



HH Amir hosts Crown Prince, Acting Premier

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace.

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

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.



Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait

Justice minister unveils rights-focused anti-trafficking strategy

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Minister of Justice and Chair of the Permanent National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Nasser Al-Sumait announced the launch of the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking and Smuggling for the period 2025–2028.

In a press statement issued on Sunday, Al-Sumait affirmed that the launch of the national strategy highlights Kuwait's commitment to protecting human rights and promoting social justice.

Minister Al-Sumait stressed that the strategy marks the beginning of a new phase of seriousness and transparency in addressing human traf-

ficking issues.

He assured that the National Committee will oversee the implementation of the strategy through regular reviews and by measuring the progress achieved, while also ensuring the active participation of relevant authorities and regional and international partners.

Minister Al-Sumait explained that the national strategy was developed in cooperation with relevant government bodies and national experts, and was based on an objective assessment of current challenges, as well as regional and international developments.

It aims to strengthen preventive measures, protection, and accountability in combating all forms of exploitation, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling.

It emphasizes the importance of coordinated

action among government agencies to enhance Kuwait's capabilities in protecting human rights, in line with the country's firm commitment to human rights, its development vision, and its respect for human rights. It stresses the need for a comprehensive and sustainable response from state institutions, in line with international standards.

The strategy highlights the main pillars through which Kuwait seeks to address challenges and achieve its goals by implementing advanced and sustainable mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

It presents a comprehensive and effective response aimed at ensuring a safer future for all individuals residing in Kuwait, making the country a regional model in the protection of human rights.

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KUWAITI CITIZENSHIP NOW LINKED TO SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE ID please ... and also your DNA

Interior Ministry adopts high-tech verification to determine nationality status

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah has issued Ministerial Resolution No. 678/2025 regarding the principles and guidelines for the use of modern scientific methods in the granting, withdrawal, loss, or revocation of Kuwaiti citizenship, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The resolution, which was published in a special supplement of the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", includes the following:

Article 1:

For implementing the provisions of this resolution, the following terms shall have the meanings specified below:

- Law: Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 on the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments.
- Ministry: Ministry of Interior.
- Minister: Minister of Interior.
- Genetic fingerprint: A map of inherited biological genes that identifies an individual and distinguishes them from others. It consists of biological traits or a genetic profile of non-coding sites in chromosomal DNA, derived from DNA analysis of biological samples.
- Biosample: A sample taken from the human body or its biological secretions, and used for comparison purposes to determine identity or assist in identifying relatives of the subject person.
- Subject person: An individual whose eligibility for the granting, withdrawal, loss, or revocation of citizenship is under examination using one of the scientific methods specified in this resolution.
- Database: A computer system that stores data containing genetic traits, biometric fingerprints, or other scientific identifiers for individuals whose data has been collected.

■ Biometric fingerprints: A form of biometric technology used to identify or verify a person's identity based on their unique physiological characteristics such as fingerprints, eye color, or facial features. This data is collected to ensure accurate identity verification and prevent impersonation.

Article 2:

Modern scientific methods that may be used in the processes of granting, withdrawing, losing, or revoking citizenship shall be determined in accordance with the principles and guidelines set forth in this resolution. These methods include:

1. Fingerprint analysis or genetic trait analysis.
2. Biometric fingerprints or biometric features.
3. Any other modern scientific method currently available or that may be developed in the future.

Article 3:

Citizens and residents subject to investigation are required to undergo genetic fingerprinting and biometric fingerprinting for the purposes of granting, withdrawing, losing, or revoking citizenship, in accordance with the regulations outlined in this resolution.

Article 4:

The authorities designated to conduct DNA and biometric fingerprint analysis shall be determined by a decision of the Minister of Interior, and shall include the center affiliated with the General Department of Criminal Evidence. These designated authorities must be equipped with medically and technically approved tools necessary for conducting DNA or genetic profile analysis, as well as biometric fingerprint examinations, to confirm or deny paternity and lineage in relation to the implementation of this resolution.

Article 5:

Biometric fingerprints shall be used through fingerprints, iris scans, facial scans, or photographic image matching, following the rules outlined below:

1. Biometric fingerprinting for the purposes of this decision shall be conducted at the General Department of Criminal Evidence, based on a request from the

General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents, or any other entity designated by the Minister of Interior.

2. The General Department of Criminal Evidence, or any entity that maintains data containing genetic characteristics, biometric fingerprints, or any other scientific methods mentioned in this decision, shall disclose the subject person's data from its registered database. If available, this data shall be sent directly to the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents. If no registered data exists, the subject person shall be summoned, in accordance with this decision, to undergo biometric fingerprinting within one week from the date of the request.
3. The General Department of Criminal Evidence shall send the biometric fingerprint results to the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents of Kuwait, or the entity designated by the Minister of Interior.
4. The General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents shall prepare a memorandum of opinion on the implications of the biometric fingerprint results and their validity as evidence for the granting, withdrawal, loss, or revocation of citizenship. The memorandum shall be submitted to the Supreme Committee for Citizenship to take appropriate action.
5. Upon request from the concerned parties or the General Department of Criminal Evidence, and with the approval of the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents or any designated party by the Minister of Interior, biometric fingerprinting may be retaken to ensure the validity and accuracy of the results.

Article 6:

The procedures for conducting DNA fingerprinting shall be determined according to the following rules:

1. To conduct DNA fingerprinting for the purposes specified in Article 3 of this resolution, a permit must be obtained from the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents or the entity designated by the Minister of Interior.

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Court fines can now trim your paycheck

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm" published Decree-Law No. 62/2025, which amends certain provisions of the Code of Procedures and Trials Law, originally issued under Law No. 17/1960.

According to Article 1 of the decree-law, Articles 188 and 230 have been replaced with new provisions.

Article 188 now states that the objection period is one week.

- For misdemeanor cases, this one-week period begins from the date the convicted person is notified of the verdict issued in absentia.
- For felony cases, the period starts from the date of the convicted person's arrest, provided the judgment was not previously served in person.

If the objection is not filed within this time frame, the verdict may only be appealed if it is eligible for appeal before the Court of Appeals.

The text permits notifying the convicted person by default, via email, or any modern means of communication that can be preserved and retrieved, in accordance with the terms and conditions stipulated in the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law.

If serving the judgment directly is not possible, the notice may be delivered at the convict's residence to a relative or in-law living with them, or to one of their dependents.

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Worshippers gathered at St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Kuwait as His Grace Bishop Antonios presided over this year's Easter service. — See Page 2

Newswatch

Kuwait welcomes US-Iran dialogue

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait welcomed, Sunday, the announcement by Oman's Foreign Ministry regarding the agreement reached between the US and Iran during the second round of talks held in Rome aimed to seal a fair, enduring and binding nuclear deal.

In statement, Kuwait's Foreign Ministry lauded this step as a reflection of both sides' commitment to continue this dialogue and build on recent progress, as well as reaffirmed Kuwait's support for all diplomatic efforts that seek to resolve disputes and achieve positive outcomes for regional and global stability.

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CAIRO: Chief of Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) **Rabah Al-Rabah** underlined the Chamber's intent on actively contributing to vital issues of socioeconomic development in the Arab world.

Al-Rabah's statement to KUNA came on sidelines of the 51st Arab Labor Conference, organized by the Cairo-based Arab League's labor organization. The conference is a strategic platform aiming to strengthen partnerships, and achieving comprehensive and sustainable regional development, noted Al-Rabah. (KUNA)

Kuwait's small businesses stuck in the slow lane

Expert proposes residency incentives for expat SME contributors

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are among the important sectors that contribute to the elimination of unemployment and provision of job opportunities.

These enterprises enable the youths and the private sector to participate in achieving economic growth by creating economic development opportunities that benefit the national economy.

Despite the importance of these projects in diversifying non-oil sources of income and supporting the gross domestic product (GDP), small enterprises face numerous obstacles and challenges in the local market, which impact their competitiveness and their pivotal role in supporting the workforce and providing job opportunities.

The newspaper asked the opinion of some experts regarding the challenges and obstacles centered on the need to provide suitable space or headquarters for SMEs at a reasonable price, while setting favorable terms for government financing with appropriate repayment opportunities or methods, and finding appropriate marketing methods.

Even if the government initially purchases the products of SMEs or contributes to their marketing, this will create entrepreneurial and innovative youths with ambitious, out-of-the-box ideas that help them

innovate and produce viable industrial alternatives.

Economic expert Abdulrahman Al-Hamoud said the main idea or goal of establishing an institution to support SMEs is to create job opportunities for Kuwaiti youths outside government work and to provide alternative products to those imported from abroad; thus, supporting local industries on one hand and diversifying sources of national income on the other hand.

He pointed out that the number of SMEs in the country ranges from 25,000 to 30,000 including approximately 1,084 enterprises financed by the government with an amount of approximately KD 220 million -- 20 percent of the capital allocated to financing SMEs in the country, which amounts to approximately KD 2 billion.

He said these projects contributed to only about three percent of the country's gross domestic product -- a modest contribution compared to what this sector can contribute to the Kuwaiti economy.

He stated that the problem with these enterprises is that most of them are financed restaur-

rants and cafés -- commercial activities that are far removed from the primary objective to support industrial and other products as alternatives to imported products.

He revealed the total Kuwaiti youth workforce in this category does not exceed seven percent. "Although funding is essential to support these enterprises, it is more important to create an environment capable of accommodating these initiatives.

Finding a headquarters or land is one of the obstacles that small investors are facing. Therefore, the most important element in supporting entrepreneurs is finding the right location.

The government must provide land to small investors at reasonable prices. For example, establishing construction tools and equipment, carpentry, electrical and medical supplies, such as cotton and gauze, and other small enterprises require State support and the provision of spaces ranging from 50 to 200 square meters for each enterprise. These materials are easy to produce and generate good returns. If land is available and the State contributes to establishing good

marketing and storage methods, with its enormous capabilities, this will ensure the serious and real success of such enterprises," he suggested.

Economic expert Najib Al-Saleh emphasized that SMEs suffer from a contradictory government approach and are in dire need of a radical overhaul of the economic environment to open the way for individual initiative and innovation through free competition.

He said the government has controlled most economic activities for the past 60 years, with the goal of employing a national workforce with salaries and benefits exceeding 50 percent of the salaries of citizens working in the private sector. "It also established a fund allocating KD2 billion to finance SMEs. However, the fund ceased operations 10 years after its establishment. Prior to this, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) was absent; hence, the establishment of a similar fund with an allocation of KD100 million and the Industrial Bank, which previously allocated KD20 million to finance SMEs. How can a country that wants to create new government jobs continue to monopolize economic activities; while hoping to force employees to abandon their secure and stable jobs and start a business with uncertain results through loans and installments they do not know how to pay?

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8 Gulf Bank brings joy to children at Bayt Abdullah Hospice



8 Zain sponsors 'Higher Education in the Era of Innovation' summit

11 Immersive art shines in Abu Dhabi

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:54	Asr	15:22
Sunrise ..	05:17	Maghrib ..	18:17
Zohr	11:47	Isha	19:38

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Rather hot and partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind, with speeds of 15-50 km/h causing rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on.

By Night: Mild and partly cloudy

Weather

with light to moderate freshening at times southeasterly wind to southerly wind, with speeds of 15-45 km/h with a chance for rising dust and a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	35	17
Abdaly	36	16

Bubyan	34	19
Jahra	36	20
Failaka Island	26	21
Salmiyah	32	22
Ahmadi	30	19
Jal Aliyah	35	17
Nuwaisib	32	17
Wafra	35	17



Ambassadors, clergy, and local leaders gather to celebrate unity and coexistence.



St. Mark's Cathedral filled with hymns, prayers and diplomatic presence

Kuwait's Coptic community marks Easter with message of hope and renewal

By Bassam Al-Qassas

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Kuwait held the Easter service, which was presided over by His Grace Bishop Antonios -- Bishop of Jerusalem, Kuwait and the Near East.

Present at the event were Ambassador of Egypt to Kuwait Osama Shaltout, Consul General Sherif Bader, Military Attaché Colonel A.H. Mustafa Al-Dallal, Head of the Church Father Bigol Anba Bishoy, other ambassadors, diplomats, sheikhs, business leaders, Egyptians and other expatriate communities.

Shaltout affirmed he is honored to attend the Easter celebration with the Egyptian community, conveying greetings from President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and His Holiness Pope Tawadros II to all Copts in Kuwait.

He stressed the need to fortify brotherhood within the Egyptian populace both domestically and internationally through such events.

He pointed out that the national unity of Egypt is exemplary, asserting that love and cooperation remain the bedrock of Egyptian society despite religious diversity. He underscored the Egyptian community's crucial role in strengthening bilateral ties between Egypt and Kuwait, confirming that overseas achievements contribute to the advancement of the nation.

He commended the recent visit of President El-Sisi to Kuwait as it reflects the



Photos by Rezk Tawfiq

Kuwaiti officials join Coptic community in a vibrant display of national and spiritual harmony.

depth of bilateral relations. He expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti leadership for their generous support for the Egyptian

community.

On the other hand, Father Bishoy expressed his appreciation to His Highness

the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Khalid Al-Hamad

Al-Sabah and the government; while acknowledging the efforts of the Interior Ministry in ensuring public safety during the service. He also thanked President El-Sisi for his recent visit and care for the Egyptian community here.

In his sermon with the theme, "Man is Immortal... His Life Does Not End with Death," Father Bishoy pointed out that true life commences after death; urging all those present to lead lives of integrity in preparation for the Hereafter.

The service concluded with the message of His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, conveyed by Father Bishoy, advocating for global peace and development. He also announced a reception for well-wishers at the cathedral on Sunday morning.

The service featured hymns and prayers, reinforcing the values of love and coexistence within the community.

On the sidelines of the service, Sheikh Khaled Bader Al-Mohammad toured St. Mark's Cathedral, accompanied by Father Bishoy.

Sheikh Khaled expressed his admiration for the church's design, stating that the Kuwaiti people are inherently welcoming to all races and beliefs. "This is how we were raised and educated. We do not discriminate against anyone," he asserted.

Father Bishoy responded "we have witnessed it in this kind, generous and giving country. This cathedral was built, thanks to the generosity of the Kuwaiti people who gave the church land 15 years ago."

Education resolution sparks legal backlash

Supervisory appointments in jeopardy

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: In recent days, criticism from academic professionals has escalated against Ministerial Resolution No. 116/2025, which regulates the conditions and procedures for filling educational supervisory and technical guidance positions.

This happened after several legal flaws were revealed; thereby, threatening the fate of the resolution and put it on the verge of judicial appeal.

A legal memorandum that former Director of the Legal Research and Grievances Department Saud Al-Jassar addressed to the acting assistant undersecretary for Legal Affairs at the Ministry of Education stated the decision was marred by a "serious flaw in legitimacy", as it explicitly violated several laws and Civil Service Council decisions while lacking the most basic requirements for legal drafting.

The memorandum cited important provisions in the ministerial resolution, which it described as unlawful and flawed with apparent invalidity. This increases the likelihood of an appeal before the Administrative Court and threatens the integrity of its implementation.

According to the memorandum, the ministerial resolution has arbitrary and vague provision as follows:

- Depriving employees of their legal rights such as ignoring mandatory leave like 'iddah' (waiting period after divorce) and maternity leave, and requiring them to attend postponed exams during the leave period -- a violation of the law, which guarantees at least two months of maternity leave.
- Unjustified restrictions on candidates by re-

quiring them to have excellent rating for three consecutive years, which could exclude those on waiting lists for years despite their eligibility.

- Unjustified revocation of acquired rights such as revoking the right to equivalency for those whose probation has been in effect for more than two years despite remaining on the waiting list. This was described as "a clear confiscation of an acquired right and an infringement on the fairness of the selection process."

The memorandum also emphasized that the resolution violated the principle of gradual legal rules when it granted the undersecretary the authority to reduce or increase the required years of experience -- a matter solely within the purview of the Civil Service Council, according to its meeting no. 9/2017.

The memorandum pointed out the absence of the signature of the Legal Sector or the undersecretary on the resolution, which raises legal questions about the entity that drafted it and responsibility for its results.

Furthermore, the memorandum criticized the lack of regulation regarding the formation of personal interview committees. It did not specify the authority responsible for forming the committees or the nature of their members, which could lead to challenges to their decisions and results on the grounds of procedural invalidity.

The memorandum concluded by calling for urgent measures to rectify the legal situation, to protect the ministry's position and the rights of its employees, and to prevent legal losses that could result from challenging the decision before the Administrative Court.

This information has sparked widespread controversy in educational and professional circles, amid anticipation of an official response from the Ministry of Education regarding the fate of the resolution and supposed flaws, which could undermine the most important regulatory tool for filling supervisory positions in the educational sector.

egation also praised the Institute's implementation of best practices in the areas

of training and evaluation, ensuring the safety of trainees and patients.



Part of the visit of the Canadian delegation to the Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialization.

Canadian delegation lauds KIMS' medical training excellence

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): A delegation from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) lauded Saturday the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization (KIMS) medical education and training programs and its strict adherence to the highest international education standards.

The Canadian delegation briefed Minister of Health and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the KIMS Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi of their assessment of the KIMS' education and training programs during their meeting today, the Ministry of Health said in a press statement.

During the meeting, the Canadian del-



KUNA photo

Mohammed Ould Omar, Arab League Educational and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) Director General.

