications. This approach has been actively pursued by Egypt under the leadership of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who spearheaded one of the most strategic revolutions of modern times - the economic revolution.

In fact, all uprisings have clear and well-defined social, economic, political, and even military objectives. This is especially true for the June 30, 2013 revolution, which marked the beginning of a new era and corrected the course of a great and deeply rooted nation like Egypt.

We must acknowledge that since 1952, Egypt has faced several crises that have left a lasting negative impact on society and its domestic and foreign political relations. These crises have shackled the Egyptian economy. The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood Group to power only added salt to the injury, as they adopted illogical and nonsensical slogans aimed at radically altering the very nature of Egypt. They overlooked the fact that Egypt is a country of diverse beliefs and intellectuals, which shaped its unique character.

Recently, we have observed that funds deposited by Gulf countries in Egyptian banks are being transformed into profitable investments. Meanwhile, opportunists, including politicians and members of the Muslim Brotherhood Group, thought they could turn back time, ignoring all the unprecedented achievements made during President El-Sisi's era. Ultimately, only truth prevails, and great Egypt will remain steadfast, despite all the storms.

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@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com

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Kuwait, Egypt reaffirm strong ties in key talks

- Details Page 2 -



Amiri Diwan photo
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi chaired on Tuesday the official rounds of talks between the two countries.

KUWAIT SHIELDS WHISTLEBLOWERS
See it ... say it

Bribery case prompts call for vigilance

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Based on an official report submitted to the relevant security bodies, security authorities arrested a Kuwaiti citizen who was working as a manager of a cooperative society after he was found to have requested a financial bribe in exchange for performing tasks that fall within his official responsibilities, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Interior explained that a legal permit was obtained, after coordinating with

the Public Prosecution, to record meetings and phone calls related to the case. Audio and video records captured the full details, which led to the suspect's arrest in the act and his referral to the relevant authorities for necessary legal action.

The ministry affirmed that this type of crime is a grave offense that undermines public confidence in state institutions.

It urged all citizens and residents to report any similar incidents without delay, particularly those involving public employees requesting bribes or gifts in exchange for performing their official duties.

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Photo by Samer Shiqer
Motorists navigate a dusty stretch of road leading to Kuwait City on Tuesday, amid deteriorating weather conditions.

Distance learning activated

Dust storm blankets Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Dusty weather continued to blanket Kuwait late into Tuesday, causing severe disruptions across the country as horizontal visibility in several areas dropped to less than 100 meters, according to the Meteorological Department.

Acting head of the department Dherar Al-Ali said the country was experiencing unstable weather conditions due to a widespread dust storm that started Monday and persisted overnight. He noted that west-northwestern winds ex-

ceeded 60 km/h, further reducing visibility and impacting outdoor activities and traffic.

Al-Ali added that horizontal visibility had dropped to nearly zero in some locations, with conditions expected to gradually improve starting Wednesday morning. Daytime temperatures are forecasted to range between 30 to 32 degrees Celsius, with lows between 17 and 20 degrees.

Continued on Page 5

Outrage in Kuwait over deadly strike on Gaza medical facility

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (Agencies): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the brutal Israeli occupation forces' crime against the Baptist Hospital in Gaza.

The Israeli occupation bombing of the hospital that resulted in destroying vital facilities in the hospital like surgery and intensive care units is a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law as well as the Geneva agreement on the

protection of health facilities, and their workers and civilians, the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry renewed Kuwait's absolute rejection of targeting medical and civil facilities, it said.

Thus, it called on the international community, mainly the UN Security Council, to bear its legal and humanitarian responsibilities towards halting these repeated breaches.

Continued on Page 5

Birth registration now fully online in Kuwait via Sahel

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications Affairs Omar Al-Omar announced on Tuesday the launch of Kuwait's first fully integrated digital service to register newborns through the government services app Sahel.

This falls in line with the Kuwait's high-level directives to accelerate digital transformation, and implement a comprehensive digital government strategy.

In a statement to KUNA, Minister Al-Omar said that the initiative embodies the government's vision of simplifying government procedures and documents for citizens through smart technologies, and providing interconnected digital services that eliminate the need for in-person visits to government entities.

The Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi confirmed in a statement



Al-Awadhi

to KUNA that the electronic registration of newborns is now available in all public and private hospitals, expediting the issuance of official birth certificates.

Dr. Al-Awadhi described the service as a qualitative leap in digitizing the birth registration system, moving away from the traditional paper-based process to a unified electronic system via Sahel.

Sahel application spokesperson, Yousef Kathem explained that the new service to register newborns includes seven streamlined and interconnected services: naming the newborn, issuing the civil ID number, generating the birth certificate, adding the child to the nationality file, applying for the civil ID card, with optional steps to add the child to the food subsidy program and apply for the newborn allowance.

Kathem noted that each service is digitally linked to the next, enabling citizens to complete the entire process seamlessly without redundant data entry or visiting any government office, stressing that the platform is designed to meet the highest standards of digital integration and data protection.

Continued on Page 5

UAE leads water scarcity dialogue in Kuwait



Left: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi and Acting UN Resident Coordinator and World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Kuwait Dr. Asad Hafeez speak at the dialogue session titled, 'Water Scarcity and Global Challenges to Water Security'.



Photos by Samer Shiqer

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi has pointed out that water scarcity is a pressing global crisis with far-reaching consequences for health, security and economic prosperity.

Speaking at the dialogue session titled, "Water Scarcity and Global Challenges to Water Security," organized by the UAE Embassy in cooperation with the United Nations (UN) Resident

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NewsWatch

KISR logs quake

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Kuwait National Seismic Network, affiliated with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), recorded an earthquake measuring 2.6 on the Richter scale northeast of Kuwait on Monday evening.

The earthquake occurred at precisely 8:29 pm Kuwait time at a depth of five kilometers below the Earth's surface.

MANAMA: The Bahraini Ministry of Industry and Commerce organized the activities of the 20th GCC Consumer Protection Week, in coordination with consumer protection authorities and departments in the GCC countries.

According to the Bahrain News Agency (BNA), Abdullah Fakhro -- Minister of Industry and Commerce -- highlighted that this year's GCC Consumer Protection Week plan reflects the directives of the Heads of Consumer Protection in the GCC Committee. (KUNA)



8 National Bank of Kuwait opens new branch at Abdullah Al-Salem University



9 ZainTECH secures commercial license in Saudi Arabia

Iraq appeals 'Khor' ruling

BAGHDAD, April 15, (KUNA): Iraq's President Abdullatif Rashid and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani have launched separate appeals against a Federal Supreme Court decision to render an agreement regulating navigation in the Khor Abdullah waterway between Baghdad and Kuwait as unconstitutional.

The appeal by the Iraqi government urges the court to scrap the ruling and restore the more than a decade-old maritime agreement between the Gulf Arab neighbors, a source familiar with the matter told KUNA, citing a personal request by the Iraqi president.

In his appeal, Rashid said that the measure is backed by relevant international laws and conventions, in addition to the constitution's support for the principle of "good neighborliness," and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

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

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:
By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy with light to moderate northwesterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-38 km/h.
By Night: Mild with light to

Weather			
moderate freshening at times over coastal areas northwesterly wind, with speeds of 12-45 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.			
Station	Max Exp	Min Rec	
Kuwait Airport	31	21	

Abdaly	32	17
Jahra	32	20
Salmiyah	25	21
Jal Aliyah	37	17
Nuwaisib	32	22
Wafra	31	19



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi is seen off by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, marking the end of his official visit to Kuwait.

Egypt president concludes Kuwait visit amid warm bilateral relations

HH Amir and El-Sisi reaffirm unity on Gaza, development

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and his accompanying delegation departed Kuwait after a state visit.

The Egyptian president was seen off by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

His Excellency was seen off by Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sherida Abdullah Al-Muasherji and senior state officials.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi chaired on Tuesday the official rounds of talks between the two countries.

This came in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, and senior state officials from both countries.

In a statement, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah said that the talks focused on the strong ties linking the two countries and ways to develop them in various fields.

Issues of mutual interest, Arab co-



His Highness the Amir bids farewell to His Excellency the President of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt.

operation and unity, in addition to the latest regional and international developments were discussed by the two sides, said the minister, adding that the dire situation in the Gaza Strip and efforts to bring upon a ceasefire and enabling the entry of humanitarian aid were also focused upon.

He stressed that supporting the Palestinian dream of establishing an independent state as well as efforts of

reconstruction Gaza was also on the table of discussions.

The meeting was highlighted by a positive atmosphere, which reflected the strong relations between the two countries, he affirmed.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held on Tuesday at Bayan Palace a luncheon in the honor of visiting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-

Sisi and the accompanying delegation.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi received at his residence in Bayan Palace, Tuesday, Kuwait's Crown Prince His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at his residence in Bayan Palace.

Head of Honorary Delegation, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi received at his residence in Bayan Palace, Tuesday, Kuwait's Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah.

Head of Honorary Delegation, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

Kuwait's Ministry of Interior announced, Tuesday, in conjunction with the departure of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, several main roads would be temporarily closed starting at 2:00 pm for security procedures.

According to the statement by the General Department of Security Relation and Media, the closure from King Fahad Road to the Sixth Ring Road, continuing to its intersection with King Faisal Road in both directions, leading to the Amiri Airport.

The General Traffic Department urged road users to cooperate with security personnel, follow traffic instructions, and use alternative routes to ensure smooth traffic flow during the temporary closure.

Amendments aim to support food security

Municipality moves to modernize farming and livestock regulations

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Chairperson of the Technical Committee at the Municipal Council Munira Al-Amir has announced the important amendments to Table No. Six of the conditions and specifications for agricultural and livestock development areas.

The proposed amendments were referred for further study to incorporate feedback from the stakeholders before a final decision is issued.

In a press statement after the committee meeting on Tuesday, Al-Amir disclosed that these amendments are part of ongoing efforts to update urban regulations. She stated that the main goals are to increase agricultural and livestock production, support investors in the sector, and foster sustainable environment in line with Kuwait's vision for food security and self-sufficiency.

She enumerated the important amendments as follows:

1. Redefinition and Regulation of Agricultural Areas: Update definitions and regulations to better align with modern agricultural needs, enabling more efficient development and utilization of plots.
2. Building Ratios and Land Use: Establish building-to-land ratios to optimize space utilization while preserving green areas and natural resources.
3. Height Standards and Setbacks: Introduce building height



Al-Amir

limits and setback requirements to support orderly urban planning and facilitate movement and access to services.

4. Streamlined Licensing Procedures: Clarify the process of issuing licenses for agricultural projects, in coordination with the Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) and Kuwait Fire Force (KFF).

5. Infrastructure Improvements: Upgrade infrastructure standards for projects related to livestock, poultry, dairy and honey production.

6. Waste Management Guidelines: Specify the placement and dimensions of waste containers within agricultural lots.

Al-Amir said these changes are the result of comprehensive technical studies and collaborative meetings involving the committee, Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of State for Municipality Affairs. "Input from major stakeholders, including agricultural landowners and livestock breeders, was also considered to ensure the amendments address their actual needs and support sustainable production," she affirmed.

In another development, Al-Amir touched on the executive body's response to the inquiry of Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council Khaled Al-Mutairi regarding the Kuwait Metro Project. "The committee recommended identifying the government entity responsible for designing and executing the project. It also advised re-evaluation of the previously approved Metro routes and station locations," she stated; while stressing the need to accelerate implementation in line with national development goals and vision.

Other Voices

Religion, Morals, and Electricity

By Ahmad alsarraf

IT is always easy to point fingers at the government and absolve citizens of responsibility for the current state of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy. But the truth is, citizens bear a huge share of the blame.

For years, people have been grumbling and complaining but they kept electing the worst representatives to parliament for decades. Despite being responsible for legislative reform, these MPs consistently opposed reforms, including any attempt to adjust electricity and water tariffs.

There is no doubt that previous governments failed to deal with the widespread corruption that had taken root in all state institutions, including the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy. The ministry, in particular, was heavily involved in appointing unqualified individuals to sensitive and important technical positions based on tribal, sectarian, or familial affiliations.

The ministry also played a dangerous role in shaping a culture where citizens were never taught how to value their country's resources, protect the environment, or use electricity and water responsibly.

Based on my knowledge of Minister Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem's accomplishments, I believe he is the right person to lead this struggling ministry at this critical stage. He now carries the responsibility of reforming an institution that most of his predecessors, with all due respect to them, were unable to fix.

The Council of Ministers must support Minister Al-Mukhaizeem in carrying out his challenging mission, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Dismiss the majority, if not all, of those currently holding senior positions. I have personally dealt with many of them, and they exemplify incompetence, lack of merit, and insufficient experience.
2. Review the entire system for tender awards and procurement processes in the ministry.
3. Establish specialized local and international companies to generate and sell electricity to specific industrial, commercial, or even residential sectors.
4. Impose strict penalties for electricity and water theft, and for water misuse by using it to wash cars or sidewalks.
5. Eliminate customs duties on all electricity and water saving products, replace traditional light bulbs with energy-efficient

LEDs, install smart control systems such as motion sensors and automatic lighting controls, reduce customs duties on high-efficiency electrical appliances with an "A+" energy rating, and promote the use of water-saving technologies like low-flow shower heads, flow restrictors, and water recycling systems for non-drinking purposes.

6. Encourage the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power by offering financial and tax incentives to individuals and businesses.

7. Introduce mandatory laws and regulations to curb excessive resource consumption and support the implementation of sustainable construction standards.

8. Monitor the operations of mineral water bottling and distribution companies.

9. Impose usage fees on swimming pool owners, including individuals, sports clubs, companies, hotels, and chalets.

10. Issue strict directives to all ministries and government agencies to turn off all unnecessary electrical devices and systems after official working hours.

11. Provide clear guidelines to mosque imams to ensure air conditioning and lighting are turned off when not in use, particularly outside prayer times. Imams should also promote awareness among worshippers about conserving electricity and water, alongside delivering religious sermons.

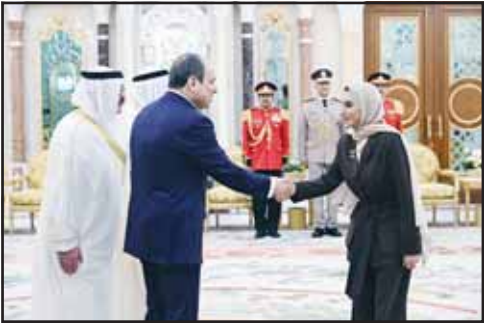
12. Organizing awareness campaigns to educate citizens on the importance of preserving natural resources and the negative impacts of waste.

13. Integrate sustainability and resource conservation concepts into school curricula at all educational levels.

14. Most importantly, conduct a comprehensive review of electricity and water pricing for individuals, companies, and factories, apply a tiered pricing system based on consumption levels, and ensure that low-income individuals are not adversely affected.

15. Enforce immediate online monthly payment of electricity and water bills, which is expected to have a direct positive impact on reducing consumption and preserving state resources.

✉ email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hosts a luncheon in honor of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt, on the occasion of his state visit to the country.

Why does the government cut off electricity? Here's a better solution ...

"I ENTERED the library section at Kaifan Cooperative Society and was shocked by the large number of ceiling lights. I asked the employee: What is this? Why do you have 200 lights on? Aren't 10 enough?" Ahmed Al-Dawas wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Indeed, this is a sin. Many buildings, streets and homes are lit with hundreds of lights. Isn't a few enough for the lightings?"

"When I worked in a ministry, employees would leave devices, such as printers and fax machines, and room lights on when they finished work each day and during the weekend.

"This means that many government departments, ministries and agencies waste electricity; while the government cuts off power in various parts of the country when the electrical load is high or during maintenance work. Therefore, it is imperative to rationalize consumption among citizens and expatriates.

"Why doesn't the government learn from European countries' experiences with electricity and roads?"

"In Norway, some roads are unlit at night. However, when a car, bicycle or pedestrian crosses the road, the lights turn on. The lights then turn off after the person crosses, and the next lights turn on and so on. Each time a person crosses, a sensor is connected to the radar. In this way, Norway reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions.

"Norway didn't stop there; it built the world's first floating underwater tunnel to connect sea traffic from one area to another. This is a remarkable engineering feat. The tunnel floats and does not touch the seabed. Instead, it is pulled to the surface by pontoons positioned at intervals. It has two lanes for vehicles.

"The third example is the paving of roads with plastic in the Netherlands. Volker Wessels explained that the new paving layer will be based on plastic recycled from plastic bottles. This method offers numerous advantages: it requires less maintenance than traditional asphalt, has a greater ability to withstand high temperatures ranging from 40 to 80 degrees Celsius, has a longer lifespan, reduces preparation time, and eases the installation of underground pipes.

"In Sweden, the city of Kiruna has been completely relocated, stone by stone. On the edge of the city, an iron mine lies beneath it, threatening to swallow it if exploration continues. A giant sinkhole opened near some of the residents' homes. Local authorities decided to build the new city of Kiruna in a safer area, farther from the mine.

"Undoubtedly, European countries have advanced people with forward-thinking ideas. We must not forget that the British built the magnificent Ahmadi.

"The Ministry of Public Works still relies on local contractors. If only it relied on a European contractor with extensive experience in road construction, rather than a local contractor, a Turkish company or preference for a well-known family; what could be the result?"

"Kuwait's roads have deteriorated, and the government currently wants to repair them by spending huge sums of money; hence, repeating the waste. Had it agreed with the Europeans, it would have paid only one price.

"Other Gulf states directly agreed with the Europeans to build their airports, and we rely on an uneducated contractor or an Asian construction company for the low price.

"We hope the government will learn from the experience of European countries in addressing electricity and road problems. The issue is not cheap tenders or encouraging local contractors, but rather in the quality of road design at a single cost, albeit expensive, instead of resurfacing roads and spending money periodically on repairs, as well as on electrical network maintenance."



Ahmed Al-Dawas

"When His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad (May God protect him) met with members of the judiciary, he called on them to rule with fairness and impartiality, so that the flag of justice would fly high above the Palace of Justice. His vision is for Kuwait to become a country of justice and security," columnist Yaqoub Youssef Al-Omar wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"His Highness is committed to ensuring that no one is wronged in Kuwait. He stressed the importance of Kuwaiti judges' loyalty to their country and their dedication to the oath they swore before the Amir. Justice, according to His Highness the Amir, is the cornerstone of governance among people, regardless of their origins and affiliations.

"It was narrated on the authority of Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari (May God be pleased with him) that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Allah said, 'O My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another.'

"Justice is the foundation of governance in any nation. In countries where justice is lacking, corruption permeates their systems. As a result, both capital and investments tend to leave such countries due to the absence of security. Investors seek countries where security and justice prevail.

"Justice must reach every person with a grievance, whether a citizen or a resident, through the judicial system, regardless of whether the country is Muslim or non-Muslim, because justice knows no boundaries.

"When the hostility of the faithless people of the Quraysh tribe toward the Muslims intensified, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ordered the Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia, where a just non-Muslim ruler, the Negus, reigned.

"Islam has many stories of just Muslim rulers, and one such story is about the justice of the second Caliph, Omar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him).

"Amr ibn al-As was the governor of Egypt when his son got into a dispute with an Egyptian Copt. The Copt rebelled against Ibn Amr ibn al-As, who then struck the Egyptian, saying, "How can you outsmart me when I am the son of the most honorable?" The Egyptian complained to Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab, who summoned Amr ibn al-As, his son, and the Egyptian to Medina. Upon their arrival, Omar ibn al-Khattab ordered the Egyptian to strike the son of the most honorable.

He then made his famous statement to Amr ibn al-As: "Since when did you enslave people when their mothers gave birth to them free?"

"This story reinforces the idea that justice is the foundation of governance. The Kuwaiti judiciary, like the example set by Omar ibn al-Khattab, issues fair rulings for everyone, regardless of who is in the right or wrong. Harsh sentences have even been issued against members of the Al-Sabah family.

"Everyone is equal before the law in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti judicial system is rich with competent judges, including Kuwaiti women who have occupied judicial positions. All judges make their decisions based on the law, regardless of individual positions within the state. As a result, all citizens and residents of Kuwait live in security and safety, and justice is granted to all.

"We ask God Almighty to preserve this security and safety under the leadership of His Highness the Amir. May God grant him a long life and protect him as a treasure for the country and its people. We pray that God grants him success in his efforts for reforms. Amen."

— Compiled by Mhamoud Attiyeh/
Simi K. Kutty



KFF photo

The Chief of the Fire Force discusses with the Deputy Assistant Minister of Defense of the Czech Republic ways to enhance fire prevention and protection systems.

KFF Chief, Czech official explore ways to enhance fire prevention

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Chief of Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) Major General Talal Al-Roumi on Tuesday discussed with the Deputy Assistant Minister of Defense of the Czech Republic, Michal Rendl, topics of mutual interest, latest firefighting equipment and mechanisms, and ways to enhance fire prevention.

The KFF said in a press release that this came dur-

ing Major General Al-Roumi's reception of the Czech Republic's Deputy Assistant Minister of Defense and his accompanying delegation, on his official visit to the country.

The meeting discussed friendly talks and joint cooperation between the two countries in the fields of civil protection and firefighting.

IAEA selects KCCC as regional nuclear medicine training hub

Lutetium-177 radiotherapy marks milestone in Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Nuclear Medicine Department at Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC) has organized a training course on Lutetium-177 (LU-177) guided radiotherapy and optimal radiation dosimetry applications, in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Chairman of the Nuclear Medicine Departments Council Dr. Abdulredha Abbas revealed on Monday that the IAEA selected the Nuclear Medicine Department at KCCC to serve as a regional training center for Arab countries in the field of nuclear medicine in the Asian region.

He explained this step is a reflection of trust in

the Kuwaiti scientific and technical competencies, resulting in the distinguished position of KCCC.

He believes this will have a significant impact on advancing nuclear medicine in Kuwait, not to mention the positive effect on the medical services provided by the center.

He pointed out that the abovementioned training course is the result of the ongoing cooperation between the nuclear medicine departments in Kuwait and the IAEA on technical projects and training courses, affirming this cooperation has had a major impact on the advancement of nuclear medicine in the country.

Head of the Local Training Course Unit Dr. Sara Murad said the course brings together about 40 participants working in nuclear medicine and other related fields. "It includes several lectures with the participation of

five international experts from Italy, Germany and Austria; in addition to a number of local lecturers," she revealed.

She pointed out that the course, which takes place for about five days, provides participants with 22 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits from Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS).

She also stressed the importance of the training course in exchanging information and expertise, strengthening cooperation with the IAEA, qualifying participants, and raising their scientific and practical competence to apply these techniques in their workplaces.