Legacy of late Kuwaiti Poet Al-Adwani lauded

RABAT, April 20, (KUNA): Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) Director General Mohammed Ould Omar, said that the late Kuwaiti Poet Ahmad Al-Adwani was chosen as a symbol of Arab Culture for the year 2025, as a recognition of his efforts and services for his country and the Arab World.

This came in a statement made by Ould Amr to KUNA on the occasion of the announcement by (ALECSO), in co-operation with the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication, as part of the ongoing activities of the International Book and Publishing Fair currently being held in Rabat, regarding the selection of Al-Adwani as a symbol of Arab culture for the year 2025.

Ould Amr affirmed that Ahmad Al-Adwani is a prominent cultural figure with literary, artistic, and cultural achievements, which enriched the cultural scene in Kuwait and the Arab world in general. He pointed out that his selection as a symbol of Arab culture is a recognition of his contributions, "which deserve to be immortalized and to serve as a shining example for future generations in our Arab countries." He noted in this context that the selection of the late Al-Adwani by ALECSO is also an honor for Kuwait, given its prominent status and vital role in enriching culture. He expressed his congratulations to Kuwait, emphasizing that the late poet "will remain in our memories and hearts as one of the cultural icons who contributed to strengthening Arab culture and identity." The honorary shield was received by Acting Assistant Secretary-General for the Antiquities and Museums Sector and member of the Permanent Committee for Culture, Mohammad bin Redha, in the presence of the Moroccan Minister of Culture and Communication, Mehdi Bensaid, the Director-General of ALECSO, as well as a group of poets, writers from Arab countries, and representatives of Arab diplomatic missions in Rabat.

Other Voices

Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Bahrain

By Ahmad alsarraf

I spent the last week of March and the first week of April at the Thai resort of Chiva Som and the Sri Lankan resort of Villa Main, which is nestled in a natural forest filled with a variety of animals and birds.

Everywhere I went, I witnessed extreme wealth side by side with brutal poverty, as well as kindness and honesty. There was an almost complete absence of dishonesty and a total lack of courtesy. I never heard flattering remarks that belittled the speaker, but instead, a lovable sense of self-esteem and unmatched politeness.

Since childhood, I have been fascinated by the Kingdom of Siam, the land of magic and elephants, which changed its name to Thailand in 1949. Thailand has a population of approximately 70 million and attracts 35 million tourists annually. Covering an area of 513,000 square kilometers, its population consists of 75 percent ethnic Thai Buddhists, 14 percent Chinese Thais, and 3 percent Malay Muslims.

Thailand has remained independent, unlike its neighboring countries, and this has been a source of pride for its citizens. The name "Thailand" means "free land". External factors played a big role in preventing Thailand from being occupied, as it served as a buffer zone during the colonial era between British-ruled Burma and Malaysia, and French-ruled Laos and Cambodia. As a result, both colonial powers chose to maintain Thailand as a neutral zone to avoid direct confrontation. Switzerland serves as a similar example in this regard.

Thai kings were renowned for their diplomatic skills. They made many concessions in exchange for preserving the country's independence. They introduced Western-style educational, legal, and military reforms, and succeeded in establishing a strong centralized system that remains intact today.

The term "Siamese twins" is derived from Siam, due to the fame of the conjoined twins Chang and Eng Bunker, who were born in 1811 in

Siam and died in 1874. The twins became famous through their circus performances that toured the world, and hence the name.

It is worth noting that Southeast Asian countries, in general, have a higher rate of Siamese twins.

Modern Thailand traces its origins to 1238, with the formation of the Sukhothai Kingdom. Under the leadership of King Ramkhamhaeng, the kingdom expanded, and Theravada Buddhism, which originated in Sri Lanka, was adopted as the majority religion, a tradition that continues to this day.

In 1511, the Portuguese established the first European contact with Siam. The Dutch arrived in the 17th century, and competed with the Portuguese in trade. The French also arrived around the same time, but their religious and cultural influence was short-lived, and they were eventually expelled, along with other Europeans.

The British arrived in the 19th century with greater force, following their conquests of India, Burma, and Malaysia. They concluded trade treaties with Thailand and gained significant influence there. As a result, Thailand, along with Japan, is one of the few countries that was never colonized by Britain, despite the fact that cars still drive on the left side of the road.

Arab sailors were familiar with Ceylon in ancient times and referred to it as Serendib. The explorer Ibn Battuta visited the island in 1344, believing that Adam had descended upon its mountain after being expelled from Paradise. The Portuguese arrived on the island in 1505 in search of spices and named it Ceylon, a name derived from the island's ancient designation.

In 1638, the Dutch colonized Ceylon and renamed it Zilan. In 1815, the British took control, and expelled the Dutch and other colonial powers. The British brought large numbers of Tamils from India and encouraged the cultivation of tea, rubber, and coconuts, as well as the extraction of sapphires.

Ceylon gained independence in 1948, and officially changed its name to Sri Lanka in 1972. However, for commercial reasons, the old name remained associated with iconic brands such as Ceylon Tea, which is the world's most famous tea brand, the Bank of Ceylon, and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.

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ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Power outages ... A chronic crisis

“ELECTRICITY is the lifeblood of citizens, the economy and services. Therefore, electricity is a top priority, and any shortage in its production impacts all aspects of life and society. Is this also a government priority, or is addressing the electricity crisis merely a seasonal summer issue, recurring whenever a shortage in electricity production occurs? Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyas-sah daily.



Al-Kharafi

“The electricity shortage crisis is not new. It began in the 1980s, and today, citizens still fear scheduled power outages. While this was limited last year, it appears to be on a larger scale this summer, and everyone will suffer from it: citizens, institutions, businesses and the economy.

“The electricity crisis is not an intractable dilemma, and its solutions are well known to specialists. All that is required is to account for the growth in electricity demand and meet it with expansion projects or new electricity projects. Is this a difficult task, given that many governments have dealt with this crisis without a definitive solution?

“I believe we all have good hopes and look forward to solutions to this crisis under Minister Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem. He is a competent and experienced electric power expert. We trust his dedication and capabilities in this regard. The government should provide him with all necessary resources and support, considering that electricity is a top priority.

“Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the National Assembly was a source of disruption or delay in the implementation of projects, the government today has an open forum and ample space to address priorities, including the chronic electricity crisis.

“The continued absence of a serious and decisive response to the scheduled power outages will inevitably lead to delays in the implementation of housing, investment and service projects. It will also negatively impact the economy and the investment climate, particularly the foreign investment we seek to attract.”

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“Thinking that a righteous nation is simply a collection of righteous individuals is a misconception. A person might be morally upright, yet that doesn’t automatically qualify them to serve in parliament or lead public affairs. A nation is only deemed truly righteous when its people collectively embody strong moral and social values that are gained through consistent discipline, sound upbringing, and a culture of self-reliance, after God, in managing their resources. Only then can a society progress toward true development and lasting psychological and social stability”, columnist Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran wrote for Al-Rai daily.

“We also lose sight of the truth when we continue to follow the slogans of some parliamentarians who call for diversifying sources of income, only to realize they actually mean diversifying “their own” income streams. True economic diversification cannot be achieved without first establishing “social integrity”. This isn’t something citizens and residents gain merely from books, classrooms, or traditional education, but it begins with a good seed planted in clean soil, nourished by sound understanding and beneficial knowledge that takes root throughout society.

“Through generations of active participation in public affairs, this integrity becomes a cultural norm. Serving the public interest becomes instinctive, carried out with ease, not obligation, much like a healthy body working in harmony, a brain that thinks and plans, hands that execute, and feet that move with purpose. Together, they fuel righteousness and reform, drawing from the nation’s natural resources and redistributing their benefits throughout society naturally and effortlessly.

“This is an undeniable truth agreed upon by academics and sociologists alike. While formal education and the information revolution may help individuals understand the connection between good upbringing and beneficial knowledge, they cannot create that connection. Why? Because social values are not born from theories or textbooks alone; they are cultivated through a community’s collective effort in continuous education, shared experiences, and hands-on development. Progress is not achieved through wishful thinking or by passively watching others succeed in diversifying their income.

“There are countless examples to support this truth. One of the clearest is the comparison between nations that had equal access to education during their respective renaissance periods, yet differed in their moral, economic, and political growth.

“These comparisons reveal that true progress depends on a shared foundation of public upbringing, not on isolated individual achievements, academic degrees, or study-abroad experiences.

“So let us ask ourselves: how many graduates do we produce each year? How many public and private universities operate in the Arab and Islamic world? How many books, long and short, are published daily? How many seminars on excellence and innovation have we attended or heard about? How many political parties and financial reform plans have been drafted? And yet why have we still failed to achieve meaningful diversification of income sources, despite all the



Al-Jeeran

persistent calls for it? “With such a huge reservoir of knowledge and academic output, we should have been a global model for income diversification, if the solution lay in classroom learning or reading alone. Sadly, the reality is far from that. Most of our educational outcomes are like arid land, unable to retain water or grow vegetation. The rain may fall, but it brings no benefit. The land neither nurtures growth nor stores water for future use.

“This is the reality for many in the younger generation today, they neither learn in a meaningful way nor contribute to those around them. They exist on the fringes of life, disconnected from purpose and productivity. So where is this “righteous nation” we often talk about? Despite being blessed with immense natural and human resources, far exceeding those of many developed countries, we have yet to harness them effectively. Meanwhile, others have taken advantage of what we have failed to manage.

“Can we truly expect our nation to thrive in righteousness and stability when it is others who control and benefit from our own wealth? The painful truth is clear: the difference between “income” and “deception” is just a single dot - one above, one below.”

— Compiled by Mahmoud Attiyy/Simi K. Kutty

86 affected by fraudulent documents

Syrian man’s forged citizenship uncovered after DNA evidence

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Nationality Investigation Department in the Interior Ministry received information about a Syrian with a forged Kuwaiti citizenship in 2017 and the suspect left the country in the same year, after realizing the seriousness of the crime he committed, reports Al-Rai daily.

The suspect relied on a number of acquaintances and parliamentary pressure that resulted in lifting the arrest warrant issued against him. He was able to return to Kuwait, believing the case was closed.

However, after former MP Ahmed Al-Fadel’s seminar and the revelation of some secrets, the suspect fled Kuwait again. Despite being summoned multiple times, he never returned to the Nationality Investigation Department.

The department summoned his sons,

conducted DNA tests, and matched them with DNA samples taken from their supposed uncles (according to the nationality files). Scientific and conclusive evidence proved they are not their uncles.

To circumvent their father’s summons, the sons obtained a death certificate claiming that their father had been in Syria and died there. They also presented a death certificate for a Kuwaiti citizen issued by the Syrian authorities.

After examining the documents, proving the DNA forgery, and doubting the validity of the death certificate; the citizenship of the suspect was revoked, as well as that of 86 individuals in his file.

The biggest irony in this case is that the suspect’s birth certificate showed he is older than his mother; that is, his alleged mother is three months and two weeks younger than him!

Kuwait and IOM boost co-op to combat human trafficking

New workshops and training set to enhance efforts



KUNA photo

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Sabah, received Sunday, the Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration for the Middle East and North Africa, Othman Belbeisi.

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieu. Gen. Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Sabah deliberated on Sunday along with senior UN official, Othman Belbeisi, boosting cooperation relating to anti-human trafficking.

Belbeisi, the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Regional Director for Middle East and North Africa, is on official visit to the country, relayed a ministry statement.

Undersecretary Al-Sabah underscored the necessity of intensifying international efforts to combat such crime, affirming Kuwait’s keenness on boosting cooperation with international bodies to protect human rights.

Belbeisi gave a detailed presentation on the organization’s programs and projects made in cooperation with governments.

Kuwait’s Interior Ministry and the IOM agreed on a number of workshops and specialized training courses in the field of combating human trafficking, according to the statement.

Ambassador highlights strong Bangladesh-Kuwait relations

Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait hosts Independence, National Day 2025 reception

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait hosted a grand reception on 16 April 2025 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel to celebrate the 54th anniversary of Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. Over 400 guests attended the event, including ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait, high-ranking Kuwaiti officials and dignitaries, members of the Bangladesh Military Contingent, representatives from the local press and media, and members of the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait. His Excellency Mr. Nasser Yusef Mohammed Al-Sumait, the Minister of Justice of the State of Kuwait graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. His Excellency Major General Syed Tareq Hussain, OSP, awc, psc, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait, along with other Embassy officials and their spouses, warmly welcomed the guests.

The colourful reception programme began with the national anthems of Bangladesh and Kuwait. In his welcome address, Ambassador Major General Syed Tareq Hussain expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Guest of Honour for attending the celebration. He also conveyed deep appreciation to the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the leadership and people of Kuwait for their continuous support to the Bangladeshi community residing in the country.

In his speech, the Ambassador underscored that



Cutting of the cake ceremony.

Kuwait was the first Gulf country to recognize Bangladesh following its independence in 1971. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1974, Bangladesh and Kuwait have enjoyed robust cooperation in various fields, including political, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, and defence. He expressed hope that under the dynamic and visionary leadership of the Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Honourable

Chief Adviser of Bangladesh, Nobel Laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, the bilateral relations will continue to flourish and reach at new heights.

The Ambassador paid homage to the freedom fighters and martyrs of 1971 liberation war of Bangladesh. The Ambassador also highlighted Bangladesh’s remarkable journey of progress and development since its independence, noting significant achievements in socio-economic advancement. He also mentioned about the July-August 2024 mass uprising led by the young generation and emphasized its role in upholding the aspirations of an equitable, transparent, and accountable society and to institutionalise the democratic norms in the country.

Referring to the recently held Investment Summit in Dhaka from April 7 to 10, 2025 where 425 delegates from 50 countries participated, the Ambassador invited Kuwait and other friendly nations to invest in Bangladesh’s Special Economic Zones and share in the mutual growth and prosperity. He also emphasized the potential of Bangladesh’s tourism sector, portraying it as a land of natural beauty and warm hospitality. He encouraged everyone to visit Bangladesh and experience its charm firsthand. In his concluding remarks, the Ambassador urged the Bangladeshi expatriate community in Kuwait to continue their efforts of contributing wholeheartedly to the development of Bangladesh.



Kuwait joins Bangladesh in commemorating liberation and lasting friendship.

News in Brief

Court to review appeal of 18 in false news case

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Court of Appeals scheduled sessions for Sept 7 and 10 to deliberate on the appeal of the Public Prosecution against the ruling of the Criminal Court to acquit 18 citizens; including former MPs, activists and social media personalities; of spreading false news, reports Al-Anba daily.

These citizens were charged based on their social media posts about the refusal of former MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri to undergo biometric fingerprinting.

The Sixth Circuit, headed by Counselor Salah Al-Houti, will deliberate on the appeal of the prosecution against the acquittal of a number of defendants on Sept 7.

The Fifth Circuit, headed by Counselor Dr. Omar Al-Masoud, will tackle the appeal against the ruling on the remaining defendants on Sept 10.

□ □ □

Bedoun arrested: The Drugs Control General Department (DCGD) in the Criminal Security Sector at the Interior Ministry arrested a Bedoun for the possession of a large quantity of imported alcohol, reports Al-Rai daily.

In a press statement, the ministry disclosed that investigations and field follow-up resulted in the arrest of the accused who was in possession of around 1,500 bottles of imported alcohol valued at more than KD100,000 and an undisclosed amount believed to be from his alcohol trafficking activities.

□ □ □

Nine warnings issued: The Public Relations Department at the Kuwait Municipality announced that the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Jahra Governorate issued nine warnings for building violations in Waha and Jahra, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, Public Relations Department revealed that the inspection team checked the investment, commercial, industrial and private residential buildings in the abovementioned areas to uncover violations, take the necessary measures against violators and ensure compliance with relevant regulations.

□ □ □

One injured in collision: One person was transported to Jahra Hospital after a collision between two vehicles on the road opposite East Taima, reports Al-Anba daily.

Traffic patrols promptly dealt with the accident, which resulted in injuries.

A security source disclosed that the collision occurred in the morning. He affirmed that traffic and rescue teams were dispatched to the scene, and the vehicle obstructing traffic was towed to clear the road.

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MoEWRE ramps up efforts to prevent blackouts as summer heat drives up demand

Power grid stabilized as Shuaiba North Plant returns to service

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Around 800 megawatts from Shuaiba North Power Plant, which underwent maintenance, have been added to the electricity grid, say sources from the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

Sources said this amount will revitalize the electricity grid and reduce the likelihood of resorting to the pro-

grammed power cuts, which the ministry did in recent weeks due to soaring temperatures.

Sources confirmed the commitment of the ministry to complete the maintenance of units in power plants within record time to ensure the grid is fully prepared to meet the challenges posed by rising temperatures and increased consumption rates.

On the other hand, the monthly statistical report of the ministry revealed that the number of electrical installations completed in March reached 71,607 kilowatts; cov-

ering 554 plots in various sectors in the country.

The report indicated that the private sector topped the list with electricity being connected to 506 plots — a load of 49,875 kilowatts or 69.7 percent of the total; followed by the government sector in second place with 16 plots — 10,714 kilowatts or 15 percent; investment sector with 14 plots, - 5,989 kilowatts or 8.4 percent; industrial sector with eight plots — 3,755 kilowatts or 5.2 percent;

agricultural and industrial sectors with eight plots —

673 kilowatts or 0.9 percent; and commercial sector with only two plots — 598 kilowatts or 0.8 percent.

In addition, the statistical report revealed that 164,428 megawatt-hours were imported from the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) in March to meet the growing demand for energy.

It indicated that the quantities imported witnessed a significant increase starting March 16, with incoming loads ranging from 7,269 megawatts to 10,825 megawatts per day.

Municipality backs e-violations platform, rejects road proposal

Jahra Committee to convene for 6th meeting

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: In response to the proposal of Municipal Council member Fahad Al-Abduljader to establish an electronic platform for violations, Kuwait Municipality revealed in a statement approved by acting Director General Manal Al-Asfour that it is working hard to implement the proposal.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the statement, which confirmed the completion of the building violations system, and that it is now implemented by the relevant de-

partment. “Work is also underway to design and implement the remaining violations,” the statement added.

On the other hand, the Municipality rejected the proposal of council member Walid Al-Dagher to establish an entrance to Mutlaa City on Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Road (Abdally Road) in front of Block Three in Mutlaa City.

The Municipality cited the approved traffic study for the site, confirming that the existing entrances and exits are enough.

Meanwhile, the Jahra Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Enezi, will hold its sixth meeting for the third legislative term on Wednesday.

The committee will discuss the following items on its agenda:

- Request of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to allocate a mosque and parking area totaling 1,100 square meters in Block Six, Abdally Agricultural Area.
- Treatment of unregulated farms in Abdally Agricultural Area as per the request of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR).
- Response of the executive authority to the question of council member Abdullah Al-Enezi regarding the road from Salil Al-Jahra Bridge, which connects the Sixth Ring Road to Mutlaa City, and his proposal regarding the road leading to the popular café in Jahra Governorate.
- Technical opinion of Kuwait Municipality on the proposal submitted of council Walid Al-Dagher to establish an entrance to Mutlaa City.

Zakat House backs cross-border religious education

Kuwait honors 50 Al-Azhar female scholars

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait Office for Charity Projects honored on Friday 50 female students of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, of various nationalities, who completed a training course on a scholarship from Kuwait Zakat House.

The honoring ceremony was held under auspices and in presence of Egyptian Minister of Awqaf (religious endowments) Dr. Usama Al-Azhari with Kuwait Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem attending.

In a speech to the gathering, Dr. Al-Azhari lauded the course, co-organized by Al-Azhar and Kuwait Office for Charity Projects - Cairo, in providing sound understanding of the noble Islam to students.

“The training course reflects the sisterly relations and fruitful cooperation between Egypt and Kuwait in preparing qualified promoters of sound Islamic thought,” the minister pointed out.

He called for more support to, and care for, Al-Azhar students in order to enable them to become religious scholars and enlightened advocates of Islam.

On a similar note, Ambassador Al-Ghanem said the training course provided a change for participants to brainstorm ideas about the best ways for spreading the sound un-



KUNA photo
A side view of the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo honoring graduating and outstanding students studying at Al-Azhar University.

derstanding of moderate Islam.

He said his attendance at the ceremony signals Kuwait’s belief in the noble message of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and the role of this prestigious institution in promoting the Islamic culture and preparing a generation of enlightened scholars.

The sisterly deep-rooted relationship between Kuwait and Egypt kept growing under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and President Abdul Fattah El-Sisi, Ambassador Al-Ghanem added.

Also attending the ceremony were Director of Kuwait Office for Charity Projects Adnan Al-Sabti and Indonesia Ambassador to Egypt Lutfi Rauf as well as other diplomats and senior officials of Al-Azhar.

Fifty female expatriate students from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand took part in the course which was held at Abu-Bakr Al-Seddiq Camp in Alexandria.

PAM resumes payments for revoked citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Based on the directives of Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) will Sunday begin the retroactive disbursement of national employment support for individuals whose citizenships registered under Article 8 were revoked, reports Al-

Seyassah daily quoting informed sources.

They explained that the payments will be made in installments, covering the suspended period following the withdrawal of citizenship, provided the individual remains employed and meets all applicable conditions and regulations.



APRIL

Room Promotion



New center to boost child wellness

MoSA launches ‘Safe Space’ program

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Ministry of Social Affairs has launched the Psychological and Social Guide Center in the Social Care Sector, represented by the “Safe Space” program, in coordination with the Family Nursery Department, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The center aims to support children at the Children’s Home by enhancing their mental and psychological health, and providing a safe environment where they can freely express their feelings and needs.

The ministry explained that the “Safe Space” program is a unique initiative designed to create a dedicated space within the center where children and teenagers

can express themselves through art, play, and creative workshops, thus contributing to their psychological and social development.

The program will be implemented periodically every Saturday for three months to ensure continuous psychological support and regular follow-up for children throughout this period. The program includes purposeful theatrical performances by the children themselves, which allow them to express their experiences and boost their self-confidence. In addition, the program includes psychological counseling sessions through interactive play and art workshops.

Mohamed bin Zayed University honors Kuwaiti scholar in Islamic Moderation

ABU DHABI, April 20, (KUNA): Mohamed bin Zayed University for Humanities honored on Wednesday Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika, Director of the Center for the Promotion of Moderation at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Islamic Affairs, for his significant contributions to promoting moderation and coexistence.

The recognition occurred during the Third International Conference on Islamic Studies, which focused on Citizenship, Identity, and Values of Coexistence. University President Dr. Khalifa Al Dhaheri presented the award, highlighting Dr. Al-Sharika’s efforts in advocating for Islam’s tolerance and combating extremism.

In a statement to KUNA, Dr. Al-Sharika noted that the honor reflects Kuwait’s ongoing commitment to reducing extremism over the past decade. He has received several awards from international institutions and recently joined the Council of Muslim Elders in Europe.

He emphasized that this honor



KUNA photo
Honoring the Director of the Center for Promoting Moderation at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sharika.

represents Kuwait’s leadership in promoting a culture of moderation, aligning with the Ministry of Awqaf’s vision of fostering moderate religious and intellectual discourse.

The conference brought together scholars from various countries to share insights on developing contemporary Islamic studies and promoting societal peace.

Former MPs’ salaries cut

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) has started implementing the decision of the Cabinet to cancel the so-called ‘exceptional salary’ granted to certain categories of former MPs, ministers and other officials, reports Al-Rai daily quoting sources.

Sources said PIFSS will reduce monthly allowances and cancel the exceptional salary starting from the beginning of next month. Sources added the salaries of the abovementioned categories will be reduced to a ceiling of KD2,750; in compliance with governmental directives to review spending and guarantee fairness in salaries and retirement benefits.



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Continued from Page 1

ID please ...

2. Biological samples, such as blood, saliva, or hair, shall be collected from the concerned parties. The collection process must be documented to ensure the integrity of the samples.

3. The analysis shall be conducted in one of the approved laboratories, as specified in Article 4 of this resolution, with appropriate precautions taken to maintain the confidentiality of the test results. DNA will be extracted and compared with the DNA strand to determine the degree of compatibility in accordance with established technical and medical rules.

4. Those conducting DNA fingerprint analyses must meet the following requirements:

- They must be from a list approved by the Ministry of Interior.
- They must not have any kinship, friendship, enmity, or interest in any of the individuals undergoing the DNA test.
- They must not have been previously convicted of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty.
- They must maintain a record of the tests performed to enable the competent authorities at the Ministry of Interior to review them upon request.

5. After the analysis is completed, a report will be issued by the laboratory where the tests were conducted, detailing the results. This report shall be submitted in a confidential envelope to the General Department of Criminal Evidence at the Ministry of Interior.

6. The General Department of Criminal Evidence shall prepare a final report with its approved opinion on the examination of the test results and submit it to the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents.

7. The General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents shall prepare a memorandum of opinion outlining the implications of the test and its validity for granting, withdrawing, losing, or revoking citizenship. This memorandum will be submitted to the Supreme Committee for Citizenship to take the appropriate action.

8. Upon request from the concerned parties or the examination center, and with the approval of the General Department of Nationality and Travel Documents or any entity designated by the Minister of Interior, the DNA test may be repeated to ensure the accuracy of the results.

Article 7:

DNA analysis may be conducted using any of the following biological samples:

1. Blood
2. Semen
3. Hair root or strand
4. Bone
5. Saliva
6. Urine
7. Amniotic fluid of the fetus

8. Fertilized egg cell after division

9. Body cell

Article 8:

Every step of the DNA analysis process, from sample transfer to the final results, shall be documented to ensure the integrity of the samples and the accuracy of the results. These documents shall be stored for reference at the General Department of Criminal Evidence.

The Ministry of Interior may audit these records at any time to ensure their integrity, the security of their storage systems, and their confidentiality.

Article 9:

The Ministry of Interior may seek the assistance of specialists from the Ministry of Health and other entities it deems appropriate to supervise the organization and conduct of DNA analysis, in accordance with the procedures and controls specified in this resolution.

Article 10:

Strict confidentiality and privacy must be maintained when handling genetic data obtained through any of the scientific methods referred to in this resolution.

Article 11:

The Undersecretary of the ministry shall be responsible for implementing this resolution, which shall take effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

Court fines

If this is also not possible, or if the recipient refuses to accept the notice, it shall be published in the official gazette and posted in prominent locations in the relevant government agency, at the convict's residence or workplace, or any other place deemed appropriate by the competent authority.

Article 230 stipulates that, if the imposed fine is not paid, it shall be collected through compulsory execution from the convict's assets. The Public Prosecution may also recover the fine through monthly deductions not exceeding one-quarter of the convict's salary, wage, national labor support, or pension.

Upon the convict's request, the President of the court that issued the verdict, the Public Prosecutor, or an authorized delegate may issue an order allowing the fine to be paid in installments or deferred for a reasonable period, provided that full payment is completed within a maximum of five years.

Expert proposes

Necessity is the mother of invention, and money is truly the last thing entrepreneurs need. The government must reduce its size and competition to

open up various areas for initiative and innovation," he added.

Economic expert Najib Al-Saleh said small business that can benefit from government support are unavailable, and the existing ones do not employ citizens who can benefit from the support. He recommended three ways to support SMEs as follows:

1. The government should stop appointing citizens to government agencies for a period of not less than 10 years to create a new generation in need of work. They will not find work in the government, forcing them to look for jobs outside it. This will encourage them to become educated, proactive and productive.
2. Grant expatriates working in small businesses permanent residency for five years, renewable once. After that, the expatriates will be eligible to apply for citizenship. If they obtain it, they will become citizens who are eligible for government support.
3. Reduce State monopoly on citizens and land to open the way for initiatives and innovation.

Justice minister

It upholds Kuwait's belief that building an effective and sustainable system to combat human trafficking and uphold human rights requires the continuous identification and resolution of shortcomings, along with the constant development of national capabilities.

This strategy primarily aims to establish a system that deals with the existing gaps in the practical response to the needs of human trafficking victims.

It reflects Kuwait's conviction that improving its international ranking is a natural outcome of fundamental efforts centered on preserving human dignity, protecting victims, and holding violators accountable.

It highlights the importance of reviewing the policy on publishing news related to contracted labor, which has been the subject of remarks by the U.S. State Department.

The strategy also highlights the overlap and limitations of current laws in fully addressing all forms and indicators of human trafficking, including forced labor and the confiscation of passports.

Special emphasis is given to the importance of strengthening cooperation with international organizations to build national capacity in combating human trafficking, as well as the need to establish strong partnerships with labor-exporting countries to ensure protection for workers and provide fair remedies for labor violations that may involve indicators of human trafficking. Addressing the issues of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the State of Kuwait presents huge challenges at both the local and international levels.

Kuwait targets rogue food trucks

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


KUWAIT CITY, April 19: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has reaffirmed its commitment to support and promote commercial activities as part of its oversight role to prevent practices that could harm public facilities or impede the provision of services to citizens and expatriates.

The ministry warned that operating mobile food trucks in locations not designated for them is a violation of the regulating ministerial decisions, stressing it will take legal action against violators, such as the permanent revocation of licenses.

It urged the license holders to fully comply with the regulations including the approved locations for conducting their activities to ensure the continuity

of their business in an orderly manner, serve public interest, and provide a safe and sound commercial environment.


Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel issued a decision last November revoking the licenses of 19 mobile food trucks for non-compliance with the rules on designated locations and licensing requirements.



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Joint Operations (Saudi Arabian Chevron Inc. / Kuwait Gulf Oil Company), announces the under-mentioned Public Tenders for procurement of materials.

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The closing date for the following Tenders will be on **Tuesday, 20 MAY 2025 @ 09:00 A.M.**

S.NO.	TENDER NO.	MATERIALS	FEES (KD)
1	032743 - R1	I/O INTERFACE PANEL, YOKOGAWA	50
2	034606	RECIRCULATION VALVE, SCHROEDAHL OR EQUIVALENT	15
3	035339	PIPE FITTINGS COATED	50
4	035340	GATE & BALL VALVES	50
5	035408	S/F EMERSON DELTA V DCS	15
6	035423	INSERT SLEEVES, COATED	25
7	035424	PIPES CARBON STEEL, COATED	100
8	035426	PIPE SPOOLS, COATED	25

Notes: Gate Passes are required for Suppliers entering JO-Wafra Administrative Offices to collect the tender documents and gate pass processing time is 48 hours. Please fill request for gate pass along with legible copies of Authorization letter, Civil ID, Car Registration, Supplier Registration (KGOC or SAC) to e-mail HBJH@chevron.com and CBMS@chevron.com at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

For additional information, you may contact: Tel No.: **23983639** - Ext. : **2502 - 3477**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning



وزارة الإسكان والتخطيط العمراني

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning would like to announce the tender for the following works :

Tender Title	Tender No.	Tender Bond	Documentation Fee	Closing Date & Time	
Completion of Construction of 507 Villas & Its Associated External Works in Village A2 & A3 Madinat Al Hidd Housing Project in the Kingdom of Bahrain funded through the Kuwait Grant under the GCC Development Program to the Kingdom of Bahrain.	HP / 02/ 24	BD 30,000/-	BD 100/-	Wednesday, 25 th June, 2025	1:30 PM (Bahrain local time)

- Suitably eligible and qualified contractors are invited to participate in the above-mentioned Tender Package. Eligibility to participate shall be given to Kuwaiti Grade 'A' Contractor registered with the Kuwaiti Central Tender Committee; and Contractors registered in Bahrain either a Housing or a Building Contractor in a Joint Venture with any Kuwaiti Eligible Contractor. Full details of the tenderer's eligibility and qualification criteria are provided in the Invitation for Qualification document.
- This is a public tender whereby the qualification of tenderers is combined with the submission of their technical and financial proposals. Full details are provided in the Invitation for Qualification Document no. QD-EHH-HP-2024 attached to the tender package. This tender is a two-envelope tender and the qualification & technical bids will be opened first and the financial bid of technically qualified tenderers only will be opened later.
- This tender is advertised through the Bahrain Tender Board E-Tendering System and eligible contractors who wish to participate for above mentioned Project shall have to purchase and download the Documents online through the Bahrain Tender Board's portal <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh>. The tender documents shall be available for purchase and download beginning from Wednesday,16th April 2025 up to Wednesday,11th June 2025.
- Contractors who are not yet registered in the Bahrain Tender Board's e-tendering system shall be required to register through the below-mentioned link. Details of registration are provided online at the Bahrain Tender Board website. For technical assistance please contact the Tender Board through email address helpdesk@tenderboard.gov.bh or call on Tel No. + 973 -17566666.

<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh/Tenders/registerUser>


- The completed Tender which comprise of the Application for Qualification, Technical and Financial Proposal documents shall be submitted online in accordance with the Instruction to Tender and the E-Tendering Guidelines of the Bahrain Tender Board. The Tenderer should include and enclose in his offer the Tender Bond for the amount specified above. The Tender Bond should be in the form and manner as prescribed in the tender document valid for 180 days from the closing date.
- This Tender is in accordance with the provision of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Law Regulating Government Tenders & Purchases No. (36) of 2002 and Its Implementing Regulations issued by Decree No. (37) of 2002; and is subjected to the Unified Rules for Giving Priority to National Products and Products of a National Origin (Article 8, Prime Ministerial Edict No. 21 of 1987).

For any query regarding the invitation, please contact:

Cost Engineering Section, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, P.O. Box 5802, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, Tel. No.: **+97317533000** - ext.519, Email: **Chandramohanan.Krishnapilla@housing.gov.bh**.

• This advertisement shall be a supplementary to the Tender Documents.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning



وزارة الإسكان والتخطيط العمراني

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning would like to announce the tender for the following works:

Tender Title	Tender No.	Tender Bond	Documentation Fee	Closing Date & Time	
Contract Management & Site Supervision for Construction and Completion of 507 Villa in Madinat Al Hidd - Village A2 & A3 in Kingdom of Bahrain funded through the Kuwait Grant under the GCC Development Program to the Kingdom of Bahrain	HP / 03/ 24	BD 10,000/-	BD 100/-	Wednesday, 25 th June, 2025	1:30 PM (Bahrain local time)

- Suitably eligible and qualified consultants are invited to participate in the Tender. Eligibility to participate shall be given to Kuwaiti Category A Consultants registered with the Kuwaiti Central Tender Committee; and Consultants registered in Bahrain should be licensed as Category A with the Council for Regulating the Practice of Engineering Professions (CRPEP), Kingdom of Bahrain in a Joint Venture with any Kuwaiti Eligible Consultant. Full details of the tenderer's eligibility and qualification criteria are provided in the Invitation for Qualification document.
- This is a public tender whereby the qualification of tenderers is combined with the submission of their technical and financial proposals. Full details are provided in the Invitation for Qualification Document no. QD/EHH/S-HP/2024 attached to the tender package. This tender is a two-envelope tender and the qualification & technical bids will be opened first and the financial bid of technically qualified tenderers only will be opened later.
- This tender is advertised through the Bahrain Tender Board E-Tendering System and eligible consultants who wish to participate for above mentioned Project shall have to purchase and download the Documents online through the Bahrain Tender Board's portal <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.bh>. The tender documents shall be available for purchase and download beginning from Wednesday,16th April 2025 up to Wednesday,11th June 2025.
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For any query regarding the invitation, please contact:

Cost Engineering Section, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, P.O. Box 5802, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, Tel. No.: **+97317533000** - ext.519, Email: **Chandramohanan.Krishnapilla@housing.gov.bh**.