She added that the course also touches on the latest technical and therapeutic developments using radiopharmaceuticals worldwide; applications of these drugs in prostate and neurological tumors; assessing issues related to radiation safety for patients, staff and the general public; foundations and principles of radiation dose measurement; and training on optimal patient applications using lutetium, with the goal of utilizing these applications for all patients.



Dr. Abbas

Army reviews plans to integrate women in military

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Vice Air Marshal Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held on Monday a meeting with a number of top brass to discuss efforts of the army to integrate female personnel into the corps.

The step came within the context of modernization and development in the army, the General Staff said in a statement, citing Sabah Al-Jaber's praise of women's contributions in different military sectors.

During the meeting, a presentation was made on administrative, organizational and legal aspects of such step, it added.

The meeting stressed the importance of creating a proper working environment that could help future women recruits their duties.



KUNA photo

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army, Major General Pilot Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, meets with a number of military leaders to discuss the integration of women into the military.

News in Brief

315 volunteers graduate at Ali Al-Sabah Military College

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Ali Al-Sabah Military College held a graduation ceremony on Monday for 315 volunteers who participated in the non-commissioned officers course No. 112 and personnel course No. 113, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ceremony was held under the patronage and in the presence of the College Commandant Brigadier General Fawaz Al-Musailem, and with the participation of the Director of Military Education Affairs Brigadier General Jassim Al-Omani.

These training courses were part of the Military Education Authority's ongoing programs and were conducted at the facilities of Ali Al-Sabah Military College.

Sorcery tools seized: Customs officers at Al-Abdali border checkpoint arrested a woman of Arab nationality who arrived from Iraq for attempting to smuggle materials and tools such as beads and rings used for sorcery and black magic, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to sources, a routine inspection of her bag by a customs officer revealed a hidden compartment at the bottom of the bag containing a tightly sealed bag with beads and rings inside. When questioned, she admitted that the items in the bag were intended for black magic and sorcery and that she had brought them for personal use.

The illicit materials were confiscated, and she was denied access into Kuwait.

18 nabbed in Jahra raid: As part of the ongoing efforts of Ministry of Interior's Public Security Sector to intensify security campaigns targeting violators, outlaws, and negative phenomena, security patrols launched a large-scale inspection campaign on Monday evening at garages in Jahra Industrial, reports Al-Anba daily.

The campaign resulted in the arrest of 18 wanted individuals and violators, the issuance of 42 traffic citations, the seizure of four vehicles subject to judicial impoundment, and the impoundment of two vehicles for causing disturbing noise.

According to a security source, the Ministry of Interior, through its various security sectors, will continue its security and traffic operations to enforce the law and apprehend violators.

The source also stressed the importance of public compliance with laws to maintain safety and security for all.



KUNA photo

The training course was opened in fruitful cooperation between the German Academy for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RENAC) and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

Five-year program trains 170 engineers

Kuwait envoy to Germany lauds RENAC, KFAS fruitful cooperation

BERLIN, April 15, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Ambassador to Germany, Reem Al-Khaled, praised the fruitful cooperation between the German Academy for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RENAC) and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), stressing that this cooperation has become a model to be emulated in the strategic partnership.

In a speech delivered via videoconference, Al-Khaled welcomed the new Kuwaiti participants in the April 2025 session, saying RENAC Academy has proven in recent years its position as a global train-

ing platform that combines specialization, qualification, and openness to international expertise.

The ongoing cooperation between RENAC and KFAS represents an important milestone in a five-year journey and has become a model to be emulated in terms of empowering national competencies and enhancing knowledge exchange in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Some 170 Kuwaiti engineers from the public and private sectors participated in the courses organized by the RENAC Academy over the past years.

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Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud presented a collection of books from Dr. Wafa Al-Aradi.



Al-Seyassah photos
Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud received Sheikh Fahad Al-Malik.

Kuwaiti women and youth are key to nation’s progress: Sheikh Faisal

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud, Advisor at the Amiri Diwan, received Dr. Wafa Al-Aradi, a specialist in political science, women’s issues, and Gulf affairs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During their meeting, they discussed ways to benefit from scientific works and their insights in serving national causes.

Dr. Al-Aradi presented a collection of her books as a gift, for which Sheikh Faisal expressed his gratitude.

He said the advancement of national talent is a top priority for the political leadership, and that the State of Kuwait is deeply committed to this goal.

Sheikh Faisal praised the invaluable role of Kuwaiti women, stating that they are deserving of all respect and appreciation for their efforts, accomplishments, and boundless contributions. He referred to them as a vital pillar in the nation’s development.

In addition, Sheikh Faisal Al-Hamoud also received Sheikh Fahad Al-Malik, with whom he exchanged ideas on successful youth initiatives.

He affirmed that empowering young people to achieve their aspirations is a top priority for the state, noting that Kuwaiti youth are fully capable of overcoming challenges and driving the nation’s development.

Council approves transfer of labor city allocations to PAHW, Finance Ministry

Move aligns with Cabinet decisions

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, on Monday held its 16th regular session for the third legislative term; during which it approved the transfer of the allocation of labor residential cities to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) and the Ministry of Finance.

This is in compliance with the decisions that the Cabinet took during its meetings on Nov 20, 2023 and July 16, 2024. These decisions are as follows:

1. Allocate the first labor residential city in Subiya with an area of 2,465,000 square meters; and the third in South Jahra with an area of 1,015,000 square meters to PAHW.
 2. Allocate the second labor residential city in North Mutlaa; the fifth in South Sabah Al-Ahmad; and the sixth in South Khiran Residential City with an area of 2,465,000 square meters each to the Ministry of Finance.
- The council approved the relocation of the fourth labor residential city in Sulaibiya-Kabad, which was allocated in its decision dated Jan 21, 2015 to the site shown in Sketch One attached to the application. This is due to a conflict with oil pipelines and an oil well at the current location. The site’s dimensions were modified after coordination with the service ministries to preserve existing electricity facilities, with the site being under the Ministry of Finance.

In a qualitative intervention at the session, council member and Technical Committee Chairperson Munira Al-Amir stressed the need for the State’s regulatory measures to be in line with a comprehensive vision that takes into account the urban and economic developments in the country.

She also called for the reassessment of the current locations of labor residential cities and their suitability for the next phase.

On the other hand, council member and architect Sharifa Al-Shalfan underscored the need to verify the issue of flood channels in the sites designated for labor residential cities prior to implementation; warning that such obstacles could lead to enormous losses for the State if they are not addressed from the outset.

Dr. Hassan Kamal corroborated Al-Shalfan’s opinion, emphasizing the need to differentiate between allocating sites for labor residential cities and allocating areas for workers’ gatherings.

Council member Alia Al-Farsi also agreed with Al-Shalfan, stressing the need to impose a binding condition on presenting the designs and components of labor residential city projects to the council before approving them for implementation.

Furthermore, the council approved the request of the Ministry of Justice to allocate a site for the construction of the Experts Affairs Department building in Hawally Governorate (Mubarak Al-Abdullah, Block Seven).

National Debt Relief Campaign raises over KD 13.7mn

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Minister of Social Affairs and Minister of State for Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaila affirmed Tuesday that the National Debt Relief Campaign marked a historic milestone reflecting Kuwait’s humanitarian image.

In a statement to KUNA on the occasion of the campaign’s conclusion, Al-Huwaila said that the total donations reached KD 13,726,706.31 (approximately USD 44,772 million), and that the number of donors reached 21,851.

Al-Huwaila expressed deep gratitude and pride in the wide participation from individuals, institutions, and charitable organizations, all of which embodied the wise directives of the political leadership and contributed to achieving the noble objectives of this initiative.

She stressed that the campaign’s remarkable success reflects Kuwait’s bright humanitarian image.

Concurrently with the closing of the donation window, applications to benefit from the campaign also closed. The latest statistics revealed that the number of applicants exceeded 5,000.

PAHW extends Mutlaa tender deadline to May 1

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) has announced the extension of the deadline for the tender related to the construction, completion and maintenance of services, infrastructure and public buildings in the N5 District Center of Mutlaa Residential City project, reports Al-Anba daily.

Originally scheduled to close on April 24, the new submission deadline has been moved to May 1, 2025. This extension is intended to allow more time for qualified companies to participate.

According to the tender documents, applicant companies must demonstrate strong financial solvency, with a minimum capital or individual asset value of no less than KD5 million or the equivalent in foreign currencies.

In addition, PAHW requires that applicants have completed at least one or two comparable projects within the past 10 years, with a total value of no less than KD8 million. This requirement ensures that bidding companies have the necessary experience in executing infrastructure and public service projects of similar scale and complexity.



Al-Seyassah photo
Photo during the Shamiya and Shuwaikh Cooperative Society General Assembly.

Chairman Al-Dokhi announces bold plans

Shamiya, Shuwaikh Cooperative stays on top with 12% dividend

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Shamiya and Shuwaikh Cooperative Society recently held its ordinary General Assembly for the fiscal year ending Dec 31, 2024; during which it approved the distribution of 12 percent dividend to shareholders for the fifth consecutive year.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the cooperative Adel Al-Dokhi said “we promise that the cooperative will remain number one in the country. We have major plans for the coming period including community services and afforestation. We will focus on this area with the aim of planting 120,000 palm trees (the new Kuwaiti palm tree); in addition to other proposals such as the new Shamiya walkway and district center. We also have developments in the Shuwaikh main branch and the central market.”

In his speech at the General Assembly, he expressed his gratitude and appreciation for everyone who attended the meeting. He welcomed the new shareholders, indicating he looks forward to more fruitful and constructive cooperation with all shareholders to achieve the desired goals and realize ambitions for the advancement of the cooperative.

He presented the financial and administrative reports for the fiscal year; highlighting the successes and achievements over the past year such as creating new opportunities to increase financial resources and modernize most of the cooperative’s facilities.

He stressed “the Board of Directors has been committed to maintain the excellence of the cooperative through innovative ideas to stimulate sales and support national products. The cooperative continues to hold the largest marketing festivals and exhibitions, completely different from those of other cooperatives. This is out of its belief in stimulating economic activity through its markets and branches, and to provide the best quality goods to shareholders and customers at appropriate prices.”

He affirmed the role played by the cooperative in providing numerous social, recreational and sports services; in addition to its hard work in develop and provide necessary care for the parks and playgrounds in the area.

He added “while we are proud of everything we have achieved over the past year, we assure you that we will continue moving forward to achieve more, elevate the status of the cooperative, expand its services and engage in new activities in all fields of operation. This will ensure that it remains a key pillar of the cooperative movement and at the forefront of other cooperative societies.”

He stated that the efforts of the Board of Directors and executive management last year, by the grace of Allah, resulted in the distribution of the highest percentage of return on shareholder purchases for the fifth consecutive year.

He asserted “this is in accordance with Minister of Social Affairs Decision No. 29/2021, which stipulated the maximum dividend distribution at 12 percent of the value of shareholder purchases. We also extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our brothers and sisters working at the cooperative for their tireless efforts, which helped in the continuation of the cooperative’s progress and prosperity; thereby, positioning it at the forefront of other cooperative societies. We promise to be worthy of this precious trust, imploring Almighty Allah to grant us success in realizing the aspirations of our shareholders and all those residing in the area. We also ask the Almighty to guide all of us to serve in the interest of the cooperative and the area under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. May Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of harm.”

Kuwait’s future scholars eye global education and high-demand fields

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Ministry of Higher Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, conducted a survey among 12th-grade students from both public and private schools to assess their interest in studying abroad.

According to the Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalencies, and Cultural Relations Ghidaa Makhour, this survey served as a valuable tool for understanding student preferences and helped in making informed decisions that benefit both students and society.

The survey results showed a strong link between student interests and the ministry’s external scholarship plan for the 2025/2026 academic year. Of the 1,906 students who participated, approximately 62 percent expressed a desire in pursuing higher education outside Kuwait, with the scientific stream making up nearly 90 percent of the respondents.

About 79 percent of students expressed interest in vital fields such as medicine, allied health sciences, modern engineering, and technical disciplines, and 21 percent showed increased interest in future-oriented fields related to digital transformation, including artificial intelligence, information security, and renewable energy.

Makhour affirmed that these results reflect the success of the “Guide Me” campaign, which was launched by the ministry in recent years to raise awareness and guide students toward disciplines that are in line with the priorities of the labor market.

She said, “Under the guidance of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, the ministry is committed to developing its external scholarship policies and implementing initiatives that improve the effectiveness of these programs, as well as contributing to the development of outstanding national talents capable of competing both locally and internationally and meeting the needs of comprehensive national development.

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30-year bond deepens

Tajikistan-Kuwait ties built on shared vision

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Ties with Kuwait are based on understanding and mutual support since diplomatic relations were established in 1994, said Tajikistan Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydov on Tuesday.

In an interview with KUNA on the 30th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties, Ambassador Zubaydov -- also Dean of the Diplomatic Corps -- revealed that Kuwait was one of the first Gulf States to have recognized Tajikistan's independence, showing as a result, Kuwait's keenness on supporting stability and development in the central Asian region.

The two countries took relations further by establishing embassies with Tajikistan opening its diplomatic mission in Kuwait in 2012 and Kuwait opening its embassy in Dushanbe the following year, he added.

The Ambassador indicated that both countries continued to coordinate efforts within the regional and international arenas, which resulted in fruitful cooperation on all aspects including within the domain of economy.

Investment

There are more venues for both countries to explore, he affirmed, noting that Tajikistan has great investment potential for Kuwaitis within agriculture, hydroelectric energy, tourism, and much more.

The joint Tajikistani-Kuwaiti committee for economic, commercial and technical cooperation is an important platform that push the wheel of developing cooperation much further, he asserted, noting that continuous meetings amongst business personnel from both countries were vital in seeking mutual ventures and benefits.

Ambassador Zubaydov welcomed all Kuwaiti companies eager to invest in Tajikistan's market especially within transport and energy, stressing that his country was eager to work with such an important partner from the GCC region.

In regards to developing cultural and educational cooperation, Ambassador Zubaydov



KUNA photo
Zubaydullo Zubaydov, Tajikistan Ambassador to Kuwait

underlined that such cooperation was important in building bridges of cooperation and understanding between the people of Kuwait and Tajikistan.

He pointed out that many Tajik students were studying in Kuwaiti Universities especially in majors such as the Arabic language and Sharia.

The Ambassador expressed his country's willingness to organize joint cultural activities with Kuwait, saying that both nations could feature their cultural outputs and heritage during such events.

The Ambassador also showcased great desire to boost ties on the highest level whether through official state visits or jointly partaking in international activities.

He noted that both countries could explore more cooperation within security as well as humanitarian work.

He also asserted that both countries shared a joint vision in regards to countering terrorism and extremism both regionally and internationally.

Tajikistan has a vast experience in handling cross-borders security challenges and would like to share this experience with other countries, namely Kuwait, he affirmed.

On the humanitarian level, the Ambassador expressed admiration to the Kuwait efforts within such domain especially through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) or charitable organizations.

He commended Kuwait for supporting Tajikistan within education, health sector, and infrastructural development, saying that such support reflected the strength relations.

Kuwaiti official affirms keenness on improving investment climate

Al-Munaifi calls for unified economic vision with Saudi

RIYADH, April 15, (KUNA): Kuwait's Undersecretary of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi has reaffirmed the ongoing efforts to improve the economic environment between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through investment conducive legislations and mutually-beneficial joint projects.

Al-Muaifi made this remark during the second meeting of the Coordination Committee on Investment, Environment, and Infrastructure, which operates under the umbrella of the Kuwaiti-Saudi Joint Coordination Council, held in Riyadh. She co-chaired the meeting together with Undersecretary of the Saudi Ministry of Investment for International Relations Sarah Al-Sayed.

Al-Munaifi urged strengthening strategic partnership between the two countries, as a unified economic entity, and underscored the



Ministry of Finance photo
Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance Aseel Al-Munaifi shakes hands with Undersecretary of the Saudi Ministry of Investment for International Relations Sarah Al-Sayed.

need to remove barriers before investors in order to boost bilateral cooperation.

On the sidelines of the committee's meetings, a roundtable discussion was held with the participation of prominent business leaders and private sector representatives from both countries.



Left: The Kuwaiti pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. Right: A cultural performance at the pavilion.

KUNA photos

NCCAL highlights Kuwaiti heritage, culture at Expo 2025 Osaka

The Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) is participating at Expo 2025 Osaka, with an official representation of Kuwait's Pavilion, cultural and civilization.

Assistant Secretary-General for the Culture Sector at the Council, Aisha Al-Mahmoud, who is heading the Council's delegation to Expo on behalf of its Director-General, Dr. Mohammad Al-Jassar, told (KUNA) that the participation in global event comes within the framework of its keenness to represent Kuwait in international forums, to enhance cultural and artistic presence, as well as highlight authentic folk heritage.

She pointed out the musical performances presented by the Red Palace Folk Arts Troupe at the pavilion's opening ceremony, which will continue for five consecutive days and will feature art and music derived from authentic Kuwaiti folklore.

The Council will also present a diverse cultural program throughout the Expo, providing a rich experience that reflects the cultural and creative

diversity that characterizes Kuwait, Al-Mahmoud added.

She noted that the Kuwait Pavilion would be an opportunity for visitors to discover Kuwait's civilization, which will be positive impact to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Kuwait and the world.

Meanwhile, the World Expo in Osaka kicks off a six month event through October 13 with a record 158 countries and regions participating. (KUNA)

Talks set April 21

China gov't reaffirms strategic 'energy' ties with Gulf nations

BEIJING, April 15, (KUNA): Secretary-General of the China Atomic Energy Authority, Huang Ping affirmed on Tuesday China's commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, particularly in nuclear energy.

This came during a meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to China, Jassem Al-Najem, to discuss preparations for the upcoming GCC-China forum for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, scheduled to be held next week in Chengdu, Sichuan Province.

In a statement, Huang said that China is keen to enhance comprehensive cooperation with GCC countries and work together toward a better shared future through this forum, especially in peaceful nuclear energy applications.

He noted that the forum builds upon the vision announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping during the first China-Gulf summit in Riyadh in December 2022, where he emphasized the importance of advancing cooperation in technology and the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

On his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador Jassem Al-Najem commended China's efforts and international cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ambassador Al-Najem stated that the five-day forum, starting April 21, aims to foster political dialogue,



KUNA photo
Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to China Jassem Al-Najem during his meeting with the Secretary-General of the China Atomic Energy Authority, Huang Ping.

exchange expertise and knowledge, and lay the groundwork for a long-term strategic partnership between China and the GCC countries in the nuclear energy field.

The forum will also be attended by representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), leading research institutions, and nuclear energy experts from around the world.



KUNA photo
Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to China Jassem Al-Najem poses for a group photo.

Continued from Page 1

See it ...

The ministry clarified that, under Kuwaiti law, whistleblowers are exempt from punishment, irrespective of whether they report the crime before or after it is committed.

It affirmed its continued implementation of strict measures against individuals who violate their official duties or exploit their positions for personal gain, and stressed that this deterrent approach is in line with the directives of the country's political leadership and reflects the State of Kuwait's commitment to international standards in combating all forms of corruption.

UAE leads

Office in Kuwait and hosted by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS); Al-Neyadi affirmed the commitment of the UAE to address this issue through a range of proactive measures.

He criticized the insufficient global focus on water scarcity; indicating that it gets only six percent of international attention -- much lower than climate change (29 percent) and pandemics (65 percent). He attributed the crisis to certain behavioral patterns, rapid population growth, unsustainable consumption practices, inadequate water infrastructure, groundwater depletion, droughts and natural climate variability.

He warned about the severe consequences of water scarcity; which include limited or no access to drinking water, famine, poverty, forced migration, biodiversity loss and broader economic decline. He stressed that the magnitude of the issue remains under-recognized on the global stage.

As part of the UAE's commitment to achieve water sustainability, Al-Neyadi cited the Mohammed bin Zayed Water Initiative and its "Water for Agriculture Challenge," which offers prizes totaling AED8 million. The initiative encourages innovation in water conservation, while boosting agricul-

tural productivity. It is open to both local and international participants from April 14 to June 30, 2025.

Also speaking at the event, Acting UN Resident Coordinator and World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Kuwait Dr. Asad Hafeez reaffirmed the UN's commitment to water security as a global priority. He praised the progress made in integrated water resources management, referring to a global increase from an average score of 49 percent in 2017 to 57 percent in 2023. He said more than 90 percent of countries have now implemented legal or policy measures enabling the participation of local communities in managing water resources in rural areas.

Dr. Amira Al-Hassan, Head of the UN-Habitat Programme in Kuwait, talked about the link between water scarcity and migration, especially in regions already grappling with economic or political instability. She pointed out that such displacement introduces new challenges for host communities, which must support growing populations despite the already strained resources.

Al-Hassan asserted that managing these dynamics is central to UN-Habitat's mission of fostering sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development.

Iraq appeals

Similarly, the Iraqi Premier referred to the Vienna Convention of the law of treaties, which sets a framework for stability in relations between states, while also prohibiting member countries from citing "internal laws as justification for violating the convention," he underlined.

In his view, the supreme court ruling to nullify the Khor Abdullah waterway agreement contravenes an Iraqi constitutional clause that requires Baghdad to fully adhere to international laws and principles dealing with neighborly relations.

He went on to explain that the Khor

Abdullah agreement is not a border demarcation deal, rather, it aims to regulate maritime navigation in the waterway that links both neighbors, describing the matter as highly significant.

In September of 2023, Iraq's Federal Supreme Court ruled that a bilateral agreement regulating navigation in the Khor Abdullah waterway was unconstitutional, a decision Kuwait said contained "historical fallacies".

Dust storm

In response to the severe weather, the Ministry of Education announced that all public and private schools shifted to online learning on Tuesday. In a statement, the Ministry said the move aimed to ensure student safety. Classes were conducted via Microsoft Teams, while teachers and administrative staff were instructed to report to school as usual.

Earlier, the Ministry of Interior urged all to be vigilant and committed due to the low and/or nil visibility in some parts of the country.

A ministry statement stressed the necessity of abiding by instructions and not leave the house if not necessary. It appealed to all to call emergency number (112) if needed.

In the same context, the Ministry of Health said it is paramount to stick to precautions and health directives, and stay home if not necessary to go out.

It urged people, especially those who have asthma, allergy and weak immunity, to wear face-masks in outdoor areas, and regularly take their medications.

Birth registration

He added that upcoming features will include passport issuance for newborns and automatic vaccination appointment notifications-enhancing user experience and reflecting the ongoing evolution of Kuwait's digital government services.

Outrage in

It also called for holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its crimes committed against civilians, and ensuring offering full protection to medical facilities and hospitals, according to the statement.