• This advertisement shall be a supplementary to the Tender Documents.



Ryan Kelley, (right), speaks at the Jackson County Republican headquarters on April 10, in Jackson, Mich. (AP)

Some Jan 6 rioters pardoned by Trump now embraced as heroes, candidates for office

JACKSON, Mich., April 20, (AP): Ryan Kelley thought he had a good shot at becoming Michigan’s governor in 2022. That is, until he was charged with misdemeanors for participating in the Jan6 riot at the US Capitol. His campaign sputtered and he finished fourth out of five candidates in the Republican primary.

Three years later, Kelley says, people ask him all the time to run for governor again. In today’s America, where President Donald Trump returned to the White House and within hours pardoned some 1,500 Jan. 6 rioters, Kelley’s two-month prison sentence for his actions that winter day in 2021 isn’t the obstacle to public life that it might once have been.

It may even be a ticket to political prominence.

Far from being sidelined, those who rioted, assaulted police officers or broke into congressional offices during the violent attack are now being spotlighted as honored guest speakers at local Republican events around the country. They are getting a platform to tell their version of events and being hailed as heroes and martyrs. Some are considering runs for office, recognizing that at least among a certain segment of the pro-Trump base, they are seen not as criminals but as patriots.

Kelley, a 43-year-old commercial

real estate developer, is among those fielding new opportunities in the political arena.

At a recent county Republican committee event in Jackson, Michigan, Kelley was met with hugs and handshakes. Dozens of attendees hollered and clapped when he introduced himself as “your favorite J6er.” They gasped and shook their heads as Kelley recalled how his young son thought he was dead while he was in federal prison. They urged him to run for governor again in 2026. It is something he said he is debating.

After Kelley finished speaking, attendees said they were touched by his story.

“I’ve done much worse and did no jail time,” said 58-year-old Todd Gillman, a woodworker and Republican chairman for the local congressional district. “Thank God people like Ryan Kelley are not intimidated by the lawfare that was used against them.”

It makes sense that Republicans are seizing the chance to showcase Jan. 6 rioters, said Matt Dallek, a historian at George Washington University who studies the conservative movement. Trump has likened those rioters to “political prisoners” and “warriors” for defending him and his false claims that the 2020 election won by Democrat Joe Biden was stolen. There is no cred-

ible evidence the 2020 election was tainted or that Trump was the winner - facts backed up by federal and state election officials and Trump’s own attorney general. Trump’s allegations of fraud were also roundly rejected by courts, including by judges appointed by Trump.

“Those who are pardoned can testify, like no one else can, to the horrific power of the federal government to destroy their lives,” Dallek said. “It’s a potent rallying cry, and also probably a potent fundraising tool.”

But there also is a danger to elevating them, he said. Many of those pardoned by the Republican president used violence to stop the peaceful transfer of power, and juries determined their actions to be criminal.

“It is, I think, a mainstreaming, a growing acceptance on the right of political violence, as long as it’s done in the service of Trump and his ongoing election lie,” Dallek said.

Kelley, who did not commit violence or enter the Capitol, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor trespassing charge. He said he saw some things at the Capitol - people breaking windows, for example - that he did not like. But he also flatly denied an audience member’s use of the term “insurrection.”

‘This is a very perilous time in America for liberty’

Anti-Trump protesters rally in New York, Washington and elsewhere across country

NEW YORK, April 20, (AP): Opponents of US President Donald Trump’s administration took to the streets of communities large and small across the US on Saturday, decrying what they see as threats to the nation’s democratic ideals. The disparate events ranged from a march through midtown Manhattan and a rally in front of the White House to a demonstration at a Massachusetts commemoration of “the shot heard ‘round the world” on April 19, 1775, marking the start of the Revolutionary War 250 years ago.

Thomas Bassford was among the demonstrators at the reenactment of the Battles of Lexington and Concord outside Boston. The 80-year-old retired mason from Maine said he believes Americans are under attack from their own government and need to stand up against it.

“This is a very perilous time in America for liberty,” said Bassford, who was with his partner, daughter and two grandsons. “I wanted the boys to learn about the origins of this country and that sometimes we have to fight for freedom.”

In Denver, hundreds of protesters gathered at the Colorado State Capitol with banners expressing solidarity with immigrants and telling the Trump administration: “Hands Off!” People waved US flags, some of them held upside down to signal distress.

Thousands of people also marched through downtown Portland, Oregon, while in San Francisco, hundreds spelled out the words “Impeach & Remove” on a sandy beach along the Pacific Ocean, also with an inverted US flag. People walked through downtown Anchorage, Alaska, with handmade signs listing reasons why they were demonstrating, including one that one that read: “No sign is BIG enough to list ALL of the reasons I’m here!”

Elsewhere protests were planned outside Tesla car dealerships against billionaire Trump adviser Elon Musk and his role in downsizing the federal government. Others organized more community service-oriented events such as food drives, teach-ins and volunteering at local shelters.

The protests come just two weeks after similar nationwide demonstrations. Organizers say they oppose what they call Trump’s civil rights violations and constitutional violations, including efforts to deport scores of immigrants and to scale back the federal government by firing thousands of government workers and effectively shuttering entire agencies.



Protesters rally at the state capitol in Harrisburg, Pa., during the Day of Action protest against the Trump administration on April 19. (AP)

Some of the events drew on the spirit of the Revolutionary War, calling for “no kings” and resistance to tyranny.

In Anchorage, a colonial reenactor in colonial garb held up a “No Kings” sign while the person next to him hoisted cardboard that read in part: “The Feudal Age is OVER.”

Boston resident George Bryant, who was among those at the Concord protest, said he is concerned that the president is creating a “police state.” He held a sign saying, “Trump fascist regime must go now!”

“He’s defying the courts. He’s kidnapping students. He’s eviscerating the

checks and balances,” Bryant said. “This is fascism.”

In Washington, Bob Fasick, a 76-year-old retired federal employee from Springfield, Virginia, said he came out to the rally near the White House out of concern over threats to constitutionally protected due process rights, Social Security and other federal safety-net programs.

The Trump administration, among other things, has moved to shutter Social Security Administration field offices, cut funding for government health programs and scale back protections for transgender people.

“I cannot sit still knowing that if I don’t do anything and everybody doesn’t do something to change this, that the world that we collectively are leaving for the little children, for our neighbors is simply not one that I would want to live,” Fasick said.

In Columbia, South Carolina, several hundred people protested at the state-house holding signs with slogans such as “Fight Fiercely, Harvard, Fight.”

And in Manhattan, protesters rallied against continued deportations of immigrants as they marched from the New York Public Library north toward Central Park and past Trump Tower.

“No fear, no hate, no ICE in our state,” they chanted to a steady drumbeat, referring to the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Marshall Green said he is most concerned that Trump invoked the wartime Alien Enemies Act of 1798 by claiming the country is at war with Venezuelan gangs linked to the South American nation’s government, even though a recent US intelligence assessment found no coordination between them.

“Congress should be stepping up and saying no, we are not at war. You cannot use that,” said the 61-year-old from Morristown, New Jersey. “You cannot deport people without due process, and everyone in this country has the right to due process no matter what.”

Meanwhile Melinda Charles, of Connecticut, said she worries about “executive overreach,” citing clashes with the federal courts, Harvard University and other elite colleges.

“We’re supposed to have three equal branches of government,” she said, “and to have the executive branch become so strong, I mean it’s just unbelievable.”



In this photo taken from video distributed by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on April 18, Russian soldiers launch a Supercam intelligence unmanned aerial vehicle towards Ukrainian positions in Ukraine. (AP)

Russia trying to create ‘impression of ceasefire’ as attacks continue: Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine, April 20, (Agencies): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia on Sunday of creating a false appearance of honoring an Easter ceasefire, saying Moscow continued to launch attacks overnight after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a unilateral temporary truce in Ukraine.

“As of Easter morning, we can say that the Russian army is trying to create a general impression of a ceasefire, but in some places, it does not abandon individual attempts to advance and inflict losses on Ukraine,” Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

Despite Putin’s declaration of an Easter ceasefire on Saturday, Zelenskyy said Sunday morning that Ukrainian forces had recorded 59 instances of Russian shelling and five assaults by units across various areas along the front line, as well as dozens of drone strikes.

In a later update on X, Zelenskyy said “despite Ukraine declaring a symmetrical approach to Russian actions,” there had been an increase in Russian shelling and drone attacks since 10 a.m. (0700 GMT). He said, however, that it was “a good thing, at least, that there were no air raid sirens.”

“In practice, either Putin does not have full control over his army, or the



A medical worker uses a wheelchair to move an injured Ukrainian soldier from an ambulance after returning from captivity in a POW exchange in Ukraine on April 19. (AP)

situation proves that in Russia, they have no intention of making a genuine move toward ending the war, and are only interested in favorable PR coverage,” he wrote.

Zelenskyy said that Russia must fully adhere to the ceasefire conditions and reiterated Ukraine’s offer to extend the truce for 30 days, starting midnight Sunday.

He said the proposal “remains on the table” and added: “We will act in

accordance with the actual situation on the ground.”

Zelenskyy said Saturday night that some areas were quieter since the ceasefire was announced, which he claimed showed Putin to be the “true cause” of the war.

Also:

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates announced on Saturday the success of mediation efforts between Russia and Ukraine, leading to the largest prisoner exchange since the outbreak of the conflict between the two countries, with a mutual exchange of 246 prisoners.

The exchange process totaled to 538 prisoners, including 31 injured Ukrainians, and 15 injured Russians, bringing the total number of prisoners exchanged due to mediations to 3,771 prisoners, said the UAE Foreign Affairs Ministry in a statement.

The ministry expressed its thanks to both countries for their cooperation in the mediation efforts, stating that the number of mediations has risen to 14, and reflects the distinguished relations between the UAE, Russia, and Ukraine.

The UAE will continue its efforts aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict, and to mitigate the humanitarian effects of the crisis, stressed the ministry.

Incessant crackdown in Belarus hurls dozens of independent journalists into harsh prisons

TALLINN, Estonia, April 20, (AP): Journalist Ksenia Lutsina served only half of her eight-year prison sentence in Belarus after being convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the government. She was pardoned after she kept fainting in her cell from a brain tumor diagnosed during pretrial detention.

“I was literally brought to the penal colony in a wheelchair, and I realized that journalism has really turned into a life-threatening profession in Belarus,” she told The Associated Press in Vilnius, Lithuania, where she lives.

Lutsina was one of dozens of journalists imprisoned in Belarus, where many face beatings, poor medical care and the inability to contact lawyers or relatives, according to activists and former inmates. She compared the prisons to those from the Soviet era.

The group Reporters Without Borders says Belarus is Europe’s leading jailer of journalists. At least 40 are serving long prison sentences, according to the Belarusian Association of Journalists.

Lutsina had quit her job making documentaries for Belarus’ state broadcaster in 2020 when mass protests broke out after an election - widely denounced as fraudulent - kept authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko in power. Trying to set up an alternative TV channel to fact-check government officials, she was



Police detain a photojournalist at an opposition rally protesting presidential election results in Minsk, Belarus, on Sept 26, 2020. (AP)

arrested that year, put on trial and later convicted.

Other journalists fled the country of 9.5 million and operate from abroad. But many have had to curtail their work after U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration cut off foreign aid, a vital source of funding for many independent media.

“Journalists are forced to face not only repressions within the country, but also the sudden withdrawal of U.S. aid, which puts many editorial offices on the brink of survival,” BAI chair Andrei Bastunets told AP.

Lukashenko’s brutal crackdown after the disputed election led to over 65,000 arrests between 2020-25. Thousands told of being beaten by police, opposition figures were jailed or forced into exile, and hundreds of thousands fled abroad in fear.

America

4 dead in Illinois plane crash: A single-engine plane crashed in a field in central Illinois on Saturday, killing all four people on board.

Coles County Coroner Ed Schniers said the victims were two women and two men, but he could not release more details pending notification of next of kin.

The Cessna C180G airplane went down shortly after 10 a.m. near the unincorporated community of Trilla, the National Transportation Safety Board said via email. Preliminary information indicated that it struck power lines, the NTSB said.

“Terrible news out of Coles County,” Gov. JB Pritzker said on social media, adding that his administration “is monitoring the situation as we keep those impacted by the plane crash in our thoughts today.” (AP)

□ □ □

Trump official urges probe of James: In the summer of 2023, New York Attorney General Letitia James helped her niece buy a modest house in Norfolk, Virginia, by becoming a co-borrower on the mortgage loan. A top housing official in the Trump administration has now seized on a document in that transaction to argue that James should be prosecuted for bank fraud, asking the US Justice Department in a letter to open a criminal investigation into the Democrat.

The request for an investigation comes as the administration has pursued a campaign of retribution against President Donald Trump’s longtime foes in the legal world. James won a \$454 million judgment against Trump last year in a lawsuit claiming he had lied about the value of his assets on financial statements given to banks.

James called the allegations against her “baseless.”

“It is nothing more than a headline, nothing more than



New York Attorney General Letitia James speaks during a news conference outside Manhattan federal court in New York on Feb 14. (AP)

retaliation against all the actions I have taken successfully against Donald Trump,” she said Wednesday in an interview on the New York cable news station NY1.

In an April 14 letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi asking for an investigation, U.S. Federal Housing Finance Agency Director William Pulte cited “media reports” claiming James had falsely listed a home in Virginia as her principal residence, which he hypothesized was an effort to avoid the higher interest rates people often pay for mortgages on second homes.

As evidence, Pulte cited a legal form James signed on Aug. 17, 2023, in which she gave her niece, Shamice Thompson-Hairston, the authority to sign documents on her behalf in connection with the sale two weeks later. Those forms are required when a person involved in buying a house can’t be present for the closing. (AP)

‘Important diplomatic mission by Trump’s administration’

Vance set to visit India for bilateral talks on economic, trade and geopolitical ties

NEW DELHI, April 20, (AP): US Vice President JD Vance will embark on a four-day visit to India on Monday as the two countries seek to unlock economic opportunities and negotiate a bilateral trade deal.

Vance will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi for talks on the economy, trade and geopolitical ties. Vance’s visit is seen as an important diplomatic mission by President Donald Trump’s administration, and it coincides with a rapidly intensifying trade war between Washington and Beijing, which is New Delhi’s main rival in the region.

A trade deal between India and the US could significantly enhance economic ties between the two countries and potentially strengthen diplomatic ties.

The US is also India’s largest trading partner, with bilateral trade valued at \$190 billion until recently.

India’s foreign ministry has said the visit will “provide an opportunity for both sides to review the progress in bilateral relations” and two leaders will “exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest.”

Vance’s arrival in India comes weeks after Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard was in India for a geopolitical conference and two months after Modi met Trump in Washington.

Modi was among the first leaders to visit the US and hold talks with Trump after he returned to the White House. During his visit, Modi hailed a “mega partnership” with the US and kick started a negotiation process to minimize the possible fallout of Trump’s tariffs after it had already cut tariffs on a range of US goods.

Regardless, Trump targeted India with a 26% levy as part of his now-paused tariff programme, which has provided temporary relief for Indian exporters.

During his visit, Modi sought to soften impending trade barriers by saying he was open to reducing more tariffs on US goods, repatriating undocumented Indian nationals and buying military gear. The two countries also agreed to start talks towards clinching the bilateral trade agreement.

Modi on Friday said he spoke with Elon Musk and said he and the SpaceX CEO “discussed the immense potential for collaboration in the areas of technology and innovation,” saying “India remains committed to advancing our partnerships with the US in these domains.”



US Vice President JD Vance, (right), and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attend a bilateral meeting at the residence of the US Ambassador on the sidelines of the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris on Feb 11. (AP)

India is a close partner of the US for bilateral trade, foreign direct investments, defence cooperation, and an important strategic ally in combating the rising influence of China in the Indo-Pacific region.

It is also part of the Quad, which is made up of the United States plus India, Japan and Australia and seen as a counter-balance to China’s expansion in the region.

Leading US companies such as Apple Inc. and Google have expanded opera-

tions in India in recent years. Last month, Musk’s Starlink entered into agreements with two of India’s top telecom operators to provide satellite-based internet services.

To further boost trade ties, the US and India have set an ambitious target of more than doubling their bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 under the expected trade deal agreement.

The negotiations are especially urgent for New Delhi as it could be hit hard by Trump’s reciprocal tariffs, particularly in sectors of agriculture, processed food, auto components, high-end machinery, medical equipment and jewelry. This poses a significant challenge for Modi government as it hopes to spruce up the country’s economy and generate jobs with an export-led recovery.