A staff member of the Kuwaiti Specialized Hospital in Gaza was killed and nine people injured in an Israeli occupation assault on the facility, said the hospital's administration on Tuesday.

Hospital Director Dr. Suhaib Al-Hams told KUNA that back gate of their facility, located in Khan Yunis city, south of Gaza, was targeted by the occupation forces, leading to the aforementioned casualties.

He indicated that staff member Manee Hanon sustained wounds in the attack and he was pronounced dead upon arrival in the European Hospital east of Khan Yunis.

The attack has resulted in damages to the Kuwait Hospital and medical tents located in its courtyard, he revealed.

Israel has bombarded and raided hospitals throughout the 18-month war in Gaza, accusing Hamas militants of hiding out in them or using them for military purposes. Hospital staff have denied the allegations and accuse Israel of recklessly endangering civilians and gutting Gaza's health system. An Israeli strike on Sunday targeted the last major hospital providing critical care in northern Gaza after the military ordered it evacuated.

The number of people killed by Israel's war in Gaza has climbed above 51,000 people, according to an updated toll released by the territory's Health Ministry on Tuesday. Since Israel ended the ceasefire last month, it has blocked all food, medicine and other aid from entering Gaza and its forces have seized more than half of the coastal territory.

The war in Gaza started when the Palestinian militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Fifty-nine hostages are still inside Gaza, 24 of whom are believed to be alive.



Hundreds of demonstrators gather on Cambridge Common during a rally at the historic park in Cambridge, Mass on April 12, calling on Harvard University to resist what organizers described as attempts by US President Trump to influence the institution. (AP)

WH freezes \$2.2b in Harvard funding

The federal government says it's freezing more than \$2.2 billion in grants and \$60 million in contracts to Harvard University, after the institution said it would defy the Trump administration's demands to limit activism on campus.

The hold on Harvard's funding marks the seventh time President Donald Trump's administration has taken the step at one of the nation's most elite colleges, in an attempt

to force compliance with Trump's political agenda. Six of the seven schools are in the Ivy League.

In a letter to Harvard Friday, Trump's administration had called for broad government and leadership reforms at the university, as well as changes to its admissions policies. It also demanded the university audit views of diversity on campus, and stop recognizing some student clubs. (AP)

Biden to speak about Social Security in return to nat'l stage

WASHINGTON, April 15, (AP): Former US President **Joe Biden** returns to the national stage Tuesday to elevate liberal concerns that President Donald Trump's agenda is threatening the health of Social Security.



Biden

The 82-year-old Democrat has largely avoided speaking publicly since leaving the White House in January. That's even as Trump frequently blames Biden for many of the nation's problems, often attacking his predecessor by name.

Biden is expected to fight back in an early evening speech to the national conference of Advocates, Counselors and Representatives for the Disabled in Chicago. While Biden has made a handful of public appearances in recent weeks, Tuesday's high-profile address focuses on a critical issue for tens of millions

of Americans that could define next year's midterm elections.

"As bipartisan leaders have long agreed, Americans who retire after paying into Social Security their whole lives deserve the vital support and caring services they receive," said Rachel Buck, executive director of the ACRD. "We are thrilled the president will be joining us to discuss how we can work together for a stable and successful future for Social Security."

Trump almost immediately began slashing the government workforce upon his return to the White House, including thousands of employees at the Social Security Administration.

Along with a planned layoff of 7,000 workers and controversial plans to impose tighter identity-proofing measures for recipients, the SSA has been sued over a decision to allow Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to access individuals' Social Security numbers and other personally identifiable information.

Musk, the world's richest man and one of Trump's most influential advisers, has called Social Security "the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time."



Community organizer Emerson Wolfe leads a march hosted by Indivisible Greater Grand Rapids down Ottawa Avenue during a Hands Off! rally on April 5, in Grand Rapids, Mich. (AP)

Groups prepare to be targeted by WH

As US President Donald Trump pushes the historical boundaries of executive power, some of the Democratic Party's core political institutions are preparing for the possibility that the federal government may soon launch criminal investigations against them.

The Democrats' dominant national fundraising platform, Act-Blue, and the party's largest protest group, Indivisible, are

working with their attorneys for just such a scenario, according to officials within both organizations. Trump's top political allies have suggested both groups should face prosecution.

Other Democratic allies are planning for Trump-backed legal crackdowns as well. Wary of antagonizing the president, most prefer to stay anonymous for now.(AP)

Proposal aggressive: senior US official

White House proposes drastic cuts to State Dept and funding for UN, NATO

WASHINGTON, April 15, (AP): The White House's Office of Management and Budget has proposed gutting the State Department's budget by almost 50%, closing a number of overseas diplomatic missions, slashing the number of diplomatic staff, and eliminating funding for nearly all international organizations, including the United Nations, many of its agencies and for NATO headquarters, officials said.

The proposal, which was presented to the State Department last week and is still in a highly preliminary phase, is not expected to pass muster with either the department's leadership or Congress, which will ultimately be asked to vote on the entire federal budget in the coming months.

Officials familiar with the proposal say it must still go through several rounds of review before it even gets to lawmakers, who in the past have amended and even rejected White House budget requests. Though the proposal is preliminary, it gives an indication of the Trump administration's priorities and coincides with massive job and funding cuts across the federal government, from Health and Human Services and the Education Department to the US Agency for International Development.

Notes from an internal meeting about the proposal have been circulated in on-line chat groups among foreign service officers since the weekend but exploded Monday when the State Department was due to present a separate unrelated reorganization plan to the OMB.

One senior US official familiar with the OMB proposal called it "aggressive" in terms of cost-cutting, but also stressed that it was an early outline that mirrored what OMB chief Russell Vought sought to do in President Donald Trump's first administration when he served in the same job. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal administration deliberations.

So did two people familiar with the matter who confirmed the proposal, one of whom also said it originated from OMB.

OMB spokesperson Alexandra McCandless said that "no final funding decisions have been made." The National Security Council did not respond to a request for comment on the proposed cuts.

OMB's efforts to severely reduce the State Department's budget during Trump's first term were met with fierce resistance on Capitol Hill and largely failed.

However, Trump's second administration has moved swiftly to scale back the federal government, slashing jobs and funding across agencies. It's already dismantled USAID and moved to defund so-called other "soft power" institutions



US President Donald Trump, (seated from right), UFC CEO Dana White and (standing from right), Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Secretary of State Marco Rubio attend a mixed martial arts fight at UFC 314 on April 12 in Miami. (AP)

of foreign policy importance like the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Radio Free Asia and Radio/TV Marti, which broadcasts to Cuba.

Thus, State Department officials and others have expressed increasing concern about the possibility that the proposed drastic cuts could actually be implemented. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said she was "deeply troubled" by the proposed cuts.

"When America First becomes America Alone, our economy, security and prosperity will suffer as adversaries fill the void the Trump Administration leaves

behind," Shaheen said in a statement. "Investments in diplomatic programs that promote peace and stability, and advance American national security interests are commonsense priorities that should be reflected in the State Department's budget request."

According to the notes from the internal State Department meeting, the budget proposal calls for:

- Halving foreign assistance funding managed by State and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which stood at \$52 billion in 2024.
- Eliminating more than a quarter of foreign assistance through State and USAID overall, freeze pay through next year, and cut travel and benefits for US foreign service staffers.
- Eliminating global health funding other than small amounts for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. Require global health partners to contribute a bigger share.
- Eliminating funding to the United Nations, a major logistical partner key to many humanitarian efforts around the world, and other major nongovernment organizations, including NATO.
- Eliminating the main office helping Afghan allies resettle in other countries to escape Taliban rule.
- Eliminating the government's independent watchdog office looking for waste and inefficiency in US programs in Afghanistan.
- Cutting a number of refugee and immigration programs, and move them under a new bureau for international humanitarian affairs.

Meanwhile, a New York judge has relaxed a ban she'd put on Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency preventing it from accessing sensitive Treasury Department information related to millions of Americans.

Judge Jeannette A. Vargas said in a written opinion that one DOGE worker, Ryan Wunderly, can access sensitive payment and data systems if he completes training that Treasury employees typically go through before given such access and submits a financial disclosure report.

The ruling came in a lawsuit brought by 19 Democratic state attorneys general who sued over privacy issues amid DOGE's assertion that it was working to modernize Treasury payment systems.

The lawsuit contended that Musk's "DOGE" team was composed of "political appointees" who should not have access to Treasury records handled by "civil servants" specially trained in protecting such sensitive information as Social Security and bank account numbers.

German parliament expected to meet May 6 to Merz as new chancellor

BERLIN, April 15, (AP): The German parliament plans to meet on May 6 to elect Friedrich Merz as the country's next leader, if all the parties in his proposed government approve a coalition agreement reached last week.

Parliament's lower house, the Bundestag, said Monday that Speaker Julia Klöckner is preparing to call the session early next month.

Merz will need a majority of all members of the house to be elected as post-World War II Germany's 10th chancellor, succeeding Olaf Scholz. The proposed coalition of his center-right Christian Democratic Union; its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union; and Scholz's center-left Social Democrats has a relatively modest majority, with 328 of the 630 seats.

Since no party wants to work with the far-right, anti-immigration Alternative for Germany, which finished second in Germany's election in February, no other plausible combination of governing parties has a parliamentary majority.

There are still two hurdles to clear before parliament can vote. The biggest is a ballot of the Social Democrats' membership on the coalition agreement, which starts on Tuesday



Friedrich Merz, Christian Democratic Union party chairman shakes hands with the Social Democratic Party co-leaders Saskia Esken next to Lars Klingbeil and Markus Soeder, chairman of Bavarian's Christian Social Union party, after reaching an agreement between their parties on a coalition for a new German government at a news conference in Berlin, Germany on April 9. (AP)

and ends on April 29. The CDU also must approve the accord at a party convention set for April 28, while the CSU's leadership already approved it last week.

The would-be coalition aims to spur economic growth, ramp up defense spending, take a tougher approach to migration and catch up on long-neglected modernization.

'Britain police struggled to counter online falsehoods that fueled summer violence'

LONDON, April 15, (AP): Outdated laws unfit for the social media age hampered police from countering false claims that helped fuel anti-immigrant violence in Britain last summer, an investigation by lawmakers said Monday.

Parliament's Home Affairs Committee said limits on disclosing details of criminal investigations "created an information vacuum that allowed disinformation to flourish" after three children were stabbed to death at a summer dance party in July.

The attack in the northwest England town of Southport shocked the country and triggered days of disorder after far-right activists seized on incorrect reports that the attacker was a Muslim migrant who had recently arrived in the UK.

Over several nights, crowds attacked housing for asylum-seekers, as well as mosques, libraries and community centers, in the worst street violence Britain had seen since riots in 2011.

Attacker Axel Rudakubana, who was 17 when he carried out the ram-



Police officers watch members of the public outside the Town Hall during a vigil to remember the victims of the stabbing attack last Monday in Southport, England, on Aug 5, 2024. (AP)

page at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class, is the British-born son of Rwandan parents. He is serving a life sentence with no chance of parole for 52

years for killing Alice Da Silva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6, and wounding eight other children and two adults.



The Chinese ship, the bulk carrier Yi Peng 3 is anchored in the sea of Kattegat, near the city of Grenaa in Jutland, Denmark on Nov 20, 2024. (AP)

'No evidence ship intentionally damaged Baltic Sea cables'

Authorities did not find any evidence that a Chinese-flagged ship in the Baltic Sea intentionally damaged two undersea cables last year, according to a Swedish report released Tuesday.

The Swedish Accident Investigation Board's report says investigators only had access to limited information and therefore were not able to figure out with certainty whether the data cables were damaged in Swed-

ish waters intentionally or not.

Chinese authorities led the investigation, with Sweden taking part as an observer. Swedish prosecutors can continue their own investigation separately.

The Yi Peng 3, a bulk carrier, had dragged its port anchor for a day and a half over 180 nautical miles (over 330 kilometers) in November 2024, the Swedish report said. (AP)

'Suspected migrant boat sinking'

2 bodies, 39 survivors found on Greek island

ATHENS, Greece, April 15, (AP): Greek authorities say they have found 39 survivors and the bodies of two women on the small, remote island of Farmakonisi after a suspected migrant boat sinking.

The coast guard said the migrants and bodies were found Monday morning. The vessel used to reach the island from the nearby Turkish coast was not found.

The coast guard said there were no reports of missing people. There was no immediate information on nationalities or what had occurred.

Earlier this month, at least 16 people died when two dinghies sank, one in Turkish waters and one in Greek waters, as dozens of migrants attempted to make their way from the Turkish coast to nearby Greek islands.

Greece is a main entry point into the European Union for people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Many make the short but often treacherous journey from the Turkish coast to Greek



Lifejackets lie at Petra port, after the capsizing of a boat carrying migrants, off the coast on the northeastern Aegean Sea island of Lesbos, Greece on April 3. (AP)

islands in inflatable dinghies or other small boats. Many are not seaworthy or set out in bad weather. Fatal accidents are common.

The Greek government has cracked

down with increased patrols at sea. Many smuggling rings have shifted their operations south, using larger boats to transport people from the northern coast of Africa to southern Greece.

US flies long-range bombers for drill with S.Korea, North marks key state 'versary

SEOUL, South Korea, April 15, (AP): The United States flew long-range B-1B bombers in a show of force against North Korea on Tuesday, days after the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to resist a US-led push to eliminate the North's nuclear program.

North Korea often reacts to the US deployment of B-1B bombers and other powerful military assets with missile tests and fiery rhetoric. Tuesday's flyover of the US bombers could draw



In this photo, provided by South Korea Air Force, two U.S. Air Force B-1B bombers, (top left), fly over the Korean Peninsula with South Korean Air Force F-35A fighter jets, F-16 fighter jets and US Air Force F-16 fighter jets in South Korea during the joint aerial drills of South Korea and the United States, at an undisclosed location in South Korea on April 15. (AP)

an angrier response because it happened when North Korea was marking a key anniversary - the 113th birthday of state founder Kim Il Sung, the late grandfather of the current leader.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement that the U.S. bombers participated in a South Korea-U.S. aerial drill meant to strengthen the allies' combined operational capability and demonstrate their deterrence capability against North Korea's advancing nuclear program.

The ministry said South Korean F-35 and F-16 fighter jets and American F-16 fighter jets also took part in the training over the Korean Peninsula. It said South Korea and the US will continue to expand their joint military exercises to respond to North Korean nuclear threats.

It was the second time a US B-1B had participated in a drill with South Korea since President Donald Trump began his second term in January.

In February, North Korea's Defense Ministry slammed the B-1B's earlier flyover as proof of intensifying U.S.-led provocations since Trump's inauguration. It pledged to counter the strategic threat of the U.S. with strategic means. Days later, North Korea test-fired cruise missiles in what it called an attempt to show its nuclear counterattack capability.

Trump has repeatedly said he will reach out to Kim Jong Un to revive diplomacy. North Korea hasn't directly responded to Trump's outreach.

Last Wednesday, Kim Yo Jong - Kim's sister and a senior official - derided the U.S. and its Asian allies over what she called their "daydream" of denuclearizing North Korea, insisting that her country will never give up its nuclear weapons program. Her statement came as a response to a recent meeting among the top diplomats of the United States, South Korea and Japan where they reaffirmed their commitment to push for North Korea's denuclearization.



Chinese warships dock at a naval base's pier during an official inauguration of the Ream Naval Base in Siha-noukville, southwestern of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on April 5. (AP)

Japanese warships to be first to visit Cambodian port

Japan on Tuesday announced that two of its minesweepers will visit a naval port in Cambodia this weekend in the first foreign navy visit since a Chinese-funded expansion project was completed.

The Bungo and the Etajima are set to enter the Ream Naval Base on Friday. Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to be in the

country the same day as he ends a three-country tour of southeast Asia.

Ream was inaugurated earlier this month with a new pier to accommodate much larger ships, a dry dock for repairs and other new features. China's role in the project drew concern among its rivals that Beijing may seek to use the facility

as its strategic outpost.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said the port call by the Japanese ships will help Cambodia to have a naval port that is open and transparent, as he noted concern about China's growing move to secure overseas outposts to expand its military activity. (AP)

People detained in Myanmar after release from scam compounds attempt an escape

BANGKOK, April 15, (AP): They walked out of the compound in Myanmar not knowing where they would go. Though they were aiming for the river that separated them from Thailand and freedom, they didn't know if they would make it across.

A group of more than 270 some men and women, who were rescued from forced labor in scam compounds two months ago but remain in detention in Myanmar, attempted a mass escape Sunday out of fear that they may end up being sent back to prison-like compounds where they face beatings, torture and potentially even death.

"We will kill ourselves instead of going back to them," said one woman, who has been waiting to go home to Ethiopia for more than two months. She came to Myanmar for what she thought was a job in customer service more than a year ago, only to realize she had been trafficked. She was forced to work in online scams targeting people across the world.

Facing pressure from China, Thailand and Myanmar's governments launched a massive operation in February in which they released thousands of trafficked people from scam compounds, working with the ethnic armed groups that rule Myanmar's border areas.

Some 7,200 - overwhelmingly from China - have returned home, according

to Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but around 1,700 are still stuck in Myanmar, many detained in locked compounds not much different to those they were released from.

That includes this group of 270, most from Ethiopia and other African

countries, who attempted to escape after a meeting in which guards suggested they could be returned to scam compounds. Their attempt underscores the ongoing humanitarian situation left by one of the biggest releases of forced laborers in modern history.



Men and women rescued from scam compounds in Myanmar sit inside a camp belonging to the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army in Kyaukhat, Myanmar on April 13, after their escape attempt to discuss their options for getting home. (AP)

Singapore dissolves parliament paving way for May 3 general elections

SINGAPORE, April 15, (AP): Singapore's parliament was dissolved Tuesday, paving the way for general elections in which the city-state's long-ruling People's Action Party will seek to strengthen its dominance under Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.

The election will be held on May 3, the Elections Department said later in the afternoon. Victory is virtually assured for the PAP, which has led Singapore since its independence in 1965.

"We are witnessing profound changes in the world. It is becoming more uncertain, unsettled and even unstable," Wong wrote on Facebook. "The global conditions that enabled Singapore's success over the past decades may no longer hold. That is why I have called this General Election," adding that Singaporeans should choose "the team to lead our nation."

Wong, who was sworn in as Singapore's fourth leader in May last year, wants to clinch a stronger win after the PAP suffered a setback in 2020 polls over voters' rising discontent with the government.

He succeeded Lee Hsien Loong, who stepped down after two decades at the helm. Lee's departure



Tourists walk in front of the Central Business District during sunset in Singapore, on May 30, 2024. (AP)

marked the end of a family dynasty started by his father, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first leader who built the former colonial trading outpost into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office.

In the 2020 polls held during the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAP maintained its supermajority with 83 out of 93 seats. But it ceded more seats to the opposition, which increased its parliamentary repre-

sentation from six to 10, the highest ever. The PAP's share of popular support also slipped to a near-record low of 61%.

As Wong heads into his first general election as PAP chief, he has sought to reach out to disgruntled younger voters. He launched a "Forward Singapore" plan that aims to give Singaporeans a say in how to develop a more balanced, vibrant and inclusive agenda for the next generation.



Local journalists inspect a destroyed hall of the Republican Palace after it was recaptured by Sudan's army from the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group, in Khartoum, Sudan on March 24. (AP)

International confab rallies aid for Sudan after two years of war, but peace elusive

LONDON, April 15, (AP): Diplomats and aid officials from around the world met Tuesday in London to try to ease the suffering from the 2-year-old war in Sudan, a conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people, displaced 14 million and pushed large parts of the country into famine.

The African Union, which co-hosted the one-day conference with Britain, France, Germany and the European Union, called for an "immediate cessation of hostilities." But U.K. Foreign Secretary David Lammy acknowledged that achieving peace would take time, renewed international effort and "patient diplomacy."

The main aim of the conference was not to negotiate peace, but to relieve what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Attendees included officials from Western nations, international institutions and neighboring countries - but no one from Sudan. Neither the Sudanese military nor the rival paramilitary it is fighting has been invited.

Lammy told delegates that "many have given up on Sudan," concluding that continued conflict is inevitable. He said a "lack of political will" is the biggest obstacle to peace.

"We have got to persuade the warring parties to protect civilians, to let aid in and across the country and to put peace first," Lammy said.

Sudan plunged into war on April 15, 2023, after simmering tensions between the Sudanese military and a paramilitary organization known as the Rapid Support Forces. Fighting broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and spread across the country, killing at least 20,000 people - though the number is likely far higher.

Last month the Sudanese military regained control over Khartoum, a major symbolic victory in the war. But the RSF still controls most of the western region of Darfur and some other areas.

More than 300 civilians were killed in a burst of intense fighting in Darfur on Friday and Saturday, according to the UN.

The war has driven parts of the country into famine and pushed more than 14 million people from their homes, with more than 3 million fleeing the country, to neighboring countries including Chad and Egypt. Both sides in the war have been accused of committing war crimes.

The World Food Program says near-

ly 25 million people - half of Sudan's population - face extreme hunger.

Aid agency Oxfam said the humanitarian catastrophe risks becoming a regional crisis, with fighting spilling into neighboring countries. It said that in South Sudan, itself wracked by recent war, "the arrival of people fleeing Sudan's conflict has put more pressure on already scarce resources, which is deepening local tensions and threatening the fragile peace."

Lammy, who visited Chad's border with Sudan in January, said that "instability must not spread."

"It drives migration from Sudan and the wider region, and a safe and stable Sudan is vital for our national security," he said.

Lammy said the conference would try to "agree a pathway to end the suffering," but the UK and other Western countries have limited power to stop the fighting.

Sudan's government has criticized conference organizers for excluding it from the meeting while inviting the United Arab Emirates, which has been repeatedly accused of arming the RSF. The UAE has strenuously denied that, despite evidence to the contrary.

Pakistan wants to deport millions of Afghans

PESHAWAR, Pakistan, April 15, (AP): Akber Khan is seeing a brisk trade at his restaurant in the northwest Pakistani city of Peshawar. Staff fan skewers of grilled meats and dole out rice and salad.

As an Afghan, Khan ought to be leaving as part of a nationwide crackdown on foreigners the Pakistani government says are living in the country illegally. But the only heat he feels is from the kitchen.

"I have been here for almost 50 years. I got married here, so did my children, and 10 of my family members are buried here. That's why we have no desire to leave," he said.

Khan is one of more than 3 million Afghans that Pakistan wants to expel this year.

At least a third live in the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and that's just those with documents like an Afghan Citizen Card or proof of registration.

It is not clear how many undocumented Afghans are in the country.

The provincial government - led by the party of imprisoned former premier Imran Khan - appears reluctant to repatriate Afghans. Mountainous terrain, sectarian violence and an array of mili-



An Afghan refugee girl peers through a torn curtain at the entrance of her home at Kababayan Refugee Camp in Peshawar, Pakistan on April 8. (AP)

tant groups have also challenged the central government's expulsion ambitions.

"Afghans can never be completely repatriated, especially from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as they return using illegal channels or exploiting loopholes in the system despite fencing at the bor-

der," said Abdullah Khan, managing director of the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies. "Many villages along the border are divided between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and people in the past three or four decades were never stopped from visiting either side."

Town after town falls to gangs

Haiti's government adopts 'war budget'

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, April 15, (AP): Haiti's government announced Monday that it approved what it called a "war budget" of \$275,000 aimed at alleviating the country's crisis as gang violence surges.

Nearly 40% of the money will go toward Haiti's police and military "to fight the armed groups that threaten national stability," while nearly 20% will go to fortify the border the country shares with the Dominican Republic, Haiti's transitional presidential council said in a statement.

Another 16% will go to social programs, including those focused on education, health and humanitarian assistance. The council said the special budget reflects the state's commitment to act decisively and target the growing insecurity.

The additional money, however, is not expected to alleviate the lack of resources hitting a U.N.-backed mission, led by Kenyan police, which is struggling to help local authorities quell gang violence.

Gangs that control at least 85% of the capital, Port-au-Prince, continue to attack communities surrounding it.

Recently, a powerful gang coalition known as Viv Ansanm took control of the towns of Mirebalais

and Saut d'Eau in Haiti's central region, according to the National Human Rights Defense Network, a local group. Police officers at the Mirebalais police station and local prison fled during the attacks, it said.



A woman sweeps debris next to a blazing barricade set up by demonstrators during a protest against insecurity in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 2. (AP)

Kuwait oil price up to \$68.68 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by USD 1.32 to reach USD 68.68 per barrel on Monday as opposed to USD 67.36 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday.

At the global markets, the prices of the Brent crude by 12 cents to reach USD 64.88 and West Texas Intermediate went up three cents to settle respectively at USD 61.53 per barrel pb.

Business

In line with its strategy to stay closest to customers across all segments

National Bank of Kuwait opens new branch at Abdullah Al-Salem University

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Reaffirming its commitment to delivering exceptional banking services wherever its customers are, and in line with its strategy to maintain close proximity to them, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has inaugurated its new branch at Abdullah Al-Salem University, further strengthening its position as the bank with the most extensive branch network in Kuwait.

The opening ceremony of the new branch was attended by Mr. Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK-Kuwait, Prof. Moudi A. Al-Humoud, the Founding Administrative Board, Chair of Abdullah Al-Salem University in Kuwait, and Mr. Mohammed Al-Othman, CEO, Consumer & Digital Banking Group at NBK, along with a number of officials from both the bank and the university.

On this occasion, Mr. Mohammed Al-Wazzan, Head of Sales Force, Consumer and Digital Banking Group at NBK, emphasized that, as part of its social responsibility towards educational institutions, the youth community, and Kuwaiti civil society, NBK offers innovative banking services and products tailored to meet students' financial needs. He highlighted that the branch is equipped with state-of-the-art banking technologies and devices, ensuring that university students enjoy a seamless and comprehensive banking experience.

He highlighted that the opening of the Abdullah Al-Salem University branch aligns with the bank's ongoing commitment to enhancing the banking experience for customers across all segments of society. This initiative is part of NBK's broader strategy to strengthen its leadership in the banking sector by expanding its branch network, introducing innovative banking solutions, and launching services that enable customers to complete their transactions seamlessly and efficiently, ensuring their convenience.

He also underlined that NBK has redefined the concept of traditional branches through its new locations, including the Abdullah Al-Salem University branch, aligning them with international standards. These transformations en-



Salah Al-Fulaij and Moudi A. Al-Humoud pose for a group photo with the consumer & digital banking group in front of the new branch.



Salah Al-Fulaij and Moudi Al-Humoud cut the ribbon to open the new branch, in the presence of Mohammed Al-Othman, Hisham Al-Nusf, Dr. Adel Al Hussainan, and Mohammed Al-Wazzan.

compass a distinctive branch design and advanced banking solutions that enhance customers' experience. Moreover, he noted that these changes reflect the bank's commitment to meeting customer expectations by leveraging multiple digital channels and cutting-edge analytics powered by AI to better understand and address their needs.

Furthermore, he pointed out that NBK's extensive network of branches, ATMs, and Interactive Teller Machines (ITM) across Kuwait is seamlessly integrated with its advanced digital channels, ensuring cus-

tomers enjoy a superior and comprehensive banking experience. This approach aligns with the bank's strategy to remain the closest to its customers, offering them unparalleled convenience and accessibility.

With the inauguration of its new branch, NBK has expanded its extensive local network to 71 branches, further strengthening its position as the bank with the largest branch presence in Kuwait. Additionally, NBK continues to operate the country's most extensive network of ATMs.

NBK recently entered into a cooperation agreement with Abdullah Al-Salem University, aimed at fostering the exchange of expertise across various fields. The agreement also includes supporting and sponsoring a wide range of activities and events organized by the university throughout the year. This partnership reflects NBK's commitment to strengthening collaborations with key institutions to support the development of ambitious national talent, as well as its ongoing efforts to empower youth and help them enhance their skills.

Boursa Kuwait closes Tues on positive note

General index up 0.06%

KUWAIT CITY, April 15, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Tuesday's session on a positive note, with the general index edging up 4.67 points, or 0.06 percent, to settle at 7,805.44 points. Trading activity saw 203.3 million shares exchanged in 15,261 cash transactions, totaling KD 58.10 million (approximately USD 177.7 million).

The Main Market Index posted a stronger gain, rising 19.70 points, or 0.28 percent, to 7,137.32 points. A total of 79.3 million shares were traded through 5,431 transactions, with a turnover of KD 11.6 million (about USD 35.4 million).

The Premier Market Index recorded a marginal increase of 1.14 points, or 0.01 percent, closing at 8,357.71 points. It witnessed the trading of 123.9 million shares across 9,830 transactions, generating KD 46.4 million (around USD 141.9 million) in value.

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index saw the highest percentage gain of the day, adding 61.38 points, or 0.90 percent, to reach 6,904.97 points. The index recorded trades of 65.6 million shares through 4,196 transactions worth KD 9.7 million (approximately USD 29.6 million).

As part of its support for Diraya campaign

KFH: Banks & licensed entities offer safe investment options

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: In support of Diraya campaign, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) emphasized the role of Kuwaiti banks in offering a diversified array of investment opportunities for customers wishing to grow their savings in a secure manner and under a regulated and clear framework.

In a press release, KFH added that the investment options offered by local banks, under the regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), are a safe haven and a stable source for financial investments, along with other companies and official institutions licensed and subject to the regulatory authorities responsible for protecting the national economy and the investment sector.

KFH pointed out that the secure investment services and products obviate the need for involvement in investment activities with unfamiliar entities that promise financial returns from fraudulent or high-risk projects. KFH also stated that banks are assisting individuals seeking to invest in their funds through a variety of investment tools and experienced employees subject to the regulations and guidelines of regulators.

KFH explained that among these safe investment services the banks offer are investment deposits, investment funds,



KFH & Diraya logo

investment savings in addition to the long and short-term investment plans.

Meanwhile, KFH warned customers against engaging in high-risk investments that are promoted by unregulated entities and are not subject to oversight by any supervisory authority fueled by the growing presence of shell companies and other online scammers that promote quick profits. KFH advises customers and investors to refrain from responding to advertisements, text messages and emails received from unknown sources. Additionally, the Bank also urges investors to seek advice from qualified experts before making any investment decisions.

13 top Asian investment firms join Kuwait capital market discussions

Boursa Kuwait hosts Asian virtual roadshow with KCC

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: As part of their efforts to enhance the Kuwaiti capital market's stature within the global investment community, Boursa Kuwait and the Kuwait Clearing Company organized a virtual roadshow for Asian investors on Monday, April 14, 2025, in collaboration with HSBC, one of the largest banks in Europe.

The roadshow, the first of its kind in the Asian continent, provided Boursa Kuwait and Kuwait Clearing Company (KCC) with a unique opportunity to engage with some of the largest and most prominent asset managers in Asia. The two companies met with 13 investment companies, including banks, asset management firms and sovereign wealth funds, shedding light on Boursa Kuwait's journey since its privatization, its subsequent listing on the "Premier" Market, and its instrumental role in the reclassification of Kuwait's capital market to "Emerging Market" status by leading global index providers.

The discussions also covered the latest developments in the Kuwaiti capital market, as well as key investment opportunities, products, and services tailored for institutional investors.

The participating Asian investors praised the strong reputation and prominent standing of the Kuwaiti capital market within the region, citing its operational efficiency and firm commitment to international standards. They also commended the market's high level of transparency, emphasizing the diligence of regulators and market participants in providing accurate, timely information – an approach that reinforces investor confidence and reflects the market's dedication to a well-regulated and transparent investment environment. The investors further expressed a clear interest in expanding their exposure to the Kuwaiti market and exploring deeper avenues of collaboration.

Representing Boursa Kuwait during the roadshow were Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi and Head of Markets Sector Noura Al-Abdulkareem, who were joined by KCC CEO Mr. Duaij Raed Al-Saleh.

"Capital markets in the region are witnessing growing interest from in-



Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi



Duaij Raed Al-Saleh

stitutional investors across Asia, and the Kuwaiti capital market is central to this expanding trend. Boursa Kuwait remains committed to fostering strong, long-term partnerships with the Asian investment community by enhancing engagement, strengthening communication channels and keeping investors informed about the latest developments in the Kuwaiti capital market," said Boursa Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Mohammad Saud Al-Osaimi.

He added, "Through our participation, we also aim to showcase the diverse investment opportunities, products and services tailored to meet the evolving needs of institutional investors. This initiative is part of a broader strategic plan to enhance the appeal of the Kuwaiti capital market, expand the range of financial instruments and deepen market liquidity – ultimately opening new avenues for both local and international investors and underscoring the strength, resilience and forward-looking vision of Kuwait's capital market."

Boursa Kuwait is currently working with its partners in the capital market apparatus to launch the central counterparty (CCP) system as a foundation for introducing new financial instruments, including exchange-traded funds and a fixed-income platform with bonds and sukuk, which are set to be rolled out in the next few months. The bourse is also preparing to implement the fourth phase of its comprehensive

market development (MD) plan, which will include the introduction of financial derivatives.

Commenting on his company's participation in the roadshow, Kuwait Clearing Company CEO Mr. Duaij Raed Al-Saleh said, "Kuwait Clearing Company continues to play a vital role in fostering a capital market built on security, transparency and investor protection. This constructive dialogue with a distinguished group of Asian investors allowed us to highlight how our market infrastructure and post-trade services are evolving to meet the growing needs of international investment institutions."

Over the past few years, the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus has implemented a series of enhancements and structural reforms, particularly within the clearing and settlement framework, to better meet the needs of international investors. These improvements include accelerating the opening of trading accounts for foreign clients, streamlining the transfer process between custodians and introducing the concept of partial settlement rejection, giving foreign investors greater flexibility in managing their obligations.

The introduction of omnibus accounts has further optimized order flow and reduced transaction volume by enabling institutional and foreign funds to execute trades through a single consolidated account, with post-trade allocation to beneficiaries completed seamlessly upon execution.

In addition, an updated, fully automated version of the electronic general assembly meeting (eAGM) system, which is mandatory for listed companies, has been launched, allowing investors to participate and vote through multiple, user-friendly channels.

Other key developments include an enhanced mechanism for foreign investor participation in initial public offerings (IPOs), aimed at boosting cross-border investment, as well as the introduction of a Securities Lending and Borrowing (SLB) framework which broadens the range of financial instruments available in the market and offers investors increased flexibility and strategic options.

Boursa Kuwait and the KCC play a pivotal role in the development of the Kuwaiti capital market and the diversification of the national economy and have remained steadfast in their dedication to establishing a transparent, efficient and advanced exchange platform, which has led to the creation of a liquid capital market. Boursa Kuwait and the KCC's unwavering commitment to promoting the Kuwaiti capital market and its participants through a series of Roadshows and Corporate Days has also helped provide prospective institutional investors worldwide with profound insights into the market's opportunities.

Since Boursa Kuwait took over operations of the Kuwaiti stock exchange, the Kuwaiti capital market has undergone an unprecedented development thanks to the diligent efforts of the capital market apparatus. Their focus on empowering participants and raising standards has resulted in several key initiatives, including the diversification of products and services, establishing an appealing investment platform, expanding the issuer base, and adapting rules and regulations to meet market demands.

The apparatus has also significantly enhanced the market's infrastructure and fostered an attractive investment environment, which resulted in the Kuwaiti capital market's reclassification to an Emerging Market by three prominent global index providers, and solidified Kuwait's position as a leading financial center in the region.

386th ECONS team guides vendors through SAM.gov and DoD procurement

ABCK hosts successful Vendor's Day Workshop in collaboration with US industry experts

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The American Business Council Kuwait (ABCK-AmCham Kuwait) hosted its latest Vendor's Day Workshop on April 7, 2025, bringing together a dynamic group of contracting officials and private sector representatives for a hands-on, educational session.

The workshop opened with welcoming remarks from Mr. Pete Swift, Chairman of AmCham Kuwait, who introduced Lt. Col. Sabellico, the newly appointed Commander of the 386th Expeditionary Contracting Squadron (ECONS). Lt. Col. Sabellico shared introductory remarks and emphasized the unit's commitment to expanding vendor engagement and supporting local procurement efforts.

A key highlight of the day was the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC) session, led virtually by Mr. Dean Franks and Mr. Drew Griffin of Cohort Shield, a U.S.-based cybersecurity compliance firm. Their presentation provided attendees with a foundational understanding of CMMC requirements and practical steps toward certification—an increasingly critical component of eligibility for DoD contracts.

Following the CMMC discussion, the 386th ECONS team delivered an in-depth overview of SAM.gov, the federal gov-



ABCK hosts Vendor's Day Workshop with contracting officials and private sector.

ernment's centralized procurement platform. They guided attendees through navigating active solicitations and shared best practices for identifying and responding to opportunities. A subsequent session focused on how to respond to a solicitation, providing real-world examples and interactive Q&A. The team concluded with a practical briefing on how to get paid, including invoicing processes and use of systems such as Wide Area Workflow (WAWF) and PIEE.

In addition to the formal presentations, attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with contracting personnel for one-on-one guidance and technical support—an aspect that received high praise in post-event feedback.

"Events like Vendor's Day are critical to building trust, transparency, and capacity between the public and private sectors," said Pete Swift, Chairman of AmCham Kuwait. "We are grateful to the 386th ECONS and our guest speakers for their time, knowledge, and commitment to empowering the local vendor community."

For more information on future programs or to inquire about becoming a member of the American Business Council Kuwait, please contact communications@amchamkuwait.org or visit www.amchamkuwait.org.

Other Voices

3 reports for a sustainable future but with different concepts and purposes

By Brian Erik Vibenholt
Business Consultant

Throughout my work on promoting the sustainability agenda, I frequently encountered misunderstandings and misinterpretations regarding the purpose and use of three key assessments: ESIA, LEED/GSAS, and ESG reporting.

In this article, I aim to clarify these three types of reports, providing insights from the perspective of the Kuwaiti enterprise market. While the examples used are fictitious, they are based on scenarios that closely reflect conditions in Kuwait. References to legislation are based on Kuwaiti law where applicable.

1) Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA):

The Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is a mandatory assessment under Kuwaiti law for all projects in the State of Kuwait.

According to Article 7 of the Environmental Protection Law No. 42/2014, this assessment is a pre-approval necessity for all projects in Kuwait.

Furthermore, Article 16 of the same law stipulates that “All entities subject to the provisions of this law are prohibited from commencing the implementation of any project, conducting alterations or expansions to existing activities, or obtaining any licenses without prior approval.”

However, since not all projects have the same level of impact on society or the environment, the law defines three categories for projects: A, B, and C.

■ Category C projects: These include small-scale projects like a small shop or consultancy office. Such projects are required only to register with a project description written on a standard form for the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF).

■ Category B projects: These are medium to large-scale projects with limited impact on the social and environmental surroundings. A report on the Environmental and Social Assessment Report (ESAR) is required for such projects.

■ Category A projects: These are medium to large-scale projects with a significant to major impact on social and environmental surroundings. These projects must submit a comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Study (ESIAS).

All assessments and reports must be conducted by a Sustainability Consultant approved by the Kuwait Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA).

These assessments provide meaningful insights. For example, consider a project where a four-story residential building with 16 apartments is demolished to make way for a 10-story building with 40 apartments. While this project will contribute 24 new apartments to the local community, and improve the standard of living, it will also place more than double pressure on the existing infrastructure. There will be a 150 percent increase in water consumption, domestic water waste, solid waste, and power consumption, with an additional 24 air conditioning units. The consultant will assess whether the municipality and the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) have the capacity to handle this increased demand for utilities. Also, the consultant will evaluate if the existing traffic and road capacity can accommodate the increased traffic and parking needs.

Another example involves the construction of a new sewage treatment plant in a residential area. This project will remove a significant odor problem in the area, providing a positive impact on the local community. However, the increased power demand resulting from the plant will need to be mitigated, potentially by installing solar panels on the roof or nearby the plant building.

Before the plant is commissioned, the sewage network feeding the plant will need to be renovated. This construction work may cause significant disruption to the community. These issues will be part of the assessment study. For any negative impacts or nuisances identified by the consultant, the project will be required to propose mitigation solutions before the Kuwait Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) grants approval.

2) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the USA, and its local counterpart, the Global Sustainability Assessment System (GSAS) from Qatar:

These are sets of recommended, but not legally mandatory, standards for sustainable building, construction, and urban design and performance.

While these standards are not legally required, they provide guidance on achieving the highest levels of sustainability in building performance. They focus on energy efficiency, such as evaluating insulation quality and the design of air conditioning systems to minimize energy consumption while maximizing effectiveness. They also assess water use efficiency and whether building materials are sourced sustainably.

Both LEED and GSAS evaluate 55 to 60 criteria, covering everything from initial design to construction. Good practices during the building phase include ensuring minimal disruption to the surrounding environment.

By raising Kuwaiti building projects to a Gold or 5-Star standard, the country could save at least 30 percent on utilities and reduce CO2 emissions. When applied at the start of a construction project, particularly during the design phase, decisions such as material selection, window placement, and HVAC system dimensions can result in huge savings, not only during construction phase but also throughout the building’s operational lifespan for decades.

3) Environment, Social & Governance (ESG) and Sustainability Reporting:

ESG sustainability reporting focuses on an entity’s actions taken to improve and contribute to environmental, social, and governance aspects of its operations. It also demonstrates how the company assesses risks and opportunities related to these three areas - environmental, social, and governance future.

The origins of ESG reporting and the various developed standards stem from the UN’s Countries Of Participation (COP).

The UN defined 17 sustainable goals, with the World Bank directing all enterprises to verify to investors what actions they are taking to achieve net-zero emissions by a fixed year, 2050 globally, or 2060 for Kuwait, with a halfway mark in 2035.

For Kuwaiti companies, ESG reporting is partly mandated by law. If the company is publicly listed, an annual report on sustainability actions is required.

ESG reporting is strongly tied to financial reporting, with legal requirements for Kuwaiti corporations set by the Capital Market Authority, as outlined in their 19 reporting modules.

The legislative requirement for ESG sustainability reporting is stated in module 12, Articles 1-17.

Article 1-17-1 uses the word “may,” which can be interpreted as “voluntary” for listed entities. However, it is important to note that Module 15 for shareholding entities, Article 6-1, stipulates, “The Board of Directors shall understand and analyze the nature and extent of risks encountered by the company’s activities, and be aware of environmental, social, and governance sustainability risks, in order to mitigate them as much as possible. In addition, it shall identify the proper procedures to address these risks.”

The use of the word “shall” indicates that this is mandatory. Furthermore, the requirement to “identify the proper procedures to deal therewith” is also a compulsory action.

Article 17, second paragraph, states:

■ The report must be prepared according to one or more internationally recognized sustainability reporting standards.

■ It should describe the scope of the report and the basis for its determination.

■ It must determine the company’s most important environmental, social, and economic impact topics and involve stakeholders in the materiality assessment process for those topics.

■ It should describe the methods used in the materiality assessment process.

■ The report must outline the methods and procedures followed in addressing each of the sustainability topics identified in the materiality assessment process.

The selection of the appropriate international standard is crucial.

To ensure compliance, it is most logical to use the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as companies are already required to produce financial reports.

The IFRS (S1) and (S2) provide the standard for ESG disclosure requirements. An important aspect to note here is that the risk must be assessed from both financial and environmental perspectives (double materiality risk and opportunity). The IFRS should be adopted by all banks and financial institutions.

The organization behind the IFRS offers a valuable opportunity for cost-saving by integrating the obligations for financial reporting and the disclosure of ESG risks and opportunities. Once the board understands the benefits of this concept, it becomes embedded in the company’s operations and capital management processes, including both capital expenditures (capex) and operational expenditures (opex).

For corporate trading, especially with any European enterprise, the report shall be in compliance with the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and its set of standards stated in the European Sustainability Reporting Standard, with a strong focus on ESG criteria.

There are a number of alternative reporting standards, with the most widely used being the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Driving innovation with AI, cybersecurity, IoT, and cloud services in KSA

ZainTECH secures commercial license in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH, April 15: ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, has achieved a significant milestone in its regional expansion strategy by securing a commercial license in Saudi Arabia that will pave the way for the entity to set up its regional offices in the Kingdom. This transition from an investment license to a full national entity status cements ZainTECH’s long-term commitment to the Kingdom, allowing it to scale its advanced technology solutions across key sectors such as digital IoT, cybersecurity, drones, AI, and cloud services.

The strategic move underscores ZainTECH’s deep commitment to Saudi Arabia’s digital transformation ambitions, fully aligning with Vision 2030. By strengthening its local presence, the company is poised to forge stronger collaborations, drive meaningful innovation, and provide tailor-made solutions that address the evolving needs of businesses and government entities in KSA.

Saudi Arabia is a vital market for ZainTECH, and securing national entity status marks a defining moment in its growth journey. This step facilitates the opening of regional offices and will allow the company to operate with greater agility, contribute to the Kingdom’s digital economy, and reinforce its mission to deliver world-class technology solutions that empower businesses and government bodies to better serve the dynamic and digitally savvy local community.