Modi established a good working relationship with Trump during his first term in office. It now appears that the two leaders are likely to further boost cooperation between their countries, particularly in trade as Chinese President Xi Jinping is aiming to position Beijing as a reliable trade partner in the Asia-Pacific region amid rising tensions with Washington.

India has also already taken a number of steps to win over Trump. It will purchase more oil, energy and defence equipment, including the fifth-generation stealth fighter jets, from the US.

The U.S, however, wants greater market access for its agricultural and dairy products in India, but New Delhi has been reluctant so far as the farm sector employs bulk of the country’s workforce.

Vance’s visit to India marks his first official trip to the country, which has added significance for the second family. His wife Usha Vance - a practising Hindu - is the daughter of immigrants from South India.

In his memoir “Hillbilly Elegy,” Vance described his wife a “supersmart daughter of Indian immigrants” whom he met at Yale Law School. Usha’s parents moved to the U.S. in the late 1970s.

Vance will be accompanied by Usha, their children and other senior members of the U.S. administration, and the couple will visit Indian cities of Jaipur and Agra and participate in engagements at cultural sites, a readout from the White House said.

Aftershocks and lack of resources hinder recovery work three weeks after Myanmar’s deadly earthquake

BANGKOK, April 20, (AP): Basic services have yet to be restored to the areas of Myanmar worst hit by a huge earthquake three weeks ago, and emergency workers recovering bodies and clearing debris are contending with regular aftershocks and lack of resources, humanitarian services say.

A situation report issued late Friday by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, said frequent strong aftershocks continue to shake central Myanmar almost daily, increasing fear and uncertainty among affected residents, disrupting response effort s and exacerbating the pressure on already limited resources and services.

“Three weeks after catastrophic twin earthquakes hit Myanmar on 28 March, the worst-affected communities are still without safe shelter, clean water and sanitation, stable electricity, health care and essential services,” the report said.

The epicenter of the 7.7 magnitude quake was near Mandalay, Myanmar’s second-largest city, but it hit a wide swath of the country, causing significant damage to six regions and states including the capital, Naypyitaw.

It also worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis triggered by the country’s civil war that had internally displaced more than 3 million people and left nearly 20 million in need, according to the United Nations.

A report in the state-run Myanmar Alinn newspaper published on Saturday said the quake’s death toll had reached 3,726, with 5,105 people injured and 129 still missing.



People clean debris from damaged buildings in the aftermath of an earthquake on March 28, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on April 7. (AP)

It said 1,975 international rescuers and medical workers from 25 countries had collaborated with local rescuers in saving 653 people and recovering 753 bodies from under rubble.

Myanma Alinn said 65,096 houses and buildings, 2,514 schools, 4,317 Buddhist monasterial living quarters, 6,027 pagodas and temples, 350 hospitals and clinics, 170 bridges, 586 dams and 203 sections of the country’s main highway were damaged by the earthquake.

Myanmar Fire Services Department, an official emergency services agency operating in many areas of the country, said in statements posted Friday on its Facebook page that rescue workers were carrying out relief, search and cleaning debris from the big buildings, and had

returned valuable jewelry, cash, and documents found among the rubble to their owners.

It also said that rescuers recovered two bodies from collapsed buildings in Mandalay.

An official from Myanmar Rescue Federation (Mandalay), which has been operating along with the firefighters, told The Associated Press on Friday that the priority three weeks on from the earthquake was to clear bodies and debris from under bigger buildings, while also providing assistance to the survivors affected by the earthquake.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he fears arrest for speaking without authorization, said the number of bodies recovered daily has decreased to only one or two.

Another emergency services worker in Mandalay, similarly speaking on condition of anonymity, said the number of rescue teams operating in Mandalay has been steadily decreasing as most of the international rescue teams had returned to their countries after their work to find survivors was considered completed. He said local rescue workers were mainly participating in clearing debris and providing assistance.

The United Nations Development Program earlier this month estimated that at least 2.5 million tons, or roughly 125,000 truckloads, of debris from the quake needs to be removed. It based its estimate on remote sensing analysis of images obtained by satellites.

UN-Habitat, the UN agency for human settlements, said in a statement on Friday that its staff and the Myanmar Engineering Society were collaborating in assessing widespread building damage in earthquake-affected regions.

In Naypyitaw, almost all rescuers have ceased their relief efforts, while government buildings that were damaged by the earthquake have not yet been repaired and remain in their post-earthquake condition, said a resident who asked not to be named for security reasons. In residential areas, people have almost completed clearing the debris on their own.

Saturday’s report in Myanma Alinn said Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, head of the military government, told his Cabinet members during a meeting on Friday that the urban layout of Naypyitaw will be redesigned.



An airport official and friend takes a selfie with renowned Sherpa mountain guide Kami Rita, (left), as the latter prepares to depart from the Tribhuvan airport to ascend Mount Everest for the record 31st time, in Kathmandu, Nepal, on April 20. (AP)

Famed Sherpa guide will attempt to climb Mt Everest for 31st time

KATHMANDU, Nepal, April 20, (AP): One of the greatest mountain guides will attempt to scale the world’s highest peak for the 31st time - and possibly the 32nd time as well - and break his own record.

Kami Rita, 55, flew to Mount Everest on Sunday from Kathmandu to lead a group of climbers who will try to reach the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit during the spring climbing season.

“I am mentally, emotionally and physically prepared to climb the mountain,” Kami Rita told The Associated Press at Kathmandu’s airport. “I am in my top physical condition right now.”

He holds the record for the most successful ascents of Mount Everest at 30 times. In May last year he climbed the peak twice.

“My first priority is to get my client to the summit of the peak. Then I will decide on whether I will climb the peak more than one time during the season. It depends on the weather and conditions on the mountain,” he said.

His closest competitor for the most climbs of Mount Everest is fellow Sherpa guide Pasang Dawa, who has made 27 successful ascents of the mountain.

Kami Rita first climbed Everest in 1994 and has been making the trip nearly every year since. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose expertise and skills are vital to the safety and success each year of foreign climbers aspiring to stand on top of the mountain.

His father was among the first Sherpa mountain guides. In addition to his Everest climbs, Kami Rita has scaled several other peaks that are among the world’s highest, including K2, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Lhotse.

Tunisian opposition figures sentenced to up to 66 years in jail: media reports

TUNIS, Tunisia, April 20, (AP): A court in Tunisia has sentenced leading opposition figures to between 13 and 66 years in prison in the climax of a major trial accusing 40 people of conspiring against state security, according to Tunisian media reports.

Activists called the case baseless and politically motivated. Tunisian President Kais Saied has rolled back many freedoms the North African country gained after spawning the Arab Spring pro-democracy uprisings in 2011.

Those accused in the trial include former diplomats, business leaders, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders, and some have spent more than two years in pre-trial detention. Others have fled abroad.

The trial began in March and wrapped up late Friday and early Saturday with the court handing down sentences of between 13 and 66 years to prominent opposition leaders, according to official news agency TAP and local radio Jawahra FM.

TAP quoted a substitute prosecutor as saying they were found guilty of conspiracy against state security and belonging to a terror group. The trial was held in a special criminal court for terrorism cases.

Lawyers in the huge and high-profile case told Tunisian media that it was unclear how many of the 40 defendants were given prison terms.

Former Tunisian legislator Said Ferjani was convicted to



People take part in a protest against president Kais Saied policies, in Tunis, Tunisia on March 5, 2023. (AP)

13 years in prison, his daughter Kaouther Ferjani posted on X. Describing it as “yet another fabricated conspiracy case,” she said that other figures from Islamist party Ennahdha were also among those sentenced.

Tunisia’s president, re-elected for a second term last year, says the defendants are “traitors and terrorists” because they accuse him of staging a coup in 2021.

Ecuadorian authorities warn of potential assassination attempt against President Noboa

QUITO, Ecuador, April 20, (AP): Ecuadorian authorities warned Saturday that the Andean country is on “high alert” after it received intelligence about an suspected attempt on President Daniel Noboa’s life.

Ecuador’s Government Ministry, providing no evidence for its claims, wrote on a post on the social network X that it was warned “about the planning of an assassination, terrorist attacks and ... violent protests.”

The ministry said it had taken security measures to neutralized the alleged threats.

The warning comes days after Noboa won re-election, defeating leftist opposition candidate Luisa González by a margin of more than one million votes, according to electoral authorities.

Noboa has gained popularity for his crackdown on organized crime at a time that violence has soared, prompting the president to declare that Ecuador is in an “internal armed conflict.”

The Noboa government claimed that those behind the recent threat were “criminal structures” and “political sectors defeated at the polls.” Noboa alluded to an alleged military intelligence report circulating on social media which said that after Sunday’s elections, “the transfer of hired killers from Mexico and other countries to Ecuador has begun.”



Ecuador’s President Daniel Noboa and his wife Lavinia Valbonesi gesture from Carondelet Palace as they attend the changing of the presidential guard ceremony in Quito, Ecuador on April 15. (AP)

The Associated Press consulted the military institution on the veracity of the report, to which its press office responded that an official statement would be issued in the coming hours.



Haitian army soldiers patrol during a protest against insecurity in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 16, (AP)

Haitians face record hunger as gang violence grips country in throes of economic crisis

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, April 20, (AP): More than half of Haiti’s population is expected to experience severe hunger through June, and another 8,400 people living in makeshift shelters are projected to starve, according to a new report released this week.

Relentless gang violence and an ongoing economic collapse is to blame, according to an analysis from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a multi-partner UN initiative that analyzes food insecurity and malnutrition around the world.

It noted that the number of those facing severe hunger increased by more than 300,000 people to some 5.7 million since last year.

Among those going hungry is Jackie Jean-Jacques, his wife and their three sons, who lost their home to gang violence and have lived in a crowded makeshift shelter for more than a year.

“There are days where the kids have to live on sugar water and bread,” he said. “It hurts me to see that.”

Jean-Jacques, 52, used to work as a bus driver but could no longer afford to rent the bus or buy gasoline. Besides,

he worries that one day gangs would open fire on his public transportation vehicle like they have on others.

Meanwhile, his wife sells small items like plastic cups and lunch boxes on the street.

“This is not enough to feed us,” he said.

While food and potable water were commonly distributed at shelters, aid began to dwindle after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump in late February decided to terminate 90% of USAID foreign aid contracts.

“Since March 2025, funding has no longer been guaranteed,” according to the report issued Monday.

It said that from August 2024 to February 2025, nearly 977,000 Haitians received humanitarian food aid monthly, although rations have been reduced by up to half.

“The assistance you get is not enough,” Jean-Jacques said.

UNICEF said Thursday that an estimated 2.85 million children - one quarter of Haiti’s entire child population - “are facing consistently high levels of food insecurity.”

The agency warned that it faces a 70% funding shortfall. It said it has helped more than 4,600 children this year with severe acute malnutrition, which represents only 4% of the estimated 129,000 children expected to need life-saving treatment this year.

Meanwhile, the U.N.’s World Food Program said it urgently needs \$53.7 million to “continue its life-saving operations in Haiti over the next six months.”

“Right now, we’re fighting to just hold the line on hunger,” Wanja Kaarria, WFP’s country director in Haiti, said in a statement Thursday.

In 2014, only 2% of Haiti’s population was food insecure, with gang violence largely under control and most people enjoying the successful spring harvests from the previous year, according to a previous report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

Hunger at that time affected mostly those in poor rural areas.

But in 2016, Hurricane Matthew battered Haiti as a Category 4 storm, destroying crops and livelihoods.

Boursa Kuwait closes higher

KUWAIT CITY, April 20, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed Sunday's trading session in the green, with its general index climbing 11.54 points, or 0.15 percent, to settle at 7,880.52 points. The mar-

ket recorded a total trading volume of 289.6 million shares across 16,704 transactions, with a turnover of KD 78.5 million (approximately USD 240.2 million).

Business



Children's joy with the New Gulf Bank mascot.



Gulf Bank team distributed toys and thoughtful gifts to the children – simple gestures that brought bright smiles and offered heartfelt encouragement during their healing journey.

Families praise Gulf Bank's compassionate community efforts

Gulf Bank brings joy to children at Bayt Abdullah Hospice

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: As part of its continuous support for humanitarian and charitable initiatives, Gulf Bank recently organized a heartfelt visit to Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice (BACCH), operated by the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH).

The visit welcomed over 200 children and their families, with the active involvement of Gulf Bank's "Sawa'ed Al-Khaleej" volunteer team, who engaged the children in a series of fun and educational activities.

This visit highlights Gulf Bank's ongoing commitment to social responsibility and its efforts to bring comfort and encouragement to children undergoing difficult medical treatments. The day featured a variety of interactive activities aimed at

spreading joy while offering meaningful learning experiences.

The children took part in engaging planting workshops, where they had the chance to grow their own plants and discover the beauty and importance of nature, nurturing not just greenery, but a sense of hope. They also explored their creativity through art sessions, using colors and brushes to express their emotions and bring their imaginations to life in a warm and joyful atmosphere.

Adding to the cheerful atmosphere, the Gulf Bank team distributed toys and thoughtful gifts to the children—simple gestures that brought bright smiles and offered heartfelt encouragement during their healing journey.

This initiative reflects Gulf Bank's continued com-

mitment to supporting the community, especially individuals navigating difficult times. It also emphasizes the powerful role that collaboration between financial institutions and humanitarian organizations plays in driving meaningful change and spreading hope.

Representatives from Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice expressed their deep appreciation to Gulf Bank and the "Sawa'ed Al-Khaleej" team, sharing that the visit and generous gifts brought moments of joy and much-needed emotional support to the children and their families.

At the end of the visit, families warmly thanked Gulf Bank for its compassion, praising the Bank's ongoing efforts to stand by their side and creating meaningful moments of joy during difficult times.



Dr. Al-Jalal with Al-Marzouq and the Zain team at the company's booth.

Company partners with KFAS for Education and Innovation Summit

Zain sponsors 'Higher Education in the Era of Innovation' summit

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: As part of its ongoing commitment to advancing innovation, supporting education, and empowering creative minds, Zain announced its sponsorship of the Higher Education in the Era of Innovation summit, organized by Abdullah Al-Salem University with the support of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The summit was held under the theme: Education in the Age of Innovation: Benefits, Challenges, and Functionalities.

Zain took part in the summit's opening ceremony, held under the patronage and attendance of H.E. Dr. Nader Abdullah Al-Jalal, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research; Dr. Moudhi Al-Humoud, Chair of the Administrative Board of Abdullah Al-Salem University; Dr. Adel Al-Husainan, Secretary General of the Board; and Hamad Al-Marzouq, Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Zain Kuwait, along with university leaders and participating partners.

Zain's support for this summit reflects its continued efforts to foster innovation and creativity within the community and its commitment to backing academic efforts amidst rapid



Dr. Nader Al-Jalal honors Hamad Al-Marzouq for Zain's support, in the presence of Dr. Moudhi Al-Humoud and Dr. Adel Al-Husainan.

digital transformation and the knowledge challenges facing the education sector.

Through its dedicated booth at the accompanying exhibition, Zain showcased its latest technology solutions tailored for universities and academic institutions in Kuwait. These solutions aim to accelerate digital transforma-

tion in the education sector, with innovation at their core.

Held at Abdullah Al-Jaber Hall at Abdullah Al-Salem University, the summit spotlighted the evolution of higher education in the innovation era. It brought together a select group of academic leaders, technology experts, and decision-makers to discuss the im-

pact of modern technologies – such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and interactive virtual environments – on curriculum design, institutional management, and student engagement.

Key topics included smart campuses, AI-powered personalized learning, predictive analytics, data security, and the policies required to drive digital transformation. The summit aimed to address existing challenges, share successful case studies, and chart a roadmap for the future of higher education – ensuring institutional readiness, inclusivity, efficiency, and sustainability.

On the sidelines of the summit, Zain honored the winners of its Innovation Nation Award: Team HALALI, who secured first place, and Team Threion Space Band, who took second place – recognizing their excellence in harnessing innovation and technology to achieve educational objectives.

Supporting the education ecosystem remains a top priority for Zain, as it continues to strengthen partnerships with leading academic institutions in Kuwait – such as Abdullah Al-Salem University – investing in education as a fundamental pillar for the nation's economic development.

Declaring 12% dividend for shareholders

Mishref achieves KD 6.5 mln in profits, leads Co-op sector

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Mishref Cooperative Society Muath Al-Yahya has announced the distribution of a maximum dividend of 12 percent to shareholders, stressing that the cooperative occupies a historic position and it is a distinctive symbol of cooperative leadership.

In a press conference held at the headquarters of the cooperative to announce the results of the 2024 fiscal year, Al-Yahya pointed out that the achievements of the cooperative would not have been possible without good planning and continuous management by successive boards of directors -- all of whom sought to affirm the rightful position of the cooperative.

He explained that the current figures and growth rates reflect the extent of progress and development in the financial statements. He said the cooperative achieved the highest net profits among cooperative societies in 2024, reaching KD 6.5 million after final approval by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

He disclosed that the sales exceeded KD 51 million, while the cash flow reached KD 23.5 million -- a growth rate of 13.5 percent. "Despite the challenges that the board faced in 2023, which led to a decline in dividend distribution; a plan was put in place to rationalize expenses, manage liquidity, and implement investment plans that helped accelerate recovery and achieve these outstanding results," he said.

Regarding the marketing aspect, Al-Yahya emphasized that last year witnessed a strong start to marketing festivals -- with 18 seasonal and recurring festivals. "Support was also provided to shareholders to enhance their purchasing power and benefit from offers and price reductions on goods," he added.