As part of ZainTECH’s expansion to the Saudi market, the company is



ZainTECH KSA headquarter

actively exploring strategic partnerships with both public and private sector organizations to accelerate the adoption of next-generation solutions that enhance efficiency, security, innovation and business resilience. This expansion is also set to create new opportunities for local talent, strengthen the Kingdom’s digital infrastructure, and accelerate the adoption of emerging technologies across industries.

The commercial license comes on the back of ZainTECH’s recent participation at LEAP 25 whereby the company announced a multitude of agreements with local entities including: King Khalid University that aims to revolutionize digital education in the Kingdom; with both Najm Insurance Group and Diamond Policy and its SHAHIN Platform to drive digital transformation, cybersecurity and technological advancements in

KSA’s insurance sector; as well as with Leejam Sports to drive the future of digital fitness in the Kingdom and beyond.

By deepening its footprint in Saudi Arabia, ZainTECH is doubling down on its investment in cutting-edge digital services, reinforcing its role as a key player in the region’s technological evolution. With a focus on AI-driven solutions, cloud advancements, and enterprise security, the company is well-positioned to support the Kingdom’s vision for a sustainable, technology-driven economy.

A Regional Powerhouse

ZainTECH has cemented its position as a leading ICT digital solutions provider to enterprises and government bodies across the MEA region. The company continued to expand its capabilities, strengthen strategic partnerships, and deliver innovative

solutions across its growing portfolio, which now includes cloud, cybersecurity, data & AI, drones & robotics, digital solutions, modern infrastructure, and software licensing. With AI and sustainability at the core of its transformation strategy, ZainTECH focused on advisory-led engagements to accelerate time-to-value benefits for clients, helping them transition to more intelligent, energy-efficient digital solutions.

Continually keeping pace with the growing regional demand for enterprise ICT solutions that leverage AI capabilities and drive sustainable digital transformation, the company’s innovative services have received numerous international and regional accolades. These include being named the ‘Most Innovative AI and Data Science’ company, as well as the ‘Most Innovative Enterprise’ company regionally at the Fast Company 2024 Awards and as ‘Digital Transformation Leader of the Year’ at the Tech Innovation Awards 2024. The entity was also recognized as a “Major Player” in the IDC MarketScape for MEA Public Cloud IaaS Services 2024 and Cloud Professional Services 2024— a testament to its cloud leadership.

Furthermore, ZainTECH also maintained a strong presence on the regional stage, participating and leading conversations on a more sustainable, AI-driven future at key industry events, including GITEX and AI & Web3 Festival in Dubai, COMEX in Muscat and LEAP in Riyadh.

Kuwaiti businessman Al-Shaya awarded King Abdulaziz medal

RIYADH, April 15, (KUNA): Saudi Minister of State and CEO of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City, Engineer Ibrahim Al-Sultan awarded Kuwaiti businessman Mohammed Al-Shaya the King Abdulaziz Medal of the Fourth Class.

The Saudi Press Agency reported that, in compliance with a royal order, Minister Al-Sultan awarded

Saudi businessmen Abdullah Al-Fawzan and Kuwaiti businessmen Mohammad Al-Shaya the King Abdulaziz Medal of the Fourth Class in appreciation of their company Shomoul’s initiative to develop the intersection of King Salman Road with King Fahad Road at a total cost of 646 million Saudi riyals (about USD 172.14 million).

Minister Al-Sultan the significant role of the private sector as a key partner in the development of the capital, Riyadh. He pointed out that such projects and initiatives contribute to improving the quality of life and enhancing the level of services provided to the city’s residents, thus achieving the goals of the Kingdom’s Vision 2030.

‘Dhaman’ reports positive sovereign ratings for most Arab countries in '24

Six Arab nations see sovereign rating upgrades

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) revealed that the sovereign ratings and political and commercial risk assessment of most Arab countries improved by the end of 2024, according to 15 indicators issued by the world’s top 14 credit rating and risk assessment agencies.

In its first quarterly bulletin for 2025, the Corporation explained that despite the events witnessed by the Arab region, in addition to the economic and climatic developments, the outlook of international rating institutions and agencies for the region’s countries through sovereign rating indicators and country risk assessment was generally positive by the end of 2024.

Based on the great importance of sovereign assessment and risk indicators in assessing how much regional and international multinationals and finance, investment and trade institutions are interested in Arab countries, Dhaman continued to monitor these indicators, which highlighted the following:

■ 6 Arab countries improved in the sovereign rating, 5 countries stabilized, one country declined, and the outlook for six countries changed, according to the four major global agencies: S&P, Moody’s, Fitch, and Capital Intelligence.

■ GCC countries continued to lead the Arab world in most sovereign ratings and indicators of all kinds of risks.

■ The average global ranking of Arab countries in the Fitch Country Risk Index advanced, buoyed by the improved rating of 11 Arab countries by the end of 2024.

■ The position of Arab countries advanced in the business environment risk index related to export transactions issued by Credendo in 2024, buoyed by the improved rating of six Arab countries and the stable standing of the remaining countries.

■ The position of Arab countries improved in the various risk assessment indicators issued by Dun & Bradstreet, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Japanese NEXI Export Credit Agency.

■ The Arab position in the Coface’s Country Risk Index slightly improved thanks to the improved rating of one country and the stable rating of the re-

maining countries included in the index.

■ The Arab position advanced in the Global Peace Index due to the improved rating of 15 countries, while the rating of six countries dropped.

■ The position of Arab countries in Allianz Trade medium-term country risk indicators and Atradius rating, as well as the index of preferred payment terms in dealing with Arab countries in commercial transactions, stabilized.

■ The average global rating of Arab countries in the PRS Composite Country Risk Index declined as a result of the decline in the rating of 10 countries.

■ Economic risks led the list of top risks that Arab countries are expected to face over the next two years, according to a World Economic Forum report, especially the risks of economic contraction, inflation and public debt.

Dhaman noted that in parallel with the expected self-efforts of the Arab countries in enhancing their political, security, economic and financial stability and improving their ratings in international indicators during the coming period, this improvement will continue to depend on several factors, most notably the expectations of the political and security situation in the region’s countries. They will also be affected by volatility of oil prices, trade, investment, tourism, borrowing and debt arrangements.

Dhaman also explained that despite the presence of reservations regarding a number of these classifications, this does not diminish their importance and the need to monitor them in order to improve the status of Arab countries and their ranking as the gateway to the improvement of the regional investment climate and business environment.

In this context, Dhaman stressed its readiness to play its role in compiling specialized and thorough reports on the situation of each Arab country, emphasizing the significance of communicating with the research teams tasked with issuing these indicators to facilitate the implementation of reform measures and improve the position of the region’s countries.

Based in Kuwait, the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (Dhaman) was established in 1974. It comprises as members all Arab countries and four joint Arab financial institutions. It provides specialized insurance services against credit and political risks with a view to facilitating the inflow of foreign direct investments into Arab countries, and promoting Arab exports and imports.

Unified Arab energy vision for Europe export proposed

Egypt, Arab Energy Organization deepen energy cooperation

CAIRO, April 15, (KUNA): Egyptian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Karim Badawi met on Tuesday with Secretary General of the Arab Energy Organization (AEO) Jamal Al-Loughani, to discuss ways to deepen Arab integration in the fields of oil, gas, and energy.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Petroleum, the meeting took place during Al-Loughani’s visit to Cairo to assess opportunities for enhanced cooperation between the organization and Egypt’s petroleum sector entities.

The discussions focused on the ongoing efforts to restructure the AEO and launch a set of impactful initiatives aimed at modernizing its functions.

These efforts follow directives from the organization’s ministerial council during its meeting last December, with the objective of elevating its role in addressing the challenges facing member states and the energy industry both regionally and globally.

Minister Badawi welcomed Al-Loughani to Egypt and reaffirmed Egypt’s full support for the organization’s development and restructuring initiatives, which he described as a fresh starting point.

He emphasized the importance of leveraging these efforts to boost regional cooperation among Arab countries in the energy sector and to foster partnerships between institutions and companies to achieve mutual benefit, which would help maximize the use of the vast resources and expertise of member states and

accelerate project development and economic growth across the region.

Minister Badawi also outlined the key pillars of Egypt’s petroleum strategy, which include increasing production, maximizing infrastructure utilization, advancing the mining sector, diversifying energy sources to ensure an optimal energy mix, enhancing safety, improving energy efficiency, reducing emissions, and deepening regional cooperation.

He noted that these pillars serve as a solid foundation for fostering collaboration and creating new Arab partnerships across various energy domains, and among his proposals was the establishment of a “Center of Excellence” under the organization’s new structure to serve as a platform for sharing member countries’ expertise and capabilities.

Minister Badawi further highlighted the strategic importance of developing a unified Arab vision for exporting to European markets, taking advantage of Egypt’s geographic position as a gateway to Europe.

He used the Sumed pipeline as an example of a successful model of Arab energy integration, facilitating the transport of crude oil from Arab producers to Europe via Egypt, and also serving as a strategic storage solution.

He also pointed to the successful Egypt-Saudi Arabia electricity interconnection project as another example of effective regional collaboration.

On his part, AEO Secretary-General Al-Loughani reviewed the organization’s current

restructuring efforts, which are being carried out in cooperation with a joint team of experts from member states.

These steps aim to modernize the organization and launch a wide range of initiatives to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

He emphasized the need to capitalize on the capabilities and resources available across the Arab world and to enhance collaboration through future projects that promote the optimal use of energy resources.

He also stressed the importance of expanding knowledge sharing, sharing expertise, and conducting research in cooperation with Arab universities and academic institutions.

Al-Loughani praised the Egyptian Ministry’s clear vision and integrated strategy, noting its value in supporting the goals of the organization’s restructuring process, and Egypt’s ongoing support and commitment to the organization’s development efforts.

During his visit, the Secretary-General will continue holding meetings in Cairo to explore collaboration opportunities between the AEO and various Egyptian petroleum sector entities including the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS), the Egyptian Petrochemicals Holding Company (ECHEM), and ENPPI, particularly in areas of training and human resource development.

ENPPI is currently implementing specialized training programs in partnership with the Arab Energy Organization.

US moves ahead on tariffs with probes into computer chips and pharmaceuticals

Bid to impose more taxes on key imports

BANGKOK, April 15, (AP): The Trump administration has taken its next steps toward imposing more tariffs on key imports, launching investigations into imports of computer chips, chip making equipment and pharmaceuticals.

The Department of Commerce posted notices about the probes late Monday on the Federal Register, seeking public comment within three weeks. It had not formally announced them earlier.

Although President Donald Trump paused most of his biggest tariff hikes last week for 90 days, apart from those for imports from China, he has said he still plans tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs, lumber, copper and computer chips.

The Commerce Department said it is investigating how imports of computer chips, equipment to make them and products that contain them - which include many daily necessities such as cars, refrigerators, smart phones and other items - affect national security. Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 permits the president to order tariffs for the sake of national security.

The probe includes assessing the potential for U.S. domestic production of computer chips to meet U.S. demand

and the role of foreign manufacturing and assembly, testing and packaging in meeting those needs.

Among other aspects of the entire computer chip supply chain, the government intends to also study the risks of having computer chip production concentrated in other places and the impact on U.S. competitiveness from foreign government subsidies, "foreign unfair trade practices and state-sponsored overcapacity."

After Trump said electronics would not be included in what his administration calls "reciprocal" tariffs of up to 50% on some nations, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick explained in an interview on ABC News that pharmaceuticals, semiconductors and autos will be handled with "sector specific" tariffs.

"And those are not available for negotiation," Lutnick said. "They are just going to be part of making sure we reshore the core national security items that need to be made in this country. We need to make medicine in this country," he said. "We need to make semiconductors."

The investigation into pharmaceutical imports includes ingredients used to make such drugs and touches on many of the same aspects of relying on imports to make them.

Asked about his plans for more tariffs on pharmaceuticals, Trump said Monday, "Yeah, we're going to be doing that."

He said it would be in the "not too



Sales rep promote projectors at the 137th Canton Fair in Guangzhou in southern China's Guangdong province on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. (AP)

distant future."

"We're doing it because we want to make our own drugs," he said.

More than 70% of the materials,

or active pharmaceutical ingredients, used to make medicines made in the United States are produced in other countries, with India, the European

Union and China leading suppliers. The U.S. produces about a fifth of all pharmaceuticals made worldwide, but consumes about 45%, far more than

any other country.

The U.S. also is a major producer of semiconductors, but only in some areas. It relies heavily on imports from Taiwan and South Korea for certain kinds of advanced chips. In particular, Taiwan dominates advanced logic chip production at 92% of all fabrication capacity according to the International Trade Administration, with South Korea making 8%.

Products like laptops, smartphones and the components needed to make them accounted for nearly \$174 billion in U.S. imports from China last year. The administration's plans suggest that such electronics will still be taxed by previous (non-"reciprocal") tariffs - and potentially under additional, sector-specific levies.

Although major computer chip makers like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp. are investing heavily in U.S. manufacturing facilities, partly due to incentives put in place during former President Joe Biden's time in office, the costly process of changing entire supply chains would take years.

Separately, the Commerce Department said Monday that it was withdrawing from a 2019 agreement that had suspended an antidumping investigation into imports of fresh tomatoes from Mexico, effective in 90 days. It said the current arrangement failed to protect U.S. growers from "unfairly priced" imports of tomatoes. Most tomatoes from Mexico will be subject to a 20.91% tariff, it said.

Xi tours Southeast Asia

Chinese leader makes case for free trade

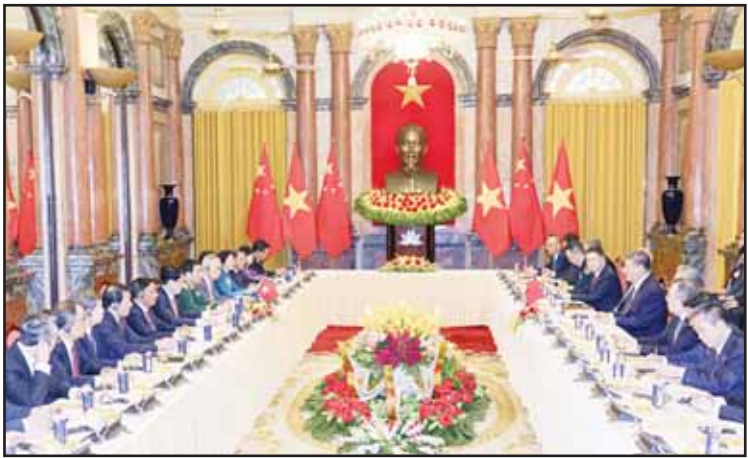
BANGKOK, April 15, (AP): China's Xi is making the case for free trade as he tours Southeast Asia this week, presenting China as a source of "stability and certainty."

On Monday, he was welcomed to Hanoi with pomp and ceremony by Vietnam's President Luong Cuong.

He arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, later Tuesday, for a three-day visit and will end his tour with a stop in Cambodia.

In Hanoi, Xi had a meeting with Vietnam's Communist Party General Secretary To Lam, where he said the two countries "have brought the world valuable stability and certainty" in a "turbulent world." He also paid respects at the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, the founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

"As beneficiaries of economic globalization, both China and Vietnam should strengthen strategic resolve, jointly oppose unilateral bullying acts, uphold the global free trade system, and keep global industrial and supply



Chinese President Xi Jinping, center right, meets with Vietnamese President Luong Cuong, sixth left, during a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi, Vietnam, Tuesday, April 15, 2025. (AP)

chains stable," he added, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China and Vietnam signed a series of

memorandums on cooperation in supply chains and a joint railway project, and Xi also promised greater access for Vietnamese agricultural exports to

China, although few details were made public about the agreements.

U.S. President Donald Trump complained about the meeting, which comes days after his tariffs upended global markets and left governments across the world scrambling. Reacting to the meeting Monday, Trump said China and Vietnam were trying "to figure out how do we screw the United States of America."

In Malaysia, Xi is expected to discuss a free trade agreement between China and 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nation, as Malaysia is chair of the association this year. Xi will meet with King Sultan Ibrahim on Wednesday morning and Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim later in the day.

ASEAN Secretary-General Kao Kim Houn told Chinese state media that the agreement will eliminate many tariffs between China and the bloc's members. "We will bring more tariffs down to zero in many cases, and then expand to all the areas," he said in an interview with CGTN, the state broadcaster's English channel.

Watchdog echoes similar moves in US

Japan accuses Google of violations in smartphones

TOKYO, April 15, (AP): Japanese regulators on Tuesday accused U.S. tech giant Google of violating anti-monopoly laws, echoing similar moves in the U.S. and Europe.

Google Japan said in a statement that it found the action "regrettable." It said it has invested in Japan significantly to promote innovation as a technology leader.

The Japan Fair Trade Commission's "cease and desist order" says Google must stop the pre-installation of the Google search engine in Android smartphones, which it said in effect shuts out competition.

It's unclear if Google, a subsidiary of Alphabet Inc., based in Mountain View in the Silicon Valley, will take legal action to fight the order.

In the U.S., a judge ruled last year that Google's ubiquitous search engine illegally exploited its dominance to squash competition. Google has denied the allegations, arguing that it's immensely popular because people like what it offers. The appeals process is likely to take years.

Japanese regulators began their investigation into Google in 2023.

They said they consulted with overseas authorities dealing with similar cases.

European regulators have also slammed what they see as Google's monopolistic dominance.

Tuesday's move marks the first time the Japan Fair Trade Commission has taken such an action against a major global technology company.

Number of jobs on offer dropped to 781,000

UK job vacancies fall lowest level in 4 years

LONDON, April 15, (KUNA): Job vacancies fell to the lowest level in nearly four years, according to official figures, suggesting demand for workers is weakening as employment costs grow.

The number of jobs on offer dropped to 781,000 in the first three months of the year, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said, while people on payrolls also declined.

Average UK pay continued to rise -- up 5.9 percent -- but

increases in employer National Insurance Contributions as well as National Minimum Wage hikes which came into force this month are forecast to weigh on salaries.

The ONS said the UK unemployment rate remained at 4.4 percent, roughly the same as the previous three months.

The employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 years was 75.1 percent, still below Labor's target of 80 percent employment.

Raw materials to keep British Steel plant operating arrive

LONDON, April 15, (AP): The U.K. government said Tuesday that it had bought enough raw materials to keep Britain's last steelmaking blast furnaces operating for the "coming weeks."

The announcement came amid fears that the government's decision to wrest control of British Steel from its Chinese owners would deepen tensions between the U.K. and China. The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Monday warned against "politicizing" the issue as British officials raised concerns about Chinese investment in strategic industries.

The issue has dominated British politics since Saturday, when Prime Minister Keir Starmer recalled lawmakers from their spring recess so Parliament could pass emergency legislation allowing the government to take operational control of British Steel.

That move was spurred by reports

that the company's owners, China's Jingye Group, were trying to shut down steelmaking operations in Scunthorpe, northern England, by starving the plant of the iron ore and coking coal needed to keep the blast furnaces operating. That raised the prospect that Britain would lose its last plant capable of making high-quality steel from scratch because once blast furnaces are shut down it is difficult and expensive to restart them.

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Ghana bans foreigners from trading gold in the country starting May 1

ACCRA, Ghana, April 15, (AP): A newly created regulatory body for gold exports from Ghana announced Monday that foreigners would no longer be allowed to buy or trade artisanally mined gold in the country, Africa's biggest gold producer.

Starting May 1, gold must be bought with licenses from the new Ghana Gold Board, also known as GoldBod, according to a statement from the new body. Licenses previously issued by the Precious Minerals Marketing Co., which used to market minerals produced in the country, will no longer be valid.

The statement said beginning next month no entity can purchase or deal in gold in the country apart from GoldBod, which was created to oversee gold trading and maximize revenue from its export.

Under the law, GoldBod becomes the sole buyer, seller, assayer and exporter of all gold produced by licensed small-scale miners in Ghana, and those who do so without a license from the board will be charged criminally.

Traditionally, local and foreign companies with export licenses had been able to buy and export gold from small-scale Ghanaian miners.

On March 29, Parliament passed the Ghana Gold Board

bill, which was signed into law by President John Dramani Mahama on April 2.

Prince Kwame Minkah, spokesman for GoldBod, told The Associated Press that "the trading activities of GoldBod is expected to culminate into building the needed reserves to enhance our forex and by extension deal with gold smuggling."

The chronic challenge of illegal gold mining - known locally as "galamsey" - was a major issue during Ghana's presidential election campaign last year and a source of concern for voters, triggering protests and criticism against the outgoing government.

Ghana is the world's sixth largest gold producer, but the commodity has been increasingly mined illegally as people become more desperate to find jobs in a crumbling economy. The mining has polluted rivers and other parts of the environment, despite government actions to clamp down on the practice.

Speaking before Parliament passed the bill, Minister of Finance Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson, said: "The GoldBod will ensure that Ghana harnesses the entire gold value chain - from extraction to refining, value addition, and marketing - both locally and internationally."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi.

The visit is to "build a relationship of trust" between the two sides, with Japan requesting the U.S. side to drop the tariff measures, Hayashi said. "The government will tackle the challenge and work as one so that we can resolve the issue as soon as possible."

Japan is among the first countries to start negotiations with the U.S.

Trump last week abruptly announced a 90-day pause on the latest series of duties, which put Japan's 24% across-the-board on hold, but the 10% baseline tariff and a 25% tariff on cars, auto parts, steel and aluminum exports to the U.S. are kept in place.

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba described the situation as "a national crisis."

Ishiba, however, told a parliamentary session Monday that "haste makes waste" and that he was in no rush to conclude the ne-

Japan's chief trade negotiator to visit Washington for tariff talks this week

TOKYO, April 15, (AP): Japan's chief trade negotiator will visit the United States this week for talks aimed at convincing U.S. President Donald Trump to remove tariff measures against the East Asian country, officials said Tuesday.

Economic Revitalization Minister Ryosei Akazawa will be in Washington from Wednesday to Friday for talks with U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, according to Japanese



Ryosei Akazawa, newly appointed Minister In Charge of Economic Revitalization, arrives at the prime minister's office Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, in Tokyo. (AP)

S. Korea to boost support of semiconductor industry

SEOUL, South Korea, April 15, (AP): South Korea said Tuesday it will expand its financial support package for its crucial semiconductor industry to 33 trillion won (about \$23 billion) in part of efforts to address uncertainties posed by the Trump administration's tariff hikes.

The package represents roughly a 26% increase from the 26 trillion won (about \$18 billion) announced last year. Officials are focusing on providing low-cost loans, subsidies, and other financial incentives to stimulate investment in the semiconductor sector. The government aims to facilitate the development of advanced chips by expanding financial assistance for research and development activities and high-tech manufacturing equipment.

Officials also plan to boost spending on industrial infrastructure, including covering the larger part of the costs for building underground power transmission systems in semiconductor clusters in the cities of Yongin and Pyeongtaek, which have attracted investments from chip giants Samsung and SK Hynix.

The government said in a statement

that the plans aim to address uncertainties stemming from U.S. trade policies and to maintain the competitiveness of South Korea's chip industry. There are growing concerns that South Korean companies are falling behind rivals in Taiwan and other countries in producing high-tech chips for artificial intelligence and advanced applications, while Chinese competitors are rapidly closing the gap in memory chips.

"The U.S. government has postponed its plans for reciprocal tariffs for 90 days. There's anticipation that product-specific tariffs will be announced for sectors such as semiconductors or pharmaceuticals," South Korean Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok said in a policy meeting on Tuesday. "This is a valuable time to strengthen the competitiveness of our companies in the face of a global trade war."

South Korea plans to dispatch a delegation to the United States soon to address recent tariff hikes and other trade concerns, part of Seoul's ongoing efforts to shield the country's export-driven economy from negative impacts.

White House bars AP from Oval Office event despite court order

Jury selected for Sarah Palin's libel case against NYT

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): A jury was selected to hear a retrial of Sarah Palin's claims that The New York Times libeled her in an editorial eight years ago.

Opening statements were scheduled for Tuesday as 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 the "honest mistake."

During a jury selection process that lasted less than an hour, Judge Jed S. Rakoff in Manhattan gave jurors a brief description of the case, saying that the plaintiff was Sarah Palin and the defendant was The New York Times, "complete unknowns I'm sure."

The trial, expected to last up to two weeks, comes after the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals restored the case last year.

In February 2022, Rakoff rejected Palin's claims in a ruling issued while a jury deliberated. The judge then let jurors deliver their verdict, which also 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.

Before jury selection began Monday, the sometimes self-deprecating and humor-prone Rakoff told lawyers that the appeals court "seems to think I got it wrong in a lot of ways."

He said that on Friday, he "went back and read the entire opinion, painful though it was."

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, left the courthouse Monday without commenting.

Charlie Stadlander, 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."

"That reference was an unintended error, and quickly corrected. We're confident we will prevail and intend to vigorously defend the case," Stadlander said in a statement.



Despite a court order, a reporter and photographer from The Associated Press were barred from an Oval Office news conference on Monday with President **Donald Trump** and his counterpart from El Salvador, **Nayib Bukele**.

Last week's federal court decision forbidding the Trump administration from punishing the AP for refusing to rename the Gulf of Mexico was to take effect Monday.



Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin leaves Manhattan federal court, Monday, April 14, 2025, in New York. (AP)

The administration is appealing the decision and arguing with the news outlet over whether it needs to change anything until those appeals are exhausted.

The US Court of Appeals for the D.C. circuit set a Thursday hearing on Trump's request that any changes be delayed while case is reviewed. The AP is fighting for more access as soon as possible.

Later Monday, two AP photographers were admitted to an event honoring Ohio State's championship football team on the more spacious South Lawn. A text reporter was turned away.

Since mid-February, AP reporters and photographers have been blocked from attending events in the Oval Office, where President Donald Trump frequently addresses journalists, and on Air Force One. The AP has seen sporadic access elsewhere, and regularly covers White House press secretary **Karoline Leavitt's** briefings. Leavitt is one of three administration officials named in the AP's lawsuit.

The dispute stems from AP's decision not to follow the president's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico, although AP style does cite Trump's wish that it be called the Gulf of America. The AP argued - and US District Judge **Trevor N. McFadden** agreed last week - that the government cannot punish the news organization for exercising its right to free speech.

McFadden on Friday had rejected Trump's request for more delay in implementing the ruling; now the president is asking an appeals court for the same thing.

"We expect the White House to restore AP's participation in the (White House press) pool as of today, as provided in the injunction order," AP spokeswoman **Lauren Easton** said Monday.

The extent of AP's future access remains uncertain, even with the court decision.

People

Weinstein's retrial

Rapper convicted of murder for 2nd time

SAN ANTONIO, April 15, (AP): A Texas rapper who performed as **Tay-K** and was best known for his 2017 single "The Race" was convicted of murder for a second time after a jury found him guilty of fatally shooting a San Antonio man.

Taymor McIntyre faces up to life in prison with the possibility of parole for the killing of 23-year-old Mark Anthony Saldivar in 2017. McIntyre had already been serving a 55-year sentence over a separate fatal shooting.

Prosecutors said that McIntyre shot Saldivar after the rapper tried to rob him. Authorities said McIntyre had picked up Saldivar, who was a photographer, in a car after asking him to take photos of the rapper for a new song.



Tay-K

McIntyre's attorneys had criticized the police investigation of the shooting, alleging the case relied too much on self-serving statements from witnesses in the car when the shooting happened.

"Taymor McIntyre is not guilty of capital murder, murder, or manslaughter, and the reason for that is very simple," John Hunter, one of McIntyre's attorneys, told jurors during closing arguments last week. "You have to do it right. You have to do the work. And this case clearly demonstrates the work wasn't done."

The jury found McIntyre not guilty of capital murder, which would have meant a life sentence without the chance of parole. The jury will now hear evidence in the trial's punishment phase before deciding on a sentence.

McIntyre was also convicted in 2019 for the shooting death of 21-year-old Ethan Walker during a home invasion in 2016 in Mansfield, southeast of Fort Worth, Texas.

McIntyre recorded "The Race" while he was on the run from authorities for the home invasion.



The last time a New York City jury sat in judgment of **Harvey Weinstein**, the ex-movie studio boss was convicted of rape and sentenced to 23 years in prison.

Five years later, that landmark #MeToo verdict is gone - wiped away on appeal - and Weinstein is set to go on trial again, beginning Tuesday with jury selection.

New York's highest court, the Court of Appeals, overturned Weinstein's conviction and ordered a new trial, finding that his original one in 2020 was tainted by improper rulings and prejudicial testimony. That ruling gave Weinstein a second chance to fight the charges, and do so in a different atmosphere than his first trial, which was held in the middle of a global reckoning over sexual misconduct.

Weinstein, who has pleaded not guilty and denies that he raped or sexually assaulted anyone, is older and more frail, in and out of the hospital regularly for a variety of health problems. He's now far removed from the time when he was among the most powerful men in the movie business.

And even if he is acquitted, he will not walk free. Weinstein is also appealing a 2022 rape conviction in Los Angeles. His 16-year prison sentence in that case still stands, though his lawyers said he needs to be resentenced because the since-vacated New York conviction was a factor in how his punishment was calculated.

In the New York retrial, Judge **Curtis Farber** has set aside at least four days for jury selection and expects opening statements and the start of testimony next week.

The judge, prosecution and defense will work to whittle a massive pool of potential jurors down to the 18 people - 12 jurors and six alternates - needed for the trial by asking questions and seeking to eliminate anyone they feel can't judge the case fairly.

Weinstein, 73, is being retried on two charges from his original trial. He is accused of assaulting an aspiring actor in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and engaging in non-consensual physical conduct with a movie and TV production assistant in 2006. He is also charged with one count of criminal conduct based on an allegation from a woman who was not part of the original trial. That woman, who has not been publicly identified, alleges that Weinstein forced himself on her at a Manhattan hotel.

Selecting a jury will involve bringing in around 80 potential jurors at a time for two basic screening questions.

Television



This undated photo, issued by SVT, shows Moose in Junsele, Sweden during preparations for the livestream 'The Great Moose Migration' to document the annual Moose migration near Kullberg in northern Sweden. (AP)

Swedish slow TV draws devoted moose watchers

Live moose trek fascinates global viewers

SWEDEN, April 15, (AP): Before Swedish slow TV hit "The Great Moose Migration" began airing Tuesday, Ulla Malmgren stocked up on coffee and prepared meals so she doesn't miss a moment of the 20-day, 24-hour event.

"Sleep? Forget it. I don't sleep," she said.

Malmgren, 62, isn't alone. The show, called "Den stora älgvandringen" in Swedish, and sometimes translated as "The Great Elk Trek" in English, began in 2019 with nearly a million people watching. In 2024, the production hit 9 million viewers on SVT Play, the streaming platform for national broadcaster SVT.

The livestream kicked off a week ahead of schedule due to warm weather and early moose movement. Malmgren was ready.

From now until May 4, the livestream's remote cameras will capture dozens of moose as they swim across the Ångerman River, some 300 kilometers (187 miles) northwest of Stockholm, in the annual spring migration toward summer grazing pastures.

Not much happens for hours at a time, and fans say that's the beauty of it.

"I feel relaxed, but at the same time I'm like, 'Oh, there's a moose. Oh, what if there's a moose? I can't go to the toilet!'" said William Garp Liljefors, 20, who has collected more than 150 moose plush toys since 2020.

"The Great Moose Migration" is part of a trend that began in 2009 with Norwegian public broadcaster NRK's minute-by-minute airing of a seven-hour train trip across the southern part of the country.

The slow TV style of programming has spread, with productions in the United Kingdom, China and elsewhere. The central Dutch city of Utrecht, for example, installed a "fish doorbell" on a river lock that lets livestream viewers alert authorities to fish being held up as they migrate to spawning grounds.

Annette Hill, a professor of media and communications at Jönköping University in Sweden, said slow TV has roots in reality television but lacks the staging and

therefore feels more authentic for viewers. The productions allow the audience to relax and watch the journey unfold.

"It became, in a strange way, gripping because nothing catastrophic is happening, nothing spectacular is happening, in that minute-by-minute moment."

As an expert and a fan of "The Great Moose Migration," Hill said the livestream helps her slow down her day by following the natural rhythms of spring.

"This is definitely a moment to have a calm, atmospheric setting in my own home, and I really appreciate it," she said.

Effect

The calming effect extends to the crew, according to Johan Erhag, SVT's project manager for "The Great Moose Migration."

"Everyone who works with it goes down in their normal stress," he said.

The moose have walked the route for thousands of years, making it easy for the crew to know where to lay some 20,000 meters (almost 12 miles) of cable and position 26 remote cameras and seven night cameras. A drone is also used.

The crew of up to 15 people works out of SVT's control room in Umeå, producing the show at a distance to avoid interfering with the migration.

SVT won't say how much the production costs, but Erhag said it's cheap when accounting for the 506 hours of footage aired last year.

Erhag said Swedes have always been fascinated by the roughly 300,000 moose roaming in their woods. The

Scandinavian country's largest animal is known as "King of the Forest." A bull moose can reach 210 centimeters (6 feet 10 inches) at shoulder height and weigh 450 kilograms (992 pounds).

Despite their size, the herbivores are typically shy and solitary.

"We actually don't see it very often. You often see it when you're out driving maybe once or twice in your life," Erhag said. "I think that's one thing why it has been so, so popular. And then you bring in the nature to everyone's living room."

Hanna Sandberg, 36, first began watching the show in 2019, though she didn't spot any moose. She tuned in the following year, finally saw some and got hooked.

"You can watch them and be a part of their natural habitat in a way that you could never be otherwise," she said.

After hours of showing an empty forest, a camera captures footage of a moose approaching the riverbank. Suddenly, slow TV turns urgent.

The push alert hits SVT's app - "Första älgarna i bild!" which translates to "First moose on camera!" - as viewers worldwide tune in. The livestream's chat explodes as commenters type encouragement for the animal, now making its way into the water.

"I would actually like to be a little fly on the wall in every household that watches the moose migration. Because I think there is about a million people saying about the same thing: 'Go on! Yes, you can do it!'" Malmgren said.

Mega-fans like Malmgren, who is in a Facebook group of 76,000-plus viewers, are committed to watching as many hours as possible.

"I was late to school because I saw moose and my teacher was like, 'What, you saw moose in the city?'" And I was like, 'No, it's on the TV,'" Garp Liljefors said.

Malmgren said friends and family have learned not to bother her when the moose are on the move.

"When someone asks me, 'What are you doing? Oh, never mind, it's the great migration,'" she said. "They know."



These undated photos show preparations in Junsele, Sweden for the livestream 'The Great Moose Migration' to document the annual moose migration near Kullberg in northern Sweden. (AP)

‘Mega-hit Broadway musical gave me life’

Odom Jr. to reprise his role in ‘Hamilton’ this fall

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): Leslie Odom Jr., one of the original cast members of the mega-hit Broadway musical “Hamilton,” is coming back for another shot, a role he says “gave me life.”

Odom, who played Aaron Burr opposite Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Alexander Hamilton, will return to his Tony Award-winning role at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Sept. 9 through Nov. 23.

“I was born on the stage of the Richard Rodgers in so many ways. It gave me life in a way,” he tells The Associated Press. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

Odom and Miranda both left the show in July 2016 after the same performance. Odom had been with “Hamilton” since it first began performances in early 2015 off-Broadway.

“I look back on it fondly, I do,” he says. “It was the start of so much for me. It was the start of a career that I always dreamed of. It’s just the beginning. It’s the genesis.”

He estimates he played Burr some 500 times, but it never got boring: “It still had revelation for me, and it still gave me reason to look a little deeper and focus a little harder.”

When he returns, he’ll be with a new company of actors and will bring to the audience his willingness to discover in the moment, something he says he learned doing

“Hamilton.”

“I want them to see something exciting and alive. And the best way for me to do that is to be open and present in that moment,” he adds.

Odom earned another Tony nomination last year for the comedy “Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch” by Ossie Davis.

After “Hamilton,” he was on the big screen in “Glass Onion” with Daniel Craig and “The Many Saints of Newark” with Alessandro Nivola, and portrayed Sam Cooke in “One Night in Miami.”

He lent his voice to the animated series “Central Park” and starred opposite Kate Hudson in Sia’s “Music.” His TV credits include “Abbott Elementary” and “Blue’s Clues & You.”

Odom, who studied at Carnegie Mellon University, became the youngest cast member in the Broadway company of “Rent.” Before “Hamilton,” he appeared on TV in the series “Smash” and “CSI: Miami,” in the film “Red Tails” and on Broadway in “Leap of Faith.”

During the pandemic, Disney+ broadcast a filmed version of the original Broadway cast of “Hamilton,” who Miranda has called “an incredible ’28 Yankees of actors”.

The Broadway show won 11 Tony Awards, including best new musical, best book and best score. The cast album has been a blockbuster, and the show has toured to

packed houses.

The musical charts the rise and fall of statesman Hamilton and stresses his orphan, immigrant roots - “Immigrants. We get the job done!” is one line that gets huge applause - as well as his almost Greek tragedy of a fall, fed by ambition.

Based on a biography by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ron Chernow and developed during the presidency of the first Black president, the show was optimistic and ambitious, tweaking Broadway traditions but respecting them, too. Odom says he’s rereading Chernow’s biography to get ready.

Many in the cast alongside Odom were relatively unknown to the wider world when they hit the stage: Daveed Diggs, Renée Elise Goldsberry, Jonathan Groff, Christopher Jackson, Okieriete Onaodowan, Anthony Ramos and Phillipa Soo. Even Miranda wasn’t yet a brand name.

Odom, who shoots Hamilton dead, sang on many of the musical’s best songs, including “Wait for It” “Dear Theodosia” “The Room Where It Happens” and “Your Obedient Servant.”

He says he often sings the songs during concerts but will have to relearn the score. “One of the most important gifts that it gave me was this association with some recognizable tunes that people like to hear,” he says.



Tony Award winner Leslie Odom Jr. poses for a portrait in New York on June 17, 2016. (AP)

Celebrities



This image provided by Blue Origin shows from left: Jeff Bezos, Kerianne Flynn, Katy Perry, Lauren Sanchez, Aisha Bowe, Gayle King, Amanda Nguyen, Sarah Knights, director of Blue Origin’s astronaut office, and Blue Origin CEO Dave Limp. (AP)

Perry sings ‘What a Wonderful World’ in space

All-female celebrity crew makes space history

CALIFORNIA, April 15, (AP): Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin launched his fiancée Lauren Sanchez into space Monday with an all-female celebrity crew that included Katy Perry and Gayle King.

It was the latest wave in space tourism, where more of the rich and famous than ever before - or lucky and well-connected - can enter the zero-gravity realm traditionally dominated by professional astronauts.

The New Shepard rocket blasted off on the quick up-and-down trip from West Texas. The fringes of space beckoned 66 miles (107 kilometers) up and provided a few precious minutes of weightlessness.

Sanchez, a helicopter pilot and former TV journalist, invited the others along for the 10-minute, fully automated flight, packing on the star power with singer-songwriter Perry and “CBS Mornings” co-host King. Moved by the views of Earth below, Perry said she couldn’t resist singing “What a Wonderful World” in space.

Also sharing the ride were film producer Kerianne Flynn; Aisha Bowe, a former NASA engineer who started her own companies to promote science education; and Amanda Nguyen, a scientist who studied planets around other stars and now advocates for survivors of sexual violence.

Blue Origin declined to say how much the flight cost or who paid what. The trip came two months before Sanchez and Bezos marry in Venice.

It was the 11th human spaceflight for the Washington state-based company, founded by Bezos in 2000 after making a fortune with Amazon. Bezos strapped in for Blue Origin’s first space tourist flight in 2021 and accompanied the latest crew to the pad.

The celebrity launch was the nation’s first spaceflight where

women filled each seat. The only other all-female crew in 64 years of human spaceflight was back in 1963. That’s when Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova launched by herself, becoming the first woman in space. Tereshkova spent three days off the planet.

Even after the latest launch, women represent barely 15% of the more than 700 people who have traveled into space. Sanchez said she deliberately chose women to launch with her, each of them eager to inspire both the young and old to dream big, and even commissioned special flight suits.

Private

The launch brought out VIPs to West Texas including Oprah Winfrey; Kris Jenner and other members of the Kardashian family; former NASA astronaut Mae Jemison, who became the first Black woman in space in 1992; and several women who previously have flown on private flights. Winfrey, a close friend of King, wiped away tears when the capsule reached space and the passengers were heard marveling at the moon and shouting with joy.

As the women were buckling up for the ride back, Perry broke into song. Despite urging by her crewmates, she resisted singing “Roar” or her other tunes and instead chose “What a Wonderful World.”

“It’s not about me. It’s not about singing my songs,” Perry said following the flight. “It’s about a collective energy in there. It’s about us.” At a news conference later, she stressed, “We weren’t just taking up space. We were making space for the future.”

Bezos opened the capsule’s hatch minutes after touchdown, embracing Sanchez, the first one out. As they emerged, Perry and King knelt and kissed the ground. “Oh my God, that was amazing,” said King, who considers herself an anxious airplane

flier.

Three hours later, Sanchez said she was still trying to process everything. “Profound is like the one word I would use,” she said.

This wasn’t the first Blue Origin launch with marquee names. “Star Trek” actor William Shatner caught a lift to space with Blue Origin in 2021 at age 90, soon after Bezos’ inaugural trip. He was followed by former New York Giants defensive end and TV host Michael Strahan and Laura Shepard Churchley, the eldest daughter of Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard, for whom the rocket is named. Two aviation pioneers who missed out on space when they were younger - Wally Funk and Ed Dwight - also rocketed away at ages 82 and 90, respectively.

Most of Blue Origin’s passengers - 58 counting the latest launch - have been business or science types, TV hosts or YouTube stars. Ticket prices are not disclosed.

The Russian Space Agency also has launched its share of space tourists, beginning with a California financier in 2001. Two decades later, a Russian actress filmed aboard the International Space Station.

Elon Musk’s SpaceX also sells multi-day trips to private customers. SpaceX’s first client to fly, billionaire tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman already has launched twice and performed the first private spacewalk. He’s now set to become NASA’s next administrator if confirmed by the Senate.

Chinese-born bitcoin investor Chun Wang just returned from the first spaceflight to carry people over the north and south poles. Wang picked up the whole SpaceX tab for himself and three polar explorers for an undisclosed sum.

“In this exciting new era of commercial spaceflight, the dream of becoming an astronaut is no longer limited to a select few,” Wang said via X last week.

A whodunit with Dorothy, Blanche, Rose and Sophia

‘Golden Girls’ inspired ‘cozy mystery’ delivers a dose of nostalgia

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): In 1985, a sitcom about four women who were considered past their prime debuted in prime time. “The Golden Girls” turned out to be a ratings hit for NBC for seven seasons. After 40 years, people of all ages are still thanking Bea Arthur, Rue McClanahan, Estelle Getty and Betty White for being their friend. The comedy continues to find fans on Hulu and has spawned a pop-up restaurant and a fan convention. A whodunnit read - “Murder By Cheesecake: A Golden Girls Cozy Mystery” doesn’t seem like a far-fetched tie-in.

The central mystery arises when

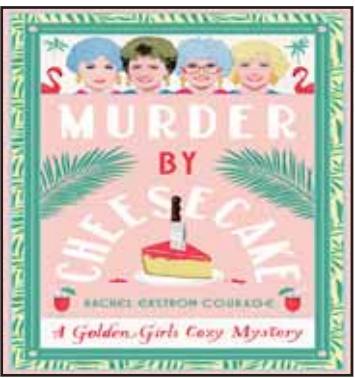
a man Dorothy meets through a video dating service turns up dead in a hotel freezer face-down in cheesecake - a macabre use of the characters’ favorite dessert. It’s the hotel where Rose is days away from staging a giant wedding for relatives from her often-mentioned hometown of St. Olaf, Minnesota. The homicide, of course, throws everything into disarray.

Because Dorothy was the last person to see the man - who had jilted her mid-date - she becomes suspect No. 1 with Miami police. Meanwhile, Rose is trying to keep the nuptials of her younger cousin and her fiancé on track with all the

required St. Olafian customs.

Be forewarned: “Murder By Cheesecake” feels more like a mix of “Murder, She Wrote” and “Miami Vice” than a “Golden Girls” episode. Rarely do the characters talk in sitcom rhythms of two lines, a beat and punchline. Sarcasm and sass were what made the original series sparkle. In this genre, some of that is there but not as sharp as on the hitcom. Sophia, known as a comeback queen, sometimes comes off more mean than amusing toward daughter Dorothy.

Still, the plot does a decent job of leading readers on a twisty chase to figure out who the victim



This cover image released by Hyperion Avenue shows ‘Murder by Cheesecake: A Golden Girls Cozy Mystery’ by Rachel Ekstrom Courage. (AP)

was and who the murderer is. The women decide to play amateur detectives to clear Dorothy’s name. And it’s a hoot while reading to picture it: Dorothy, Rose, Sophia and Blanche donning disguises and clumsily snooping in the hotel manager’s office and the victim’s home. Even though their climactic showdown with the culprit seems pretty outrageous, it’s fun to see four “old ladies” get an action-hero moment.