"The festivals covered the main market and Mubarak Al-Abdullah Market; such as the Ramadan, Musk Al-Khatam, October and Summer Festivals, in addition to other branches like the library, perfumes and cosmetics, and car service. Festivals and discounts on health and beauty products were also organized at Mishref and Mubarak Al-Abdullah pharmacies," he revealed.

He stated that the cooperative held huge marketing events in the central markets in Mishref and Mubarak Al-Abdullah suburbs; featuring 1,800 products at a discount of up to 50 percent, coinciding with the Family Supplies Festival.

He said the products were selected based on high demand from shoppers during the holy month with KD50 purchase credit for each contributor.

He also confirmed that the cooperative contributed to the maintenance of mosques and supervised the preparation of hospitality services for mosquegoers, particularly during night prayers (Tarawih and Qiyam) prayers.

He said some projects have been completed, while others are still underway; including the Block Four grocery store building, which is currently being constructed and equipped for re-opening.

He stated that one of the projects underway is the administration building, which will be for investment activities that meet the needs of shareholders and residents in the area.

"New projects will be implemented in Waha like new playgrounds and the renovation and maintenance of existing playgrounds and facilities along the vital walkway, and a national sports and family destination. Many activities were held throughout the year, such as reforestation, environmental conservation, and maintenance of schools, mosques, public facilities, and roads. The cooperative has a Services and Engineering Department responsible for carrying out maintenance tasks for cooperative and public facilities, as well as other social activities like sports and recreational competitions for shareholders. We are now preparing for a range of activities and events this year," he added.

'Smartphones revolutionize trip planning'

Wego forecasts future of travel with AI & voice-activated apps

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The following is an interview with spokesperson – Mamoun Hmidan, Chief Business Officer of Wego

1. In what keyways has the widespread adoption of smartphones and mobile internet changed how travellers in Kuwait begin planning their trips and gathering information?

The rise of smartphones and mobile internet has transformed how Kuwaiti travellers plan their trips, marking a clear digital shift. People are now moving away from traditional sources like travel agencies and using smartphones to explore blogs, guides and reviews for more personalised travel inspiration.

At Wego, the majority of bookings and travel searches are now happening on smartphones. Another noticeable shift has been the use of social media platforms like YouTube and Instagram, that are driving destination choices through immersive, visually engaging content.

Moreover, real-time planning has become a reality for Kuwaiti travellers, who can now get instant access to visa rules, travel advisories and local conditions, enabling them to make informed decisions with greater confidence.

2. How has mobile technology impacted the urgency and convenience of booking flights, accommodations, and activities for travellers based in this region? What are some specific features or functionalities within mobile travel apps that have been particularly transformative for this market?

Mobile technology has significantly shortened the travel booking window for Kuwaiti travellers, enabling them to research, compare and book trips within minutes. At Wego, we see this shift daily through user behaviour on our platform. Spontaneous travel is now easier, with real-time deals and last-minute bookings just a few taps away. Mobile apps further enhance convenience with personalized experiences and recommendations, online payments, streamlining the entire process.

Travel marketplaces like ours offer price transparency, allowing users to instantly compare



Mamoun Hmidan, Chief Business Officer of Wego

options across hundreds of airlines, hotels and agencies to find the best fit for their budget. Moreover, in-app support through live chat or messaging offers travellers immediate assistance without phone calls or emails, ensuring a smoother booking experience.

3. How do you predict mobile technology continuing to evolve and further shape the future of travel research, booking, and the overall travel experience for Kuwaiti travellers and the Kuwaiti travel market?

As mobile technology evolves, Wego expects key advancements that will reshape travel for Kuwaiti users. AI will drive hyper-personalised experiences, with apps acting as smart travel assistants that learn from past behaviour to offer tailored suggestions like recommending restaurants based on dietary needs or tours based on previous bookings.

Voice search and conversational AI will also become key, enabling users to manage trips through natural language commands.

Sustainability and wearable technology will further influence the future of travel. Mobile platforms will highlight eco-friendly options, helping users make responsible choices. Meanwhile, wearables like smartwatches will offer added convenience through hands-free access to boarding passes, bookings and payments.

CBK honors the participants of the 16th Cohort of Harvard Business School Program for Banking & Finance Executives

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Under the patronage of the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and Chairman of the Board of the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS), Basel A. Al-Haroon, KIBS concluded the Executive Leadership Development Program, which is implemented annually in cooperation with Harvard Business School (HBS). The program is held this year under the title "Strategic Leadership in the Age of Financial Sustainability", and it is a flagship component of "Kafa'a" Initiative launched by the CBK in cooperation with Kuwaiti banks and managed by KIBS to develop executive leaders and qualify national cadres in the banking and financial sector.

The ceremony took place on Thursday, April 17, 2025, in the presence of esteemed representatives from CBK, Kuwaiti banks, participating companies from Kuwait and other countries, KIBS management, and the program's participants.

Having congratulated the participants and encouraged them to embrace continuous learning in order to stay ahead in an ever-evolving financial landscape, the CBK stressed on continuing cooperation with local banks and KIBS to support quality education, training and qualification to provide the national economy with competencies and distinguished cadres, in order to contribute to enhancing economic growth, whether through the KIBS's various pro-

grams or through "Kafa'a" Initiative.

The enduring collaboration between KIBS and HBS was also recognized. Over the past sixteen years, this collaboration has produced a diverse portfolio of high-impact programs that helped shape the leadership of executives and mid-level managers across Kuwait and the GCC region, with invaluable support of CBK and local banks.

Program participants expressed their deep appreciation for the transformative experience, noting the significant knowledge, tools, and global perspectives they have gained. They also extended their gratitude to CBK, KIBS, and their employers who are keen to support and invest in the national cadres.



CBK Governor patronizes KIBS Leadership Graduation Ceremony.

Powell warns tariffs threaten Fed’s dual mandate

Global markets calm amidst trade tensions, US economic data mixed

By National Bank of Kuwait

Market Commentary
This week, global markets saw relative calm following last week’s epic volatility. In the United States, market sentiment was dominated by continuing trade tensions and renewed political pressure on the Federal Reserve. Chair Jerome Powell warned that the newly announced tariffs are significantly larger than was anticipated, potentially jeopardising the Fed’s dual mandate amidst still elevated inflation. President Trump escalated calls for rate cuts, questioning Powell’s tenure. US retail sales rose 1.4% m/m in March, reflecting front-loaded consumer demand ahead of tariff implementation. The labour market showed mixed signals, with unemployment claims declining to 215K but manufacturing indicators weakening. In Canada, the Bank of Canada held its overnight rate at 2.75% as CPI eased to 2.3% y/y, but recession risks rose due to external shocks, prompting the central bank to suspend its forecast guidance. Meanwhile, the European Central Bank lowered its benchmark rate to 2.25%, citing weakening growth projections and tightening financial conditions. The Eurozone’s 2025 GDP growth outlook was already revised down to 0.9%. In the United Kingdom, CPI inflation fell to 2.6% y/y in March, below expectations, whilst a weakening labour market drove market expectations of a rate cut at the BoE’s 8 May meeting to 100%. In the Asia-Pacific region, China’s Q1 GDP grew 5.4% y/y, exceeding expectations, supported by strong March data. Australia added 32.2K jobs in March, keeping unemployment at 4.1%, though the RBA remains biased toward easing. In New Zealand, Q1 inflation rose to 2.5% y/y, exceeding forecasts despite ongoing economic fragility. Equity markets were relatively calm in the holiday-shortened trading week, with the S&P 500 and DJIA finishing the week with deltas of +0.28% and -1.14% respectively. US Treasury yields eased with the 10-year at 4.33%. Gold reached a historic high \$3,357.78, reflecting heightened risk aversion.

United States and Canada
Fed Warns Tariffs May Undermine Dual Mandate as Inflation and Growth Outlooks Deteriorate

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell cautioned that recently announced tariffs by the Trump administration are “significantly larger than anticipated” and likely to exert upward pressure on inflation whilst dampening economic growth. In remarks to the Economic Club of Chicago, Powell stated that such developments could place the Federal Reserve “in the challenging scenario in which our dual-mandate goals [maintaining 2% inflation and maximum employment] are in tension”. The Fed’s preferred inflation gauge, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index, rose 2.5% y/y in February, exceeding target. Several FOMC members, including Governor Christopher Waller and New York Fed President John Williams, warned that inflation may remain elevated as tariff-related import costs ripple through the economy. DXY was last seen at 99.230.

Trump Intensifies Pressure on Fed Chair Powell to Cut Rates, Raises Prospect of Early Removal

Former President Donald Trump escalated his criticism of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, publicly demanding rate cuts and suggesting Powell’s removal prior to the scheduled end of his term in May 2026. Speaking from the White House, Trump reiterated calls for immediate easing, stating the Fed “owes it to the American people to get interest rates down”. The comments follow Powell’s warning that recently announced US tariffs are considerably greater than expected and risk pushing inflation above target whilst weakening economic growth. The Fed, which has

Previous Week Levels					This Week’s Expected Range		3-Month
Currencies	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1355	1.1264	1.1425	1.1394	1.1250	1.1475	1.1457
GBP	1.3087	1.3041	1.3299	1.3295	1.3200	1.3400	1.3299
JPY	143.54	141.62	144.31	142.18	140.00	143.10	140.74
CHF	0.8148	0.8120	0.8268	0.8165	0.8100	0.8260	0.8077

held rates steady in 2025, following three cuts in 2024 totalling 100bps, is not expected to move at its upcoming May meeting. Powell reaffirmed the central bank’s legal independence, asserting policy decisions remain unaffected by political pressure.

US Retail Sales Rise 1.4% in March Driven by Pre-Tariff Purchases; Core Sales Up 0.4%, Auto Sales Surge 5.3%

US retail sales rose by 1.4% m/m in March 2025, marking the strongest increase since January 2023, as consumers accelerated purchases ahead of 25% global tariffs on vehicles and broad consumer goods effected in early April. Core retail sales, which exclude automobiles, fuel, building materials, and food services, increased by 0.4%, following a revised 1.3% rise in February. Motor vehicle sales led the gains, rising by 5.3%, whilst sales at building material suppliers and restaurants climbed 3.3% and 1.8%, respectively. Year-on-year, total retail sales were up 4.6%. Despite the headline strength, consumer sentiment remains near three-year lows, and Q1 GDP growth forecasts remain subdued, with the Atlanta Fed projecting a contraction.

Bank of Canada Holds Overnight Rate at 2.75% Amidst Rising Economic Uncertainty from US Trade War

The Bank of Canada held its benchmark interest rate at 2.75%, following seven consecutive cuts since June 2024, and cited elevated uncertainty due to US-imposed tariffs. March headline CPI unexpectedly slowed to 2.3% y/y, down from 2.6%, driven by lower gasoline and travel costs, whilst core inflation remained elevated. In light of heightened external risks, the BoC suspended its traditional forecast and outlined two economic scenarios, including the possibility of a deep recession and spike in inflation. Prime Minister Mark Carney echoed these concerns in the leaders’ debate, warning that Trump’s trade actions are an existential threat to Canada’s economy. Q2 2025 GDP is expected to weaken after an estimated 1.8% rise in Q1. USD/CAD was last seen at 1.3847.

Europe and the United Kingdom

ECB Cuts Rate to 2.25% Amidst Deteriorating Outlook, Seventh Reduction Since June 2024

The European Central Bank reduced its benchmark interest rate by 25bps to 2.25%, marking its seventh cut since June 2024. The decision, taken unanimously, reflects heightened uncertainty following the US administration’s imposition of tariffs across major trade partners. The ECB cited a deteriorating growth outlook and tightening financial conditions driven by adverse market responses to trade tensions. In March, Eurozone GDP growth for 2025 was revised down to 0.9%, whilst the HICP eased to 2.2% y/y. Swaps markets now imply a 62% probability of at least three further cuts in 2025, underscoring the ECB’s dovish bias amidst persistent geopolitical and external demand shocks. EUR/USD was last seen at 1.1393.

UK CPI Falls to 2.6%, Services Inflation at 4.7%, May Rate Cut Expected Amidst Labour Market Softening

UK consumer price inflation eased to 2.6% in March from 2.8% in February, below both the Bank of England’s forecast of 2.7% and market consensus. Services inflation declined marginally to 4.7% from 5.0%, re-

flecting moderating domestic price pressures. Preliminary labour market data showed employment declined by 78K in March, with vacancies falling below pre-pandemic levels for the first time since 2021. Despite wage growth of 5.9% in the three months to February, swap markets are now full discounting a 25bp rate cut at the BoE’s 8 May meeting. However, inflation is projected to rebound above 3% from April due to utility tariff increases and employer tax hikes. GBP/USD was last seen at 1.3296.

Asia-Pacific
China Q1 GDP Grows 5.4% y/y, Exceeding 5.1% Forecast Amidst Tariff Headwinds and Strong March Data

China’s GDP expanded by 5.4% y/y in Q1 2025, outperforming the 5.1% consensus estimate and matching Q4 2024’s pace. Growth was supported by a 7.7% y/y increase in industrial production and a 5.9% rise in retail sales in March, both exceeding expectations. Fixed asset investment grew by 4.2%, whilst the national unemployment rate declined to 5.2% from 5.4%. Exporters accelerated shipments ahead of the April implementation of new US tariffs, which have increased total levies on Chinese goods to 145%, though with temporary exemptions for some products like smartphones and electronics. The outlook remains uncertain as tariffs are expected to constrain export demand and prompt further stimulus from Beijing to support domestic consumption and maintain economic stability. USD/CNY was last seen at 7.2998.

Australia Adds 32.2K Jobs in March, Unemployment at 4.1% Amidst Easing Bias

Australia’s labour market showed renewed resilience in March 2025, with net employment rising by 32.2K, partially offsetting February’s downwardly revised 57.5K job loss. The unemployment rate ticked up marginally to 4.1% from 4.0%, remaining below market expectations of 4.2% and broadly consistent with the Reserve Bank of Australia’s projection of a 4.2% peak. The participation rate increased to 66.8%, whilst hours worked fell 0.3%, partly due to weather disruptions. Despite the rebound, swap markets currently fully price a 25bp rate cut at the RBA’s next meeting in May, with a 20% probability of a larger 50bp move, as global growth risks intensify and inflation expectations soften. AUD/USD was last seen at 0.6377.

New Zealand Q1 Inflation Rises to 2.5%, Surpassing Expectations Amidst Weak Recovery

New Zealand’s annual CPI rose to 2.5% in Q1 2025, up from 2.2% in the previous quarter and exceeding both the Reserve Bank of New Zealand’s and market forecasts of 2.4%. Quarterly inflation also advanced by 0.9%, outpacing expectations. Whilst headline inflation remains within the RBNZ’s 1–3% target band, the economy continues to show signs of fragility following a 0.5% GDP contraction in 2024. Core inflation excluding food, energy and fuel eased to 2.6% from 3%, and non-tradables inflation decelerated to 4.0% from 4.5%. Swap markets now anticipate the official cash rate to fall below 2.75% by year-end, from 3.5% currently. NZD/USD was last seen at 0.5937.

Kuwait
USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30680.

US trade protectionism threatens \$22 billion in Arab non-oil exports

Jordan, Bahrain, UAE most exposed to US tariffs

BEIRUT, April 20, (KUNA): A dramatic escalation in trade protectionism by the United States is significantly affecting Arab economies, placing USD 22 billion in non-oil exports at risk, according to a policy brief issued by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on Saturday.

Total Arab exports to the US declined from USD 91 billion in 2013 to USD 48 billion in 2024 - largely due to reduced US crude oil imports.

Yet non-oil exports nearly doubled over the same period, climbing from USD 14 billion to USD 22 billion, with sectors like textiles, chemicals, aluminum, fertilizers and electronics driving the growth.

That progress is now under serious threat, according to ESCWA statement.

Jordan is the most exposed, with nearly 25 percent of its total exports destined for the US.

Bahrain, heavily reliant on aluminum and chemical ex-

ports to the American market, is also flagged for heightened risk.

Meanwhile, the United Arab Emirates faces disruptions to an estimated USD 10 billion in US-bound re-exports due to tariffs levied on goods originating from third countries.

ESCWA also notes that Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies are facing a recent sharp drop in global oil prices, which is further straining fiscal revenues and testing the resilience of Gulf economies reliant on hydrocarbon exports.

The financial implications are also significant. ESCWA estimates that Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia will pay USD 114 million more in sovereign interest payments in 2025 due to rising bond yields linked to global investor uncertainty.

This increase in borrowing costs threatens to constrain national budgets and delay development spending.

On the demand side, reduced imports from major global partners such as the European Union and China are likely to add pressure.

The EU currently absorbs 72 percent of Tunisia’s exports and 68 percent of Morocco’s, while China imports 22 percent of GCC oil and chemical exports.

Despite the headwinds, ESCWA highlights potential opportunities for trade diversion.



Warba Bank reaffirms Sharia commitment at 9th AAOIFI Conference.

Conference explores AI’s role in Islamic Sharia auditing

Warba Bank reaffirms commitment to Sharia compliance at ‘Shura-AAOIFI Conference’

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Warba Bank reaffirmed its commitment to Sharia and professional standards in the field of Sharia auditing, as the 9th Shura-AAOIFI Sharia Audit Conference concluded in Kuwait with the participation of leading experts and specialists from within Kuwait and abroad. The Bank’s participation comes as part of its ongoing efforts to support and align with the latest regulatory and professional developments in the Islamic financial sector, while underscoring its role as a leading institution in promoting governance and Sharia compliance.