There’s no doubt author Rachel Ekstrom Courage is a true “Golden Girls” devotee. She takes the time to describe even the furniture in the women’s home to bring us fans

back to that familiar kitchen and living room. References to plots and recurring characters from the show are sprinkled throughout the pages.

The novel is primarily told through the angst-ridden thoughts of Dorothy and Rose. Unfortunately, Blanche and Sophia feel more like sidekicks. But, it’s likely that if this book is the first in a series, then those two will be at the center of things next time.

With the show’s cast all deceased, “Murder By Cheesecake” is an especially pleasant, breezy way to have “the girls” back again for a little while.

Variety

NEW YORK: A federal prosecutor in New York said Monday that lawyers for music mogul **Sean “Diddy” Combs** are looking for reasons to delay a sex trafficking trial slated to start in three weeks.

The latest version of the indictment against Combs, 55, added two new charges this month but he still hadn’t entered a plea, prosecutors said. That, plus possible delays from the routine process for sharing evidence with both sides, called discovery, made prosecutors think he might be stalling for time, Assistant US Attorney Christy Slavik said.

Combs has been locked up without bail since his September arrest. He entered a not guilty plea again at Monday’s hearing, but otherwise remained impassive in the courtroom.

Judge Arun Subramanian told Combs’ lawyers they have until Wednesday to request a pause in the trial to give time for discovery.

“We are a freight train moving toward trial,” he said.

Marc Agnifilo, representing Combs, said the defense might ask for a “very short” two-week adjournment over discovery issues, including the government’s failure to ask a key witness to turn over 200,000 of her emails rather than just letting her highlight the ones she thinks are important.

The latest version of the indictment, returned on April 4, added two new charges and accused Combs of using force, fraud or coercion to compel a woman to engage in commercial sex acts from at least 2021 to 2024.

It also alleges that Combs was involved in transporting the woman - identified only as “Victim-2” - and other people, including commercial sex workers, to engage in prostitution during the same period. (AP)



Combs

Safeguarding ecosystems

Qatar’s nature reserves: Environmental mission

This is the first in a series of articles on State of Qatar’s nature reserves, environment and sustainability.

□ □ □

DOHA, April 15, (KUNA): The environmental issue enjoys increasing attention from all countries worldwide, as well as from international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, in addition, protecting the environment, preserving its elements, and preserving its various components are a priority at all national, regional, and international levels.

The State of Qatar has placed the environment at the center of its attention, adopting measures, mechanisms, laws, legislation, and strategies to ensure its protection and preservation, keeping it clean, safe, healthy, and free of all forms of pollutants.

This has become an ingrained culture in Qatar’s society and a common behavior among all citizens, residents, and visitors, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Qatar boasts numerous natural landmarks and a wide variety of wildlife, land, and marine environments. These include nature reserves that encompass diverse ecosystems, where visitors can connect with nature and explore diverse animals, plants, environments, and habitats, including sand and sea beaches.

These reserves are designated for the conservation of specific species of plants or animals that are at risk of extinction, in addition to their role in preserving the country’s ecological balance.

Qatar’s nature reserves are also of great importance as they aim to protect endangered species, preserve natural habitats, and enhance the sustainability of ecosystems.

In this context, the State of Qatar has given great importance to wildlife by preserving, developing, and protecting it from extinction.

Amiri Decree Law No. 19 of 2004 was issued regarding the protection of wildlife and its natural habitats.

Establish

Qatar has also sought to establish several conservation areas and nature reserves for the purpose of protecting and maintaining ecosystems and their components. The State of Qatar has witnessed a remarkable expansion in nature reserves, as they now cover approximately 25.73 percent of the country’s area, with plans to reach 30 percent by 2030.

In his remarks to Qatar News Agency (QNA), Director of the Natural Reserves Department at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Saleh Al-Kuwari said that nature reserves in the State of Qatar are divided into two main types, terrestrial and marine.

There are a total of 12 reserves, in addition to the Umm Al-Sheif Reserve, which was approved as a nature reserve at the end of 2024.

Nature reserves include the Al Shahaniya Reserve, one of the first nature reserves established by the State of Qatar, located in the Al-Shahaniya area, 45 kilometers from Doha, central Qatar, with an area of 12 square kilometers. Al-Shahaniya Reserve was allocated in 1979 as a special reserve for the endangered Arabian Oryx, and the reserve also includes a barn to house ostriches.

Another nature reserve is Al-Mashabiya Reserve, located southwest of Qatar, to the southeast of Abu Samra.

It houses rare animals such as the Al-Reem Gazelle and the Arabian Oryx (Al-Wadihi). Officially opened in 1997, the reserve covers an area of approximately 54 square kilometers and was established to resettle the Arabian Oryx (Al-Wadihi), Al-Reem Gazelle, and other endangered

wildlife. Some natural grasses, seasonal herbs, and wild trees grow in the reserve among the sand dunes.

Al-Reem Reserve is one of the largest reserves in Qatar, covering approximately 16 percent of Qatar’s land area and boasting natural terrain that supports the repopulation of wildlife.

Al-Reem Reserve is located in the northwest of the State of Qatar, and is considered a nature reserve according to Law No. 7 of 2005.

It is located 65 kilometers west of Doha, on the western coast. The reserve area covers approximately 16 percent of Qatar’s total land area, and is characterized by its high limestone formations along the western coast. The Brouq area is considered one of the best areas ever for projects to resettle wildlife, such as gazelles and ostriches.

Recognized

This reserve has been recognized by the UNESCO International Coordinating Council of the Man and Biosphere Program. It is rich in orchids and holds a special place in the hearts of the people of Qatar due to its extensive vegetation cover.

In addition, the marine reserves include the Al-Thakhira Reserve, as the Al-Thakhira area was considered a natural reserve according to Resolution No. 6 of 2006, and is home to mangrove trees and coral reefs.

The reserve is located in the northeast of the State of Qatar, about 64 kilometers from Doha, and includes a marine side that includes Um Al Far Island and the natural mangrove forest, and a land side that includes gravel lands, sabkhas (salty and limestone), and valleys.

This region is distinguished by its rich marine diversity and abundance of evergreen mangrove trees, which grow in the salty sea waters of summer and winter. It is almost the only place where trees grow naturally.

Among the marine reserves is the Khor Al-Udeid Reserve, known as the “Inland Sea,” which represents a unique environment for supporting diverse marine life.

The reserve is one of the natural reserves based on Resolution No. 1 of 2007. It is located 80 kilometers southeast of Doha. It is usually referred to as the inland sea, as it is located at the southernmost point of Qatar, and its area is approximately 1,833 square kilometers.

Khor Al-Udeid is one of the most significant areas for mammals and is an exceptional natural environment of special importance and attraction in Qatar. It contains high sand dunes and represents a unique combination of geological terrain and environmental factors, creating natural environments that support unique species of animals and plants. This has led to the emergence of a natural landscape and ecosystem unique to Qatar, deserving of the highest levels of protection for the natural environment.

According to Resolution No. 1 of 2006, the Al-Areeq Reserve was established in the southwestern region of the State of Qatar, 80 kilometers away from Doha. It is characterized by valleys and highlands and is also characterized by the presence of several types of plants. It was chosen as a natural reserve to preserve its vegetation cover from overgrazing.

As for the Lusail Reserve, it is also considered a natural reserve, according to Law No. 7 of 2005. The reserve is located northeast of Doha, and its area is 36 square kilometers.

The Lusail Reserve was selected to implement the objectives of the biodiversity strategy and to limit rapid urban expansion on the eastern coast of the State of Qatar. The Lusail area is one of the largest historical sites and contains distinctive geological features.

To be continued

Conference to offer networking opportunities for professionals

Kuwait hosts 2nd pharma conference on April 20

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The 2nd Kuwait Pharmaceutical Advancement Conference (KIPAC), organized by the Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association, with extensive participation from local, regional, and international entities, is set to begin on April 20.

Conference Chair Dr. Ahmad Taqi announced that the event will be held for two days - April 20 and April 21 - with representatives from various Kuwaiti pharmaceutical sectors, including Kuwait University, the Dasman Diabetes Institute, the Public Authority for Applied Education and

Training, and several entities from the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Taqi explained that the conference will include 18 scientific lectures and seven workshops, covering the latest achievements and developments in various fields of pharmacy, including regulatory, professional, and clinical aspects. The sessions will also focus on educational programs related to pharmacy practice, with the aim of highlighting the current challenges and promoting communication and knowledge exchange between pharmacists and experts, all with the goal of advancing the profession. The conference will include an exhibition with over 50 academic, professional, and scientific organizations from Kuwait,

GCC countries, and international institutions. The exhibition will showcase the latest advancements in pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical technologies, and medical supplies.

Dr. Taqi affirmed the organizing committee’s commitment to diversify the conference program to involve a broad range of expert pharmacists, and ensure all entities benefit from the discussions.

He emphasized that the conference offers a unique opportunity for pharmacists from various sectors to collaborate, highlighting its fully pharmaceutical organization and workforce, adding that this approach enriches the experience and contributes to the conference’s continuous growth year after year.

Overcrowded and underprepared

Long ER stays plague the US, and aging population could worsen it

AURORA, Ill., April 15, (AP): At her mother’s home in Illinois, Tracy Balhan flips through photos of her dad, Bill Speer. In one picture, he’s smiling in front of a bucket of sweating beers and wearing a blue T-shirt that reads, “Pops. The man. The myth. The legend.”

Balhan’s father died last year after struggling with dementia. During one episode late in his life, he became so agitated that he tried to exit a moving car. Balhan recalls her dad - larger than life, steady and loving - yelling at the top of his lungs.

His geriatric psychiatrist recommended she take him to the emergency room at Endeavor Health’s Edward Hospital in the Chicago suburb of Naperville because of its connection to an inpatient behavioral care unit. She hoped it would help get him a quick referral.



Boni Speer, (left), and her daughter, Tracy Balhan, hold a photo of Bill Speer, Tracy’s father, in Aurora, Ill., on March 14, 2025. (AP)

often pay more for. Experts also warn the boarding issue will worsen as the number of people 65 and older in the U.S. with dementia grows in the coming decades.

Hospital bed capacity in the U.S. may not keep up. Between 2003 and 2023, the number of staffed hospital beds was static, even as emergency department visits shot up 30% to 40% over that same period.

For older people with dementia, boarding can be especially dangerous, Chicago-based geriatric psychiatrist Dr. Shafi Siddiqui said. One research letter published in June 2024 in the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at more than 200,000 patients and found long ER stays could be linked to a higher risk of dementia patients developing delirium - a temporary state of mental confusion and sometimes hallucinations.

“People need to be enraged about

(boarding),” said Dr. Vicki Norton, president-elect of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine.

National emergency physician groups have lobbied for years to keep boarding under control. While they’ve made some progress, nothing substantial has changed, despite concerns that it leads to worse patient outcomes.

Dr. Alison Haddock, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians, said that’s because boarding is a failing of the entire health care system that manifests in the ER, so solving it demands a systemic approach.

In 2003, there were 965,000 staffed hospital beds compared to 913,000 in 2023, according to the American Hospital Association. And another JAMA research letter published in February shows there are 16% fewer staffed beds in the U.S. post-pandemic.

Kuwait keeps up with global medical advancements

Kuwait sets record with 5 remote robotic surgeries

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: Kuwait recorded an unprecedented medical achievement worldwide after the Ministry of Health successfully performed five consecutive remote robotic surgeries using the ‘Telerobotic Surgery’ technology from abroad -- a distance of more than 7,000 kilometers, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The ministry disclosed in a post on the social networking site ‘X’ that Kuwaiti surgeon Dr. Saad Al-Dosari performed the surgeries from Shanghai, China on patients at Sabah Al-Ahmad Center in Kuwait, using the advanced surgical robot ‘MedBot’. This achievement is a new world record, as it is the largest number of consecutive remote robotic surgeries performed within a short period.

The ministry stated that the five patients, who underwent the surgeries, were suffering from cancerous tumors in the

kidney and prostate. It affirmed that the technology provided extreme precision and three-dimensional vision, while reducing the risk of bleeding and accelerating recovery; showcasing the country’s advanced medical infrastructure and the competence of its national workforce.

This achievement reflects the Kuwaiti health system’s ability to keep pace with global developments in the medical field. The number of robotic surgeries performed in Kuwait has exceeded 1,800 to date, and the number of robotic surgical devices in Ministry of Health hospitals now exceeds seven.

The ministry commended the achievement, emphasizing that this success embodies the efficiency of the Kuwaiti medical sector; and reinforces the country’s ambition to become an advanced medical center regionally and globally.

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Pelicans fire basketball operations chief Griffin

Suns fire Budenholzer after one dismal season with high-priced roster

PHOENIX, April 15, (AP): The Phoenix Suns have parted ways with veteran coach Mike Budenholzer following one dismal season that featured a fast start before a maddening slide out of postseason contention for a high-priced roster that included Kevin Durant, Devin Booker and Bradley Beal.

The Suns made the unsurprising announcement on Monday, one day after the franchise finished with a 36-46 record which put them 11th in the Western Conference. They lost nine of their last 10 games, failing to qualify for the play-in tournament.

“Competing at the highest level remains our goal, and we failed to meet expectations this season,” the team’s short statement said. “Our fans deserve better. Change is needed.”

The 55-year-old Budenholzer was hired in May, replacing Frank Vogel, who also had a one-year tenure that ended in disappointment. Coach Bud - an Arizona native - won an NBA title with the Milwaukee Bucks in 2021, beating the Suns in six games in the Finals, and the hope was he could finally bring a championship to the desert.

He didn’t even come close.

The season started with optimism after the Suns

jumped to an 8-1 record, but Durant went down with a calf strain that knocked the team into a tailspin. Even after the 15-time All-Star returned to the lineup a few weeks later, Phoenix was never able to recapture its early momentum.

The New Orleans Pelicans fired basketball operations chief David Griffin on Monday, ending a six-year chapter during which the club drafted former Duke superstar Zion Williamson but still struggled to win consistently with three different coaches. Griffin, whose title was executive vice president of basketball operations, leaves his post one day after a 115-100 loss to Oklahoma City that extended the injury-plagued club’s season-ending skid to seven games.

“This was a difficult decision, but one that I feel is necessary at this time to bring a fresh approach to our front office and build a culture that will deliver sustainable success,” Pelicans owner Gayle Benson said in a written statement.

The Pelicans’ 21-61 record - fourth worst in the NBA this season - was the franchise’s second-worst mark since arriving in New Orleans in 2002 and worst since the 2004-05 season, when the club, then called the Hornets, went 18-64.

But the Pelicans’ failures this season - their first in the past four without a postseason berth - appeared less tied to the level of talent on the roster than the health of all of their starters and even prominent reserves.

Injuries were so rampant that Griffin never got to watch top players on the team he assembled last summer all play together under the direction of Willie Green, the coach he hired four years ago.

Green’s future remains uncertain and could be decided by Griffin’s yet-to-be-named replacement. A person with knowledge of the situation confirmed Monday that the Pelicans have had discussions to gauge Louisiana native Joe Dumars’ interest in the job, a detail first reported by ESPN. Dumars is a former NBA executive of the year and currently an executive vice president in the league office. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because neither side announced the talks publicly.

“I haven’t had any discussions, any talks yet,” Green said Sunday when asked about his future with the club. “I didn’t do great. I have to take full ownership of where we are as a team. We failed. I failed.”



Phoenix Suns head coach Mike Budenholzer calls to his players during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Phoenix Suns in Boston. (AP)

Chennai ends longest losing streak after beating high-flying Lucknow



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

Singh Dhoni proved coach claim wrong

LUCKNOW, India, April 15, (AP): Chennai Super Kings ended their longest ever losing streak by stopping the Lucknow Super Giants’ three-match winning run in the Indian Premier League.

A day after Chennai coach Stephen Fleming said Mahendra Singh Dhoni didn’t have a magic wand, the new captain proved the claim wrong by scoring a robust 26 not out off 11 balls to get them over the finish line with three balls left. He was supported by impact player Shivam Dube, 43 not out.

Chennai scored 168-5 after Lucknow’s lowest total of the season 166-7, winning by five wickets after five straight losses.

Lucknow clawed its way back through spinners Ravi Bishnoi and Digvesh Rathi in the middle overs. But in the death overs, Bishnoi, 2-18, wasn’t given a fourth and final over. Instead, the pacers were, and Dhoni and Dube punished them in a 57-run partnership off 28 balls.

Shardul Thakur was notably expensive with figures of 0-56.

After the tight win, five-time cham-



Chennai Super Kings' Anshul Kamboj appeals successfully for the wicket of Lucknow Super Giants' Nicholas Pooran during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Chennai Super Kings at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, India. (AP)

pion Chennai remained at the bottom of the table and Lucknow was fourth.

Opening batter Shaik Rasheed replaced Devon Conway and smashed six fours in his IPL debut. Along with Rachin Ravindra’s 37, they gave Chennai’s chase a brisk start of 52 off 29 balls.

But when they were dismissed, Chennai’s brittle middle order was exposed again.

Bishnoi and Rathi dismissed Rahul Tripathi, Ravindra Jadeja and Vijay Shankar for single-digit scores before

Dhoni joined Dube and Chennai still needing 56 off the final five overs.

Before the match, Fleming tried to temper expectations of a turnaround in Chennai’s fortunes from making the veteran Dhoni the replacement captain for the injured Ruturaj Gaikwad. But Dhoni’s cameo of four boundaries and a six were exactly what Chennai needed.

Dhoni brought down the target to 31 off three overs when he smashed a one-handed six to Thakur’s final ball of the 17th over.

Thakur was smacked for 19 runs in the 19th over in which Bishnoi couldn’t hold onto a regulation catch of Dhoni. Dube sealed the win with a cover-driven boundary off Avesh Khan.

Chennai fast bowlers Khaleel Ahmed and Anshul Kamboj clipped Lucknow early when they dismissed Aiden Markram and the dangerous Nicholas Pooran.

Tripathi grabbed a stunning two-handed catch over his shoulders after he sprinted from the covers when Markram top-edged Khaleel in the first over. Kamboj pinned Pooran plumb leg before while bowling round the wicket.

Rishabh Pant, who has been struggling for runs since taking over the reins of the Lucknow captaincy, started confidently until Afghanistan wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad bowled 10 dot balls to the left-hander.

Pant opened up after reaching 40 off 39 balls when he smashed successive sixes off fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana and raised a 42-ball half-century. But he fell to the Sri Lanka pacer in the final over when he top-edged a slower ball.

Cameos from Mitchell Marsh and Ayush Badoni were undone by Jadeja, Abdul Samad was run out in the final over, and Lucknow’s total was about 10-15 runs below par.

Brignone’s first aim is to walk before thinking of next yr’s Oly

MILAN, April 15, (AP): Italian skier Federica Brignone’s first aim is to walk again before she begins to even think of competing in next year’s home Olympics.

Brignone was discharged from the hospital only last Tuesday, five days after breaking multiple bones in her left leg and tearing her ACL in a giant slalom crash.

The injuries raised questions about 34-year-old Brignone’s chances of competing at the Olympics in 10 months. The World Cup overall champion was expected to be one of Italy’s stars in the Milan-Cortina Games.

“I don’t know. We’re not doctors and they don’t know,” Brignone said on Monday, when asked about when she was expecting to be able to put on her skis again. “Everything depends on how the physiotherapy goes ... on how my body responds. But before four or five months it’s impossible and that’s if everything goes well. “Step by step. First, I’m thinking about walking again, and then we’ll see about the rest.”

Brignone reiterated that her issues will become clearer when she has more tests 45 days after the operation.

Brignone was nevertheless smiling as she spoke at a media day organized by the Italian winter sports federation, appearing via video link ahead of her first physiotherapy session.

“I’m a super positive person. What happened to me isn’t nice but it happened and I can’t go back in time,” she said. “So it’s useless to think negatively. I’m just trying to think positively and get through it the best way possible. “I want to work for small aims, small steps and I’ll try to give my utmost to get better as quick as possible and in the best way possible.”

Brignone also published an Instagram post on Monday of pictures of her with the overall crystal globe and ending with a photo of her injury, with a long line of stitches or staples running down her leg.

Last season was the best in Brignone’s career and the crash happened at the Italian championships in what was meant to be a celebratory final week of competition.

Brignone, also the giant slalom winner at the world championships in February, won 10 World Cups across three different disciplines (five giant slaloms, three super-Gs and two downhill) this season. At 34, she became the oldest woman to win a World Cup race.

Her teammate, Sofia Goggia, who has had numerous injuries, got in touch with Brignone immediately after the incident. “We spoke that very day she hurt herself,” Goggia said at the media day in Milan. “I called the federation’s doctor to ask about her and they were together at the hospital so he passed her to me.



BAGHDAD, April 15, (AP): Iraq announced the dismissal of head coach Jesus Casas with just two games remaining in Asian qualification for the 2026 World Cup.

In a statement, the Iraq Football Association said that the decision was due to a “serious breach of contractual obligations,” from the Spanish boss and his assistants, “including their departure from Iraq without official permission . . .”

The federation added the action was taken based on Article 14 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfers of Players. This article states that a party may terminate a contract “without consequences . . . where there is just cause.”

There have been reports in domestic media that the Iraq federation decided to dismiss Casas, a former assistant with the Spain national team and appointed in November 2022, in March following two disappointing World Cup qualification results against the bottom two teams in the six-team Group B.

Iraq drew 2-2 at home to Kuwait and five days later had a dramatic last-minute loss to the Palestinian team to drop out of the two automatic qualification

places in the group.

Now the team is third behind leader South Korea and Jordan in second. Those two are the next opponents in June, meaning that Iraq has to win both to progress to its first World Cup since 1986.

The top two teams from each of the three groups in the third round of Asian qualification progress automatically to the tournament, to be co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

There is still hope if Iraq finishes in third or fourth place it will then enter a further round of international qualification with six teams playing off for two more World Cup places.

Evenepoel returning to cycling this week

BRUSSELS, April 15, (AP): Double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel will return in the Brabantse Pijl race at home in Belgium on Friday after a serious crash last year.

Evenepoel, who swept

gold in the road race and the time trial at last year’s Paris Olympics, sustained multiple fractures, a dislocated collarbone and lung contusions in December when he crashed into a vehicle while training in Belgium.

“I am counting the days until I can race with the guys again for the first time in more than six months,” Evenepoel said in a statement provided by his Soudal Quick-Step team on Tuesday. “I’ve worked hard all these months, I’ve been on a solid training camp in Spain, and I feel good and motivated for Brabantse. I’m not going

there with any specific goals, as the most important thing will be to get the race rhythm back after all this time.”

The 25-year-old Evenepoel crashed into the open door of a postal van on Dec. 3. The impact was heavy enough to break the frame of his bicycle.

Evenepoel’s main goal this season is the Tour de France in July. He was third last year at cycling’s biggest race, before going on to become the first cyclist to sweep both road golds at an Olympics.

A two-time world champion, Evenepoel also won the Spanish Vuelta in 2022.

Nuggets boss says firings of coach, GM were months in the making

DENVER, April 15, (AP): Denver Nuggets boss Josh Kroenke said Monday that he twice balked at firing the winningest coach in franchise history and the general manager who connected the final pieces of the team’s only championship puzzle before finally canning them last week with just three games left in the season.

Kroenke held off in November to give the team time to jell and an eight-game winning streak heading into the All-Star break tempered his desire to part ways in February with coach Michael Malone and GM Calvin Booth.

Kroenke finally fired both men last week in a move that stunned the league because the Nuggets had already secured a seventh consecutive playoff berth and were less than two years removed from the city’s first NBA championship parade.

“So, what would be crazier, me doing what I did last week or doing it on an eight-game winning streak?” Kroenke asked.

Only one of those eight wins leading into the All-Star break came against a team that would make the playoffs, the Orlando Magic, the No. 7 seed in the East.

“I think that those eight games masked a trend that was going on behind closed doors that ultimately started to really affect the end of our season,” Kroenke said.



Denver Nuggets team president Josh Kroenke responds to questions at a news conference in Denver about the firing of the team’s general manager and head coach last week. (AP)

Kroenke said he also seriously considered a change around Thanksgiving with the Nuggets off to a so-so start and “I was really feeling like things weren’t headed in the right direction.” But he said he held off then to give the team time to settle in.

Despite leading Denver to its first title in 47 years, Malone and Booth long clashed over roster philosophies, a discord that led to a toxicity in the organization that began to affect the team’s fortunes and which led Kroenke to fire them both.

The Nuggets won all three games under interim coach David Adelman to secure a third consecutive 50-win season and the fourth seed in the West, where they’ll open at home Saturday against the fifth-seeded Los Angeles Clippers.

Kroenke said he’ll commence a search for both positions after the season but he demurred when asked if he wanted to have a GM in place before hiring a head coach: “My thoughts aren’t there because this season’s not over.”

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F1 heads to Saudi Arabia

Concerns mount at Red Bull after Verstappen’s ‘catastrophe’

SAKHIR, Bahrain, April 15, (AP): Max Verstappen and Red Bull are one of Formula 1’s all-time most successful partnerships. But a disastrous race has raised concerns Verstappen could consider a move elsewhere.

Following the Bahrain Grand Prix, Verstappen talked of a “catastrophe” as he listed the problems. The defending world champion had to cope with tires overheating, brake problems and two different pit stop delays. At one stage, he was briefly last before finishing sixth.

Red Bull’s influential motorsport adviser Helmut Marko has previously indicated there’s a performance-related clause in Verstappen’s contract, which is officially dated to 2028. The specifics aren’t public but Marko indicated to the BBC last month a clause could come into play “if we don’t deliver for Max.”

Red Bull seemed to have the fourth-fastest car in Bahrain, behind McLaren, Ferrari and Mercedes.

Asked by Sky Sport Germany after the Bahrain race Sunday if he had concerns that Verstappen might consider his future, Marko said: “The (concern) is great ... improvements need to come in the near future so that he once again has a car that he can win with.” Verstappen signaled his unhappiness with a key team decision last month. He “liked” an Instagram post by ex-F1 driver Giedo van der Garde which suggested it was a “panic move” to replace Liam Lawson as his teammate after two races of the season.

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff expressed interest in a potential move last year. Both of his drivers are only confirmed to be under contract for this year. Verstappen has hinted at leaving F1 someday, saying last year he’d “passed half-

way for sure” in his career and dislikes the busy schedule.

Marko suggested Sunday that Verstappen’s most recent wins in the rain in Brazil and after a stunning qualifying lap in Japan had come despite the car, not because of it. He added that Red Bull needed to create “a base level” of performance “so that he can fight for the world championship.”

After two record-breaking years of dominance for Verstappen and Red Bull in 2022 and 2023, Red Bull fell behind McLaren on pace partway through the season in 2024. Verstappen won only two of the last 14 races but still retained the title. McLaren won the constructors’ championship.

The regulations are largely unchanged since 2022 and there are competing theories for Red Bull’s decline.

Verstappen said last year that Red Bull had turned a winning car “into a monster” in its attempts to squeeze more pace out of the design. His then-teammate Sergio Perez made similar claims when his results fell off dramatically.

There are also questions over the effect of car design guru Adrian Newey leaving or whether Red Bull has simply reached the limits of the car’s basic concept.

Marko said the team mismanaged Friday practice sessions, meaning unpleasant surprises like Verstappen lacking grip on hard tires in Bahrain. Those “Black Fridays” need to end, Marko said.

Probably not this week. The Saudi Arabian GP in Jeddah on Sunday could bring more issues with heat, though Verstappen expects less tire wear than in Bahrain. Upgrades are expected for the Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix at the Imola circuit in Italy on May 18.



Mechanics push Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands on the starting grid before the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix, in Sakhir. (AP)

Napoli keeps pressure on Inter



Napoli’s Mathias Olivera, left, and Empoli’s Emmanuel Gyasi challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Empoli at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

Atletico labors to win over lowly Valladolid

NAPLES, Italy, April 15, (AP): A double from Scott McTominay and one from Romelu Lukaku gave Napoli a 3-0 win over Empoli and cut Inter Milan’s lead of Serie A to three points.

Scotland international McTominay has been one of the stars of the season for Napoli and he put the home side ahead after 18 minutes when he gathered the ball just inside the Empoli half, drove forward and unleashed a low drive that whizzed into the corner from 25 meters out.

Lukaku made it 2-0 early in the second half when he found space in a crowded box and gave the goalkeeper no chance from close range.

McTominay’s closer was a delightful looped header five minutes later.

The defeat extended Empoli’s winless run to 17 games and left it second from bottom, equal on points with third-to-last Venezia. Both teams have nine points more than Monza.

In Madrid, Julián Alvarez scored two penalties as Atletico Madrid came from behind to beat bot-



Napoli’s Scott McTominay, left, and Empoli’s Liam Henderson challenge for the ball during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Empoli at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium in Naples, Italy. (AP)

tom club Valladolid 4-2 and keep alive its slim chances of winning La Liga.

Valladolid lost 10 of its previous 11 games, conceding 32 goals along the way, but it took a shock lead after 20 minutes when Mamadou Sylla converted from the penalty spot.

Alvarez levelled four minutes later from another penalty after Giuliano Simeone was brought down in the box. Simeone put the home side in front with a nice individual goal three minutes after.

Javi Sánchez got an equalizer 10 minutes into the second half when his free kick took a deflection that wrongfooted Jan Oblak in the Atletico goal.

Alvarez scored a second penalty and Alexander Sorloth made it 4-2 11 minutes from time when he slotted a shot that the goalkeeper could only parry at his feet.

The result meant Atletico closed the gap on second-placed Real Madrid to three points. Leader Barcelona was another four points clear.

Valladolid remained in last place, 16 points behind second-from-bottom Leganes, and appeared almost certain to be relegated.

‘It’s unacceptable’

Rome derby clashes likened to ‘urban warfare’ with 24 police officers injured

ROME, April 15, (AP): The toll from clashes between violent fans and police at the weekend’s Rome derby includes 24 law enforcement officers injured, one arrest and at least 40,000 euros (\$45,000) in damaged garbage dumpsters.

Officials in the capital were still trying to sum up the damages after fans on Sunday attacked police in riot gear in a heavily populated area where people had been gathering ahead of the Serie A game between Lazio and Roma.

“I am disgusted,” said Rome Mayor Roberto Gualtieri. “It’s unacceptable that hooligans transform a day of sport into a scene of urban warfare.”

Some 2,000 police officers were stationed at various flashpoints around the Stadio Olimpico and swept into action when Lazio’s hard-core “ultra” fans attempted to push through a barred-off

area.

Fans reacted to the intervention by launching fireworks and other objects at the police officers. Police then responded with tear gas and water canons.

The derby was restored to an 8:45 p.m. kickoff this season after six years of earlier start times in order to avoid violence. Now next year’s games will likely start earlier again.

Lazio and Roma both expressed solidarity with the injured police officers and denounced the violence.

The game ended 1-1.

The Rome derby has been plagued by violence for years.

In 2004, the derby was suspended due to a false rumor that police had killed a boy outside the stadium.

In January, a car went up in flames outside the stadium before this season’s first derby.



Lazio fans clash with Italian policemen in riot gears outside the Olympic stadium prior to the start of the Italian soccer match between Lazio and Roma in Rome. (AP)

Best of the Rest

Veurink going home to coach Dutch: The Dutch assistant coach of the England women’s national team will be going home to lead the Netherlands after the European Championship in July, where the two countries will play each other.

The Dutch soccer federation said Tuesday that Arjan Veurink has a four-year contract that will start after his work with England - coached by his mentor Sarina Wiegman - at the Euros in Switzerland.

Defending champion England was drawn in the same group as the Netherlands and they meet July 9 in Zurich in the second game for each team.

France and Wales also are in a strong-looking Group D.

England won the title at home in 2022 with Wiegman and her longtime assistant Veurink, who also won the previous title together with the Dutch team at the 2017 European Championship.

“I have never hidden my ambition to one day take on the lead role with the Dutch national team,” Veurink said in a statement published by the federation. “After over eight years of experience at the highest level as Sarina Wiegman’s right-hand man, first with the Netherlands and now in England, I feel ready to stand on my own.” (AP)

‘I am so excited to start new chapter’

Bueckers goes No. 1 in WNBA draft to Wings after UConn Championship win

NEW YORK, April 15, (AP): Paige Bueckers is ready for her next chapter after a whirlwind week that started with her helping UConn win its 12th national championship and ended with her becoming the WNBA’s No. 1 draft pick by the Dallas Wings.

“I’m just extremely excited to be there. I’ve only heard great things about the city,” Bueckers said of Dallas. “I am so excited to start that new chapter and be in a new city, explore that, and give everything I have to the Wings organization. I know we’re going to do great things, and it’s a fresh start, and I think we’re all ready to do something special.”

The versatile UConn star is the latest Huskies graduate to go No. 1, joining former greats Sue Bird, Diana Taurasi, Tina Charles, Maya Moore, and Breanna Stewart.

Bueckers has had a busy time since helping UConn win the title on April 6. She has split her time between New York and Connecticut, doing morning and nighttime talk shows. On Sunday, she took part in the Huskies’ championship parade.

“I’m glad New York and Storrs are pretty close to each other because there’s been a lot of back and forth,” Bueckers said. “Part of me wants to stay at school, celebrate

with the team, be with them, enjoy the last moments of being in Storrs, and the other part of me has to get ready for the next chapter.”

Bueckers got to enjoy the moment Monday night with her UConn teammates and coach Geno Auriemma, who were in the audience at the draft, which was held at The Shed in New York. Bueckers choked up when talking about her former Huskies teammates.

“They mean everything to me. They helped me get through highs



UConn’s Paige Bueckers listens during an interview at the WNBA basketball draft in New York. (AP)

and lows,” Bueckers said.

Seattle followed Dallas’s selection by taking 19-year-old French star Dominique Malonga with the No. 2 pick. The 6-foot-6 Malonga was part of the silver medal-winning French Olympic basketball team. She’s the first French player to be drafted this high since 1997, when Isabelle Fijalkowski went second.

“I was so proud to achieve that goal,” Malonga said. “It showed that French basketball has evolved as we’ve seen the past few years on the NBA side. We see Wemby (Victor Wembanyama) and Zaccharie (Rissacher) show that French basketball is great.”

The Washington Mystics, with a new coach and general manager, then took Notre Dame’s Sonia Citron with the third pick, and Southern Cal’s Kiki Iriafen with No. 4. They also took Kentucky guard Georgia Amoore with the sixth pick. Amoore was dressed on the WNBA’s orange carpet by NBA star Russell Westbrook, who has a clothing brand called Honor The Gift. Amoore said Westbrook designed her outfit and was terrific to work with since they first got together on a Zoom session last November.

“It’s phenomenal. He did such

a good job,” Amoore said of Westbrook. “It wasn’t just to put his name on something. He spent hours at the hotel fitting it. He’s been very active in the process. To have a contact like that now, someone I can lean on or into, is amazing. It’s the start. You’ll see this happen more often. It’s a blessing to be the first one to do this.”

The expansion Golden State Valkyries made Juste Jocyte of Lithuania with the first draft choice in franchise history.

Connecticut had consecutive picks and took LSU’s Aneeshah Morrow seventh and N.C. State’s Saniya Rivers eighth.

Los Angeles took Alabama’s Sarah Ashlee Barker ninth. Chicago drafted Ajasa Sivka from Slovenia 10th, and then TCU’s Hailey Van Lith next.

Dallas closed out the first round by drafting Aziah James of N.C. State. Six teams didn’t have picks in the opening round as New York, Indiana, Minnesota, Phoenix, and Atlanta traded away their picks. Las Vegas forfeited its pick following an investigation by the league in 2023 that found the franchise violated league rules regarding impermissible player benefits and workplace policies.

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FIFA President Gianni Infantino gestures toward the FIFA World Cup soccer trophy during a news conference at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, to discuss the upcoming 2025 Club World Cup which is to be hosted by Atlanta this summer. (AP)

Sports

Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr mourns loss of Major General Issa Al-Ali

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: President of Kuwait and Asian Aquatics Federation (KAAF) Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah, on behalf of the KAAF Board of Directors and its members, mourned the passing of Major General (retired) Issa Shuaib Ibrahim Al-Ali — former President of the Sea Sports Club.

Sheikh Al-Badr paid tribute to the late Al-Ali's distinguished sporting career; citing his tireless dedication to elevating the presence of Kuwait in regional and international sporting arenas. He described the deceased as a true embodiment of sports-

manship; marked by humility, selflessness and an unwavering commitment to the advancement of sports in Kuwait.

He also stated that with the passing of Al-Ali, the Kuwaiti sports community has lost one of its most loyal and respected figures.

He extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, the sports and aquatics communities, and all who knew and admired the late Al-Ali. He concluded with a prayer for Almighty Allah to grant mercy upon the departed soul and for strength and solace for his loved ones.



Sheikh Khaled AlBadr

Kuwait reaches final of Arab Squash Champ'ship



The Kuwaiti squash team.

Jordan looms in the title match

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The Kuwait youth team advanced to the final of the 29th Arab Squash Championship, currently taking place at the Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah Center in Kuwait.

Kuwait earned its spot in the final after a strong performance against Saudi Arabia in the semi-finals. It is now set to face Jordan in the title match, following Jordan's victory over

Qatar.

Representing Kuwait in this category are Abdulrahman Al-Maghribi, Jassim Al-Gharib, Khaled Al-Fawzan, and Abdullah Hani.

Kuwait has already claimed an impressive haul in the championship, winning five medals in individual events and two in the team competitions, which concluded yesterday.

Commenting on the success, Abdullah Al-Subaie, Director of National Teams, credited the achievements to the comprehen-

sive support provided by the Federation. He highlighted the importance of the preparation plan devised by the National Teams Committee, the players' commitment to training, and the coaching staff's focus on both physical and technical development.

"These results reflect the players' dedication and the quality of preparation leading up to the tournament. The efforts of everyone involved brought our athletes to peak performance, and the results speak for themselves," Al-Subaie said.

Kuwait Shooting Club honors Sahar

KUWAIT CITY, April 15: The men's and women's trap shooting qualifiers for the 75-target event are set to take place today, Wednesday, as part of the prestigious His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Shooting Championship. The annual tournament is hosted by the Kuwait Shooting Sports Club at the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex, attracting around 220 male and female shooters from 18 Arab and international countries, alongside their technical and administrative teams.

Earlier this week, Kuwaiti shooter Abdulaziz Al-Mandil claimed the silver medal in the skeet shooting competition, highlighting Kuwait's strong presence in the tournament.

On the sidelines of the event, Obaid Al-Osaimi, Secretary-General of the Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations and Tournament Director, welcomed Egyptian MP and businesswoman Sahar Talaat Mostafa at his office. Al-Osaimi presented her with the Kuwaiti Shooting Club shield in appreciation of her visit.

Mostafa expressed her pride in taking part in the Amir's Championship for the first time, praising the exceptional organization and competitive environment. "The Supreme Organizing Committee and all working teams have ensured top-tier preparation and execution," she said. Mostafa



Obaid Al-Osaimi honoring Sahar Talaat in the presence of the President of the Egyptian and African Shooting Federation.

is competing alongside her son, 18-year-old shooter Yassin Ihab Madi, and both are aiming for podium finishes in what she described as one of the largest international shooting events.

She extended heartfelt thanks to Duaij Al-Otaibi, President of the Kuwaiti and Arab Shooting Federations, and to Obaid Al-Osaimi for their warm hospitality and commitment to excellence. "Kuwait is like a second home," she added, affirming her dedication to participating in future competitions held in the country.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Honorary President of the Asian Shooting Federation, also expressed his admiration for the event. "This

championship, bearing the name of His Highness the Amir, is dear to all of us," he said.

Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah Al Khalifa praised the continuous improvement in the championship's organization under Engineer Duaij Al-Otaibi and highlighted the high caliber of participating athletes and teams. "The presence of elite shooters and expert national cadres has elevated the level of competition, making it one of the most prestigious shooting events globally," he noted.

He concluded by emphasizing the championship's intense competition and technical excellence, which continue to enhance its regional and international standing.

Kuwait wins 10 medals at Phoenix Cup

SOFIA, April 15: The Kuwaiti girls' rhythmic gymnastics team delivered an outstanding performance at the Phoenix Cup, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, earning a total of 10 medals — 3 gold, 5 silver, and 2 bronze. The international tournament featured strong competition from elite teams representing countries such as Brazil, Poland, and the host nation, Bulgaria.

Among the standout performers was Sarah Al-Bannai (born 2012), who competed in the elite category. Al-Bannai claimed a silver medal in the mace, a bronze in the ribbon, and placed fourth in the individual all-around and fifth in the hoop.

In the first-level category, Raya Al-Qassar (born 2013) won two gold medals — one in the individual all-around and another in the club event — along with a silver in the ball competition.

Fellow first-level gymnast Nabila Al-Kharafi (born 2013) earned a gold medal in the ball, silver in the individual all-around, and silver in the hoop.

Meanwhile, Talya Behbehani (born 2014) secured a silver medal in the club, a bronze in the ball, and finished fourth in the individual all-around.

This impressive medal haul reflects the rising level of rhythmic gymnastics in Kuwait and the commitment of its young athletes on the international stage.



Kuwait rhythmic gymnastics team.

Blues drawn into challenging Group A

Talib expresses confidence in Kuwait ahead of World Cup

CAIRO, April 15: Khaled Talib, Treasurer of the Kuwait Handball Association and head of the Kuwaiti junior team delegation, expressed strong confidence in the team ahead of its participation in the 2025 IHF Men's Youth World Championship, despite being drawn into a challenging



Kuwait intensifies training for the World Cup.

Group A alongside handball powerhouses Sweden, Portugal, and Austria.

The official draw for the tournament was held in Cairo, with 32 teams set to compete from August 6 to 17 in Egypt. Notably, six Arab nations will take part: Egypt (host), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Kuwait.

World Cup Groupings:

Group A: Kuwait, Sweden, Portugal, Austria
Group B: Hungary, Switzerland, Morocco, Kosovo
Group C: Serbia, Spain, Croatia, Algeria
Group D: Iceland, Brazil, Guinea, Saudi Arabia
Group E: Germany, Slovenia, Uruguay, Faroe Islands
Group F: Norway, France, Argentina, Mexico
Group G: Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Bahrain
Group H: Denmark, Tunisia, USA, Czech Republic

This marks Kuwait's second appearance in the U-19 Handball World Cup, after debuting in Tunisia 2009, where it finished 19th.

Talib acknowledged the difficulty of facing elite European teams, renowned for their strength and experience, but emphasized Kuwait's solid preparation. The team recently gained valuable experience by competing in the Mediterranean International Friendly Championship against teams such as Tunisia, Italy, Greece, and Montenegro.

He added that continued participation in continental competitions will further strengthen the team and help elevate the standard of Kuwaiti handball. Talib also expressed hope that the players will make Kuwaiti fans proud, especially given the strong support they've received from the local community and federation.

Madrid says 'anything is possible'

MADRID, April 15, (AP): Real Madrid's website defiantly told fans that "anything is possible," one day before the defending champion attempts to overcome a three-goal deficit to Arsenal in the Champions League.

A video showed Madrid's memorable comebacks in recent years, mentioning the "team of dreams" and the club's achievements "in this stadium, in this competition."

"Bernabeu, again," was the headline on the website ahead of the second leg of the quarterfinals at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium on Wednesday.

Record 15-time European champion Madrid lost the first leg 3-0 in England last week.

Only four times has a home team erased a first-leg deficit of three goals or more, according to UEFA.

Madrid rival Barcelona recovered after a 4-0 loss at Paris Saint-Germain with a historic 6-1 home victory in the round of 16 in the 2016-17 season. In the 2018-19 semifinals, Liverpool lost 3-0 at Barcelona but advanced with a 4-0 home victory. A season earlier in the quarterfinals, Barcelona was involved again. After beating Roma 4-1 at home, Barcelona lost the second leg 3-0 in the Italian capital.

The only other three-goal comeback

by the home team came in 2004 in the quarterfinals, when Spanish club Deportivo La Coruna lost 4-1 at AC Milan and then won 4-0 at home to advance.

Madrid has a recent history of comebacks in the Champions League that has given fans hope of another magical night at the Bernabeu.

Madrid won its 14th Champions League title in 2022 after rallying its way through the knockout rounds. It looked beaten at the Bernabeu in the last 16 against PSG, in the quarterfinals against Chelsea and in the semifinals against Manchester City, but every time it found a way to advance.

Against City, Madrid needed two late goals by forward Rodrygo - in the 90th minute and in stoppage time - to force extra time, when Karim Benzema converted a decisive penalty kick to put Madrid in the final, where it beat Liverpool.

"The fans will be very important," Ancelotti said Tuesday. "The push from the fans has helped us many times before. They have helped us a lot in recent years, and tomorrow it will be the same. We need to play at our best level to try to reverse this result, which we know is something difficult to do."