Speaking of the conference, Executive Director of the Sharia Management at Warba Bank, Abdullah Abdul Rahim Fakhro, emphasized that the Bank’s participation in this specialized event falls within its broader strategy of strengthening the Sharia audit profession and aligning its practices with evolving regulatory frameworks. He stated: “We highly value the in-depth discussions held during the conference, particularly those focused on enhancing integration between regulatory bodies and Sharia audit practices, and on the role of technology in improving efficiency. At Warba Bank, we remain firmly committed to implementing the standards set by leading bodies such as AAOIFI and other regulatory authorities. This ensures the soundness of our banking operations, protects the rights of our clients and stakeholders, and enables us to deliver services that are fully compliant with Islamic Sharia.”

Fakhro added: “We see this conference as an important scientific platform that supports the development and unification of professional practices in Sharia auditing. It contributes to improving the efficiency of the Islamic financial sector and aligns perfectly with Warba Bank’s vision, which blends Sharia knowledge, digital progress, quality, and security in service delivery.”

He noted that Warba Bank’s sponsorship of the event is part of its ongoing commitment to investing in specialized knowledge and reinforcing its role in building a dynamic and transparent Islamic banking sector grounded in governance, quality and compliance.

He affirmed that through this participation, Warba Bank continues to support initiatives that combine innovation with Sharia adherence, reflecting its role as a responsible financial institution that prioritizes the development of the Islamic banking environment and being fully aligned with its guiding slogan: “We Hear You, Let’s Own Tomorrow.” This commitment continues to strengthen the trust the Bank has



Abdullah Fakhro

earned from its customers and shareholders over the years. The conference, held under the theme “Sharia Auditing between Reinforcing the Profession and Expanding New Horizons,” explored several key topics, including licensing mechanisms for the Sharia audit profession, integration between external Sharia auditors and Sharia supervisory boards, the role of artificial intelligence in advancing audit and consulting services, and applications of Sharia auditing in the Takaful insurance sector and charitable and humanitarian organizations.

The event concluded on April 15, 2025, and was organized by Shura Sharia Consulting in cooperation with the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI).

If featured speakers and experts from leading financial and regulatory institutions, government entities from Kuwait and abroad, and a broad audience of Sharia audit professionals. It offers a unique opportunity for the exchange of insights and best practices that can help raise performance standards across Islamic financial institutions.

Building a Better Tomorrow
Guided by its slogan, “We Hear You, Let’s Own Tomorrow,” Warba Bank is committed to redefining the future of Islamic banking through innovative services, a superior customer experience, and a sustainable, inclusive financial system. As one of the fastest-growing Islamic banks in Kuwait and one with the largest local shareholder bases, Warba Bank continues to embrace excellence, sustainability, and innovation, strengthening its role as a trusted partner for individuals and businesses alike.

Cementing its commitment to investing in Kuwait’s national talents and fostering a culture of inclusivity and equal opportunity

Burgan Bank participates in the 2nd ‘Partners to Hire’ Employment Forum

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Burgan Bank renewed its participation in the second “Partners to Hire” Employment Forum, dedicated to enabling Kuwaiti talents with disabilities in the workplace and paving the way for their sustainable inclusion in the labor force. The Bank also joined the graduation ceremony held to celebrate the 123 students with disabilities who completed the sixth round of the “Partners to Hire” training program. The event was organized and hosted by the Public Authority for Disability Affairs, under the auspices and in the presence of the Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amathal Al-Huwaila, with the support of leading private and public sector Kuwaiti institutions.

Burgan’s continued support of the national initiative aligns with its dedicated strategies for human capital development and corporate social responsibility (CSR), as well as its commitment to adopting the best environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices and fostering a culture of equality and inclusion.

“Our community, at Burgan and beyond, is as strong as every individual within it; that’s why we remain committed to supporting all talents across our community, especially those who require special support to accommodate their special needs, ensuring they always have a place to thrive as Burgan family,” said Ms. Ghalia Al-Saleh,



Ms. Ghalia Al-Saleh, Senior Manager – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank.

Senior Manager – Talent Acquisition at Burgan Bank. “We are utterly delighted to continue participating in and supporting the trailblazing ‘Partners to Hire’ initiative. On behalf of the Burgan Management, I would like to applaud the program graduates on their commendable achievement and wish them continued success in their professional careers.”

Throughout the two-day employment expo, Burgan representatives engaged with the event visitors, introducing them to the Bank’s dynamic work culture, which fosters continuous learning and growth for all employees,



Dr. Amathal Al-Huwailah, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, in a group photo with Burgan representatives.

regardless of their needs, interests, or aspirations. They also seized the opportunity to share vital banking awareness and financial literacy information with visitors and candidates, in line with the Bank’s steadfast support of the “Let’s Be Aware” (Diraya) campaign – launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), with the support of local banks.

In addition to enabling professional talents with disabilities, Burgan Bank

also recognizes the daily challenges the wider community with disabilities face. This is why the Bank integrated extra accessibility features across six of its branches in Kuwait, ensuring that all customers’ financial needs are met with ease and convenience. The fully equipped branches in Adaliyah, Bayan, Khaitan, Qurain, Riqqa, and Al-Qusur are designed to cater to customers with physical disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, in addition to senior customers, with the help of

highly qualified staff who are trained to accommodate customers’ special needs.

It serves to note that Burgan Bank remains one of the most proactive national institutions with a commitment to advancing Kuwaiti society on various vital fronts as part of its contribution to realizing the New Kuwait Vision 2035 goals.

About Burgan Bank
Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is a Kuwait-based conventional bank with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institution sectors. From its earliest days, the Bank has significantly sought to diversify its offering to cater to its growing retail and private banking customer base.

Burgan Bank has majority-owned subsidiaries, collectively known as the “Burgan Bank Group”, in the MENAT region. This Group is supported by one of the largest branch networks across the region and includes: Gulf Bank Algeria – AGB (Algeria), Tunis International Bank – TIB (Tunisia), and Burgan Bank Turkey. Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a presence in the UAE through its corporate office, Burgan Financial Services Limited.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years, through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter

in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Moreover, Burgan Bank’s brand has been built on a foundation of real values – trust, commitment, excellence, and progression – which serve as a reminder of the high standards to which the Bank always aspires. In fact, the Bank’s core philosophy of ‘Driven by You’ is the foundation on which its products and services are continuously developed.

Burgan Bank has achieved the LEED v4.1 O+M: EB Gold Certification for its Head Office in Kuwait City. The Bank has also obtained the ISO/IEC 27001: 2022 Information Security Management Systems certificate (ISMS), ISO /IEC 27701:2019 Privacy Information Management Systems (PIMS), ISO/IEC 20000-1: 2018 Information Technology Service Management System (ITSMS) and was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2015Quality Management System (QMS), making it one of the few banks in the GCC and Kuwait to receive such certification for five consecutive times. At the same time, the Bank has the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twenty consecutive years. Moreover, in a testament to its dedication to the development of its human capital, Burgan Bank is the first bank in Kuwait to be certified as a Great Place to Work®, earning the distinct honor in 2023.

Al-Nasrallah: The masterclass and workshop reflect NBK’s commitment to achieving employee well-being

NBK organizes intensive masterclass and another specialized workshop for its employees titled ‘Leading with Happiness’

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: In line with its continuous efforts to enhance employee competency with the best training and development programs, the National Bank of Kuwait organized a training program titled Leading with Happiness, which explored how leaders can place happiness as a priority to achieve exceptional business results.

The program consisted of an intensively interactive masterclass targeting general managers and deputy general managers, in addition to a full-day workshop for their delegates that delved into more details about the topic and included many activities.

Presented by Chief Happiness Officer, speaker, and author and founder of Woohoo Inc, Alexander Kjerulf, both the masterclass and workshop focused on the economic usefulness of happiness and why happy companies achieve more profits, in addition to defining happiness at work and what makes employees happy beyond raises, bonuses, and perks. The workshop, which went into more depth, also explored how leaders themselves stay happy at work and what are the tools that leaders can use to make their employees happier.

According to the workshop, studies revealed that leaders have a great impact on the happiness of employees, as good leadership motivates and ener-



Maryam Al-Nasrallah

gizes them, and instills in them a level of happiness that pushes them towards putting bigger efforts in the workplace and serving customers..

On this occasion, **Maryam Al-Nasrallah**, Talent Management Manager said: “This workshop reflects NBK’s attention to the well-being and satisfaction of its employees through several initiatives presented by the bank, which



Left-right: Some photos of the event



are manifold, including training and development programs and initiatives that target employee health and safety.”

Al-Nasrallah added that NBK provides many programs and activities that focus on employee well-being and care and motivates them to follow a healthy lifestyle. In addition, NBK constantly strives to create a unique and ideal work environment that stim-

ulates creativity and innovation akin to international peers.

Al-Nasrallah also emphasized that the human resources of NBK are its greatest asset, which is why we are committed to investing in our human capital by devoting our best capabilities and the latest technical and digital methods to enhance their performance and grow their potential.

It should be noted that NBK won the Gold Award for “Excellence in Health and Wellbeing” from the prestigious US-based Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) at the SHRM MENA STAR Awards 2024.

NBK continuously strives to support and empower its employees by providing training and development programs designed according to the latest

methodologies and scientific standards ranging from training and development to the preparation of specialized professional staff. NBK also brings the best banking experts who share their knowledge, in line with the bank’s responsibility towards its employees and towards maintaining its leadership in providing customers with the best banking services.

IMF: US tariffs will weaken global economy, trigger inflation but not a global recession

‘World economy’s resilience is being tested...’

WASHINGTON, April 20, (AP): Surging U.S. tariffs will weaken the global economy and push up inflation this year, according to projections to be released next week by the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF’s Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva, said that the Trump administration’s sharp increases in duties have caused global uncertainty to spike. The import taxes will slow global growth, but not cause a worldwide recession, she added. The details of the IMF’s outlook will be issued Tuesday.

The world economy’s resilience is being tested “by the reboot of the global trading system” that threatens to cause turbulence in financial

markets, Georgieva said.

That turbulence has been playing out in financial markets for weeks now, especially on Wall Street, which has experienced wild swings from day-to-day and often times even hour-to-hour.

The IMF chief also echoed some Trump administration concerns. She called on countries to reduce their tariffs and lower other barriers to trade, a process that she said had stalled out in the past decade after making steady progress for many years after World War II.

“Trade distortions - tariff and nontariff barriers - have fed negative perceptions of a multilateral system seen to have failed to deliver a level playing field,” she said. “This feeling of unfairness in some places feeds the narrative: we play by the rules while others game the system without penalty.”

Georgieva added that tariffs cause uncertainty, which can be



International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, talks to CNN Anchor Richard Quest during the World Governments Summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Feb. 11, 2025. (AP)

costly. Due to the complexity of supply chains, the cost of a single item can be affected by tariffs in

dozens of countries, she said. Increased trade barriers also tend to immediately impact growth, and

while it can lead to more domestic production, that takes time to implement, she added.

In its most recent projections issued in January, the IMF forecast the world economy to grow nominally faster and for inflation to come down, though it warned that outlook was clouded by President Donald Trump’s policies, including tax cuts and increased tariffs on foreign imports.

The Washington-based lending agency said at the time that it expected the world economy to grow 3.3% this year and next, up from 3.2% in 2024.

Global inflation, which had surged after the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted global supply chains and caused shortages and higher prices, was forecast to fall from 5.7% in 2024 to 4.2% this year and 3.5% in 2026.

However, in a blog post that accompanied those projections, the

fund’s chief economist, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, wrote that the policies Trump has promised to introduce “are likely to push inflation higher in the near term.”

Those forecasts from January are expected to change - possibly significantly - as Trump’s trade war has escalated in recent months, particularly with the U.S.’s biggest trade partner, China.

Trump has paused or pulled back on many of his tariff threats - leading to more volatility in the stock market - but has been in a tit-for-tat tariff battle with China and has shown no sign of backing down. Each time Trump has raised tariffs on China, Beijing has retaliated with tariffs on U.S. imports.

The IMF is a 191-nation lending organization that works to promote economic growth and financial stability and to reduce global poverty.

US small manufacturers hope to benefit from tariffs, but some worry about uncertainty

NASHVILLE, Tenn., April 20, (AP): Drew Greenblatt is fully on board with the Trump administration’s use of tariffs to rebalance a global trading system that it says favors foreign companies over U.S. manufacturers.

Greenblatt is the president and owner of Marlin Steel Wire Products in Baltimore, Maryland, which makes baskets and racks for medical device manufacturers, aerospace companies, food processing companies and others. It has 115 employees and makes its products in three locations in Maryland, Indiana and Michigan. The steel

is sourced from Tennessee, Illinois and Michigan.

Currently, it’s hard to compete with baskets made overseas., Greenblatt says, because the countries he competes against have an “unfair advantage.” For example, due to European tariffs and taxes, it costs much more for a German consumer or company to buy Marlin wire baskets than it does for Americans to buy a German-made basket, creating an uneven playing field, Greenblatt said.

“It’s wildly unfair to the American worker,” he said. “And this has, by the

way, been going on for decades.”

The Trump administration has called U.S. manufacturing an “economic and national security” priority. U.S. manufacturing has been declining for decades. In June 1979, the number of manufacturing workers peaked at 19.6 million. By January of 2025, employment was down 35% to 12.8 million, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Small manufacturers, which make up 99% of all American manufacturing, have been hit particularly hard.

The administration has implemented some tariffs against major U.S. trading partners, while putting a hold on other tariffs pending negotiations. The Trump administration says tariffs will force companies to have more products made in the U.S. to avoid steep price increases on their imports, which will mean “better-paying American jobs,” for people making cars, appliances and other goods.

Greenblatt agrees, saying he could double his staff if “parity” in tariffs becomes a reality.

While other small manufacturing businesses also support the tariffs, other owners have concerns. The Trump tariffs threaten to upend the existing economic order and possibly push the global economy into recession. And the uneven rollout of the policy has created uncertainty for businesses, financial markets and U.S. households.

For Corry Blanc, the injection of uncertainty around the economy outstrips

any potential benefit.

He started his business, Blanc Creations in Waynesboro, Virginia, in 2012. He makes handcrafted cookware such as skillets and other kitchenware and bakeware with American steel and wood and employs 12 staffers. He gets his steel from a plant in South Carolina and a distributor in Richmond. Wood comes from local regional sawmills near the company’s headquarters in Waynesboro, Virginia.

He said he’s been fielding worried calls from customers in Canada and overseas. And he says the infrastructure isn’t in place to increase production if more people do start buying American-made goods.

Blanc said he survived the pandemic and other tough times, but conditions now are the hardest they’ve ever been. “There’s so much uncertainty and not a lot of direction,” he said.

Michael Lyons is the founder of Rogue Industries, a company that makes wallets and other leather goods in a workshop in Standish, Maine, with a staff of nine. He uses leather from Maine and the Midwest. About 80% of his products are made in Maine and 20% are imported.

He said the uncertainty around the tariffs is outweighing any potential long-term benefit. A long-time customer from Canada recently told Lyons that he would no longer be buying from Rogue Industries because of the friction between the two countries.



An American Giant logo tag is shown on pants at the company’s showroom in San Francisco, Thursday, April 17, 2025. (AP)

Trump’s attacks on Powell threaten Fed’s independence

WASHINGTON, April 20, (AP): Donald Trump has stepped up his attacks on Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell at the same time that the Supreme Court is considering a case that could make it easier for the president to fire him.

The developments are occurring against a backdrop of wider turmoil in the economy and financial markets, brought on by Trump’s sweeping taxes on imports. Most economists worry that an assault on the Fed’s longstanding independence from politics would further disrupt markets and add to the uncertainty enveloping the economy.

In comments at the White House Thursday, Trump

suggested he has the power to remove Powell and criticized him for not aggressively cutting interest rates.

“If I want him out, he’ll be out of there real fast, believe me,” Trump said. “I’m not happy with him.”

All the scrutiny threatens the Fed’s venerated independence, which has long been supported by most economists and Wall Street investors. Here are some questions and answers about the Fed.

The Fed wields extensive power over the U.S. economy. By cutting the short-term interest rate it controls - which it typically does when the economy

falters - the Fed can make borrowing cheaper and encourage more spending, accelerating growth and hiring. When it raises the rate - which it does to cool the economy and combat inflation - it can weaken the economy and cause job losses.

Economists have long preferred independent central banks because they can more easily take unpopular steps to fight inflation, such as raise interest rates, which makes borrowing to buy a home, car, or appliance more expensive.

The importance of an independent Fed was cemented for most economists after the extended inflation spike of the 1970s and early 1980s.

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Highest level since late February

Average US rate on a 30-year mortgage climbs to 6.83 pct

WASHINGTON, April 20, (AP): The average rate on a 30-year mortgage in the U.S. climbed to its highest level in eight weeks, a setback for home shoppers in the midst of the spring home-buying season.

The rate rose to 6.83% from 6.62% last week, mortgage buyer Freddie Mac said Thursday. A year ago, the rate averaged 7.1%.

Borrowing costs on 15-year fixed-rate mortgages, popular with homeowners refinancing their home loans, also rose. The average rate increased to 6.03% from 5.82% last week. It’s still down from 6.39% a year ago, Freddie Mac said.

Mortgage rates are influenced by several factors, including global demand for U.S. Treasuries, the Federal Reserve’s interest rate policy decisions and bond market investors’ expectations for future inflation.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage loosely follows moves in the 10-year Treasury yield, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

The yield, which had mostly fallen this year after climbing to around 4.8% in mid-January, spiked last week to 4.5% amid a sell-off in government bonds triggered by investor anxiety over the potential fallout from the Trump administration’s escalating tariff war.

The 10-year Treasury yield was at 4.32% in midday trading Thursday.

When mortgage rates rise, they reduce homebuyers’ purchasing power.

The average rate on a 30-year mortgage had mostly trended lower since reaching just over 7% in mid-January. This week’s increase is the first after three straight declines and brings the average rate to its highest level since Feb. 20, when it was 6.85%.

The increase in mortgage rates may put off some would-be homebuyers during what’s traditionally the busiest period of the year for home sales. Last week, mortgage applications fell 8.5% from a week earlier, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

World Bank, IMF spring meeting to address poverty, US tariffs impact

WASHINGTON, April 20, (KUNA): The 2025 Spring meetings between the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) on April 21st until the 26th will be addressing several issues including poverty, global developments and the impact of the US tariffs on the world.

The State of Kuwait, represented by Finance Ministry Undersecretary Aseel Al-Munifi, will take part in the event, which would witness a wide-range participation from government representatives, civil society members, business personnel, as well as other officials and organizations.

Perhaps one of the main issues to be addressed in this year’s meetings is the impact of the new US tariffs on the world economy, leading to tremendous tension between the world most developed economies, the US and China.

Earlier month, President Donald

Trump signed a “historic” executive order imposing “reciprocal” tariffs on all countries of the world; however, Trump said that not all countries would have the same level of tariffs.

Back to the WB-IMF Spring meetings, the gatherers would touch on ways to utilize AI in finding solutions to challenges facing the world and increasing funding, knowledge, and investments within the private sector.

The conferees would also discuss the status of world economy due to several countries facing numerous real challenges including increasing debt and livelihood crises in the last decade.

Ajay Banga, World Bank President, urged in a press statement a few days ago developing countries to free their trade, saying that most of such countries had high tariffs more than those imposed by developed economies.

Arkapaw shines as first woman to shoot IMAX film

First female cinematographer makes history with ‘Sinners’

LOS ANGELES, April 20, (AP): Cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw didn’t realize she was going to make history on “Sinners.” The Ryan Coogler film, now playing in theaters nationwide, marks the first time a female director of photography has shot a movie on large format IMAX film.

It was Kodak executive Vanessa Bendetti who texted her the news.

“I smiled at the thought,” Arkapaw said in a recent interview. “I felt very proud that Ryan gave me the opportunity.”

The format, a favorite of filmmakers like Christopher Nolan, has gained popularity in recent years - not just with directors but with moviegoers seeking it out as well. Coogler hadn’t originally sought it out for “Sinners” (he had planned on using 16 mm) until Warner Bros. executive Jesse Ehrman asked him if he’d considered large format, which gives moviegoers more resolution and a shallower depth of field.

“Just from an exhibition sense in this day and age with folks having so much access to streaming and watching so many things on their phones, it’s nice to have a format like IMAX that can be an experience you can only experience in the theaters,” Coogler told The Associated Press.

Coogler and Arkapaw then began a testing process, looking at 70 mm IMAX prints of films like “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “The Hateful Eight” and “Tenet” and consulting with Nolan and his regular cinematographer Hoyte van Hoytema. Coogler quickly fell in love with the format and felt it was fitting for the larger-than-life,

genre-bending film about vampires, the blues and life in the Jim Crow south in 1932.

“I wasn’t surprised that we were exploring large format,” Arkapaw said. “We shot ‘Wakanda Forever’ on IMAX, but that was digital. We always talked about true IMAX being ... something that you see and you fall in love with.”

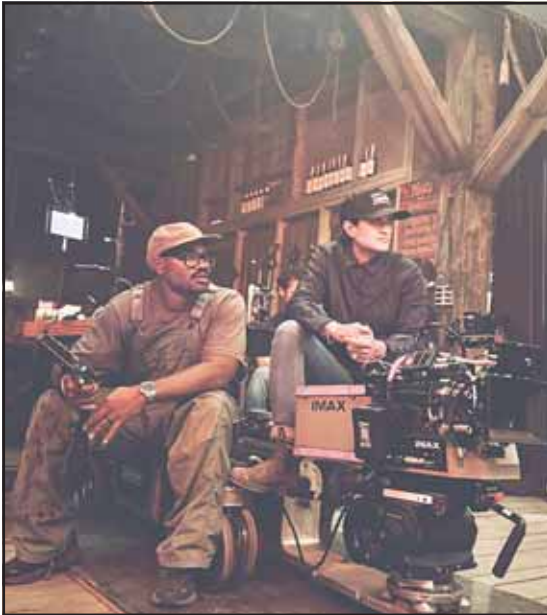
Her conversation with Hoytema made her even more excited. The Oscar-winning “Oppenheimer” cinematographer told her not to worry about the size or weight of the equipment and to shoot the movie as she would with any other kind of camera.

“Hearing that straight off was inspiring and encouraging and we took that advice and just told our story,” Arkapaw said. “It was very freeing.”

In the end, they decided to employ a combination of IMAX film and Ultra Panavision 70, an even rarer format that Quentin Tarantino resurrected for “The Hateful Eight.” This means different scenes have different aspect ratios, which Coogler himself broke down in a video explainer for Kodak. “We’re using these two formats for the very first time,” Coogler said. “It really complements the story, it really complements the setting and it really complements the filmmaking.”

One of Arkapaw’s favorite scenes was one they weren’t even initially going to do on IMAX film because it was dialogue heavy and the cameras are notoriously noisy. But if her work on “Wakanda” taught her anything about Coogler, it’s that he’s always looking to push boundaries.

The scene is the introduction to Jack O’Connell’s



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows director-writer-producer Ryan Coogler, (left), and cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw on the set of ‘Sinners.’ (AP)

Irish vampire Remmick and the Choctaw trying to hunt

him down, which they shot like a Western as the sun sets

in the distance.

“We had a lot of beautiful crane work in that and some intimate stuff. Ryan loves a hallway, so there’s a Steadicam shot inside. It’s very eerie,” she said. “I can’t see that scene in any other format now.”

With “Sinners” out now, the hope is that audiences will seek out the special formats where they can, whether it’s IMAX film or digital.

“We want to bring people back to the cinema, get back to theaters,” “Sinners” star Michael B. Jordan said. “I think this is a movie that’s meant to give for the moviegoing experience...it takes you on a ride.”

The profession has come a long way since Arkapaw started exploring cinematography as a career path. It wasn’t too long ago that she said she struggled to find many women cinematographers besides Ellen Kuras (“Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”). And while there are more than there were 20 years ago, there are still barriers to be broken, including an Oscar win. Only three have been nominated: Rachel Morrison (who worked with Coogler on “Fruitvale Station” and “Black Panther”) was the first for “Mudbound,” in 2018, followed by Ari Wegner for “The Power of the Dog” and Mandy Walker for “Elvis.”

Arkapaw takes the significance of her landmark seriously.

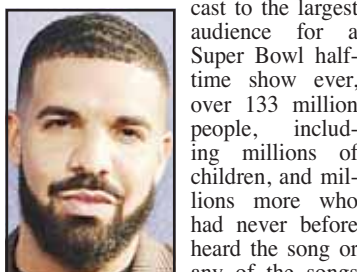
“I heard a phrase that said you need to see you to be you,” she said. “I think for us females in business, the more women are able to shoot on large format, it will inspire the younger girls who maybe don’t think that they can get there.”

Super Bowl

Drake expands his UMG lawsuit

LOS ANGELES, April 20, (AP): Hip hop superstar **Drake** is now complaining about rival rapper Kendrick Lamar’s performance of “Not Like Us” at this year’s Super Bowl, adding it to his defamation lawsuit against Universal Music Group over the diss track and its allegations of pedophilia against Drake.

“The Recording was performed during the 2025 Super Bowl and broadcast to the largest audience for a Super Bowl half-time show ever, over 133 million people, including millions of children, and millions more who had never before heard the song or any of the songs that preceded it,” says the amended lawsuit filed Wednesday in federal court in Manhattan.



Drake

It adds, “It was the first, and will hopefully be the last, Super Bowl half-time show orchestrated to assassinate the character of another artist.”

Although Lamar removed the word “pedophile” that’s in the track during the halftime show, the fact that it was omitted showed that “nearly everyone understands that it is defamatory,” the suit says. It also alleges Universal Music used financial benefits and leveraged business relationships to secure the headline spot for Lamar at the Super Bowl, and promoted the performance.

“Drake’s amended complaint makes an already strong case stronger,” his lawyer, Michael Gottlieb, said in a statement. “Drake will expose the evidence of UMG’s misconduct, and UMG will be held accountable for the consequences of its ill-conceived decisions.”

Allegation

This year’s Super Bowl and its halftime show were the most-watched ever, according to Nielsen.

In a statement responding to the court filing, Universal Music, the parent record label of both artists, continued to deny Drake’s allegations.

“Drake, unquestionably one of the world’s most accomplished artists and with whom we’ve enjoyed a 16-year successful relationship, is being misled by his legal representatives into taking one absurd legal step after another,” the company said. “It is shameful that these foolish and frivolous legal theatrics continue.”

A spokesperson for Drake said in a prepared release that the artist is “holding the largest music conglomerate in the world accountable for its actions and doing so without fear.”

The amended lawsuit also adds that defamatory portions of “Not Like Us” were played at the Grammy Awards in February, when the single won five awards, including song and record of the year. The suit claims that Universal Music also helped secure the Grammy nominations and allowed the song to be played at the ceremony.

Drake sued Universal Music, but not Lamar, for undisclosed damages in January, saying the company published and promoted “Not Like Us” despite its false pedophilia allegations and suggestions that listeners should resort to vigilante justice.

The result, the suit says, was intruders shooting a security guard at Drake’s Toronto home and two attempted break-ins there, online hate and harassment, a hit to his reputation and a decrease in his brand’s value before his contract renegotiation with UMG this year. The amended lawsuit also adds more online comments indicating people believe the pedophilia allegations.

Drake, a 38-year-old Canadian rapper and singer and five-time Grammy winner, and Lamar, a 37-year-old Pulitzer Prize winner with 22 Grammy wins, have been beefing for years. The feud is among the biggest in hip hop in recent years.

Comic Con



Cosplayers pose for a portrait at the Middle East Film & Comic Con in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, April 19. (AP)



Cosplayers pose for a portrait at the Middle East Film & Comic Con in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, April 19. (AP)



Emirati men wear Spider-Man masks as they attend the Middle East Film & Comic Con in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Saturday, April 19. (AP)



teamLab Phenomena now open in Saadiyat

Immersive art shines in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI, UAE, April 20, (AP): teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi officially opened its transformative multi-sensory art experience within Saadiyat Cultural District, an enriching addition to Abu Dhabi’s dynamic cultural and artistic landscape.

On April 17, the grand opening celebration welcomed distinguished guests and cultural leaders, featuring a specially composed performance by renowned Italian pianist and composer Ludovico Einaudi. Set against the venue’s unique architecture, the score was paired with a dramatic display of 6,000 synchronised drones and pyrotechnics, curated to celebrate the new milestone for Saadiyat Cultural District, and reflect the connection between art, technology and imagination.

H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, said: “teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi is a groundbreaking cultural landmark that redefines immersive art experiences on a global scale. It embodies a bold vision that pushes the boundaries of creativity, technology, and human perception, offering visitors an experience unlike any other. Together with our partner, teamLab, we take great pride in bringing this pioneering concept to life, reinforcing our commitment to shaping world-class experiences that inspire, engage, and contribute to Abu Dhabi’s cultural legacy. Saadiyat Cultural District is a cultural landmark of global significance, bringing together the world’s greatest minds and institutions to foster dialogue, inspire creativity, and shape a more connected future.”

Following the opening ceremony, guests were immersed within newly unveiled teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi exhibits, meandering between its inspiring artistic installations, interacting with the dynamic artworks, and experiencing the connection between art, technology and natural phenomena.

Toshiyuki Inoko, Founder of teamLab, said: “The artworks in teamLab Phenomena do not exist independently but are created by the environment which produces the various phenomena that creates the artworks. Objects such

as stones and man-made creations maintain a stable structure independently. A stone, for instance, will remain unchanged even if placed in a sealed box, isolated from the outside world. In contrast, a vortex in the ocean will vanish in an instant if removed from its environment. Unlike a stone, a vortex does not sustain itself; it evolves with the surrounding currents, formed by water flowing continuously from the outside to the inside and from the inside to the outside of the vortex, changing along with the flow. Moreover, the boundaries of its existence are ambiguous, and there is no material distinction between the vortex and its surroundings.

Environment

“The unique environment produces the phenomena, and the environment maintains the existence of the structure. Let us call that existence Environmental Phenomena. The artwork is inseparable from the environment and changes along with the environment. This concept transcends the various conventional notions of existence by physical forms. Even if people immerse themselves physically into the artwork, the artwork will remain intact, capable of naturally restoring itself even if disrupted. However, when the environment is not sustained, the artwork will disappear. The boundaries of the artwork are ambiguous and continuous with the environment. Perhaps, people’s consciousness will expand from the artwork itself to the environment beyond.”

Spanning 17,000 square metres, teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi has been developed by the internationally acclaimed art collective teamLab, in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi). The multi-sensory art experience reflects the emirate’s unwavering commitment to fostering creativity and cultural innovation on a global scale, and it presents massive transformative artworks that each blend art, science and technology in groundbreaking ways.

teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi is designed to explore and transcend the limits of every

guest’s imagination. Each artwork within the unique, purpose-built venue will evolve over time through the interplay of light, sound and movement. Unlike artworks at traditional galleries, visitors will discover exhibits that are fluid, existing in a dynamic relationship with their environment. Each artwork responds to guests’ actions and natural changes in the environment, creating a living, breathing art experience, unlike any other.

Comprising two distinct Wet and Dry areas, guests will be immersed in a series of mesmerising visuals, vibrant landscapes and interactive installations that dissolve the boundaries between art and audience. Every moment offers a new philosophical experience, ensuring that each visitor experience is unique.

In the Dry area, visitors will encounter a variety of artworks that encourage interaction, responding to their movements and actions to create a unique connection between guests and the installations. As they move into the Wet area, guests will follow a dedicated walkway leading them into an exciting realm filled with fluid, hands-on experiences that further deepen their connection with the art.

teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi is a key addition to Saadiyat Cultural District, which upon completion will be the largest concentration of world-leading cultural and educational institutions. The District is home to an unparalleled lineup of museums and cultural landmarks, including Louvre Abu Dhabi; the upcoming Zayed National Museum, the national museum of the UAE; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, featuring a global collection of modern and contemporary art that reflects the diversity of cultures and trends from around the world; and Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi, telling the story of life on earth and the origins of our universe.

The addition of teamLab Phenomena reinforces Abu Dhabi’s position as a global cultural epicentre, offering visitors a unique and transformative experience while showcasing its commitment to creativity, innovation and cultural collaboration on a global scale.

Variety

NEW YORK: An emotional former opinion page editor for The New York Times delivered a tearful apology Thursday to **Sarah Palin** as he testified about a 2017 editorial that she says damaged her reputation.

James Bennet testified that he “blew it” when he erroneously wrote that the former Alaska governor’s political action committee had contributed to an atmosphere of violence before a member of Congress was severely wounded in a 2011 mass shooting in Arizona.

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

Bennet got choked up and teary as he apologized to the onetime Republican vice presidential candidate, saying he was “really upset, and I still am, obviously.” A lawyer brought him a box of tissues as he testified for a second day at the defamation trial.

“I did, and I do apologize to Governor Palin for this mistake,” Bennet said.

Before a lunch break, Judge Jed S. Rakoff told lawyers that Bennet had offered a “heartfelt” and “moving” apology to Palin. (AP)

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NEW YORK: Lee Corso’s nearly four-decade run on ESPN’s “College GameDay” is coming to an end.

Corso, the longtime ESPN broadcaster and folksy former coach widely known for his endearing expressions and elaborate headgear picks, is set to retire after a career with the show that began in 1987. ESPN announced Thursday. His final broadcast will be Aug. 30 - Week 1 of the 2025 college football season - and the network said additional programming to celebrate Corso is also planned.

“My family and I will be forever indebted for the opportunity to be part of ESPN and ‘College GameDay’ for nearly 40 years,” Corso said in a statement to ESPN. “I have a treasure of many friends, fond memories and some unusual experiences to take with me into retirement.”

Corso, who turns 90 in August, began his popular headgear segment in October 1996 at a game at Ohio State. Since then, he has gone 286-144 in 430 selections wearing everything from helmets and mascot heads to dressing up as the Fighting Irish leprechaun from Notre Dame, the Stanford tree and historic figures James Madison and Benjamin Franklin. (AP)

□ □ □

WASHINGTON: A federal judge who ordered the Trump administration to stop blocking The Associated Press’ from presidential events refused Friday to take immediate steps to get White House officials to comply - an incremental development in a two-month dispute between the global news agency and administration officials over access.

The case, which has significant free-speech implications under the US Constitution’s First Amendment, centers on the government blocking AP’s access to cover events because the outlet won’t rename the Gulf of Mexico in its reports.

US District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, who handed the AP a victory last week in its efforts to end the ban, said it’s too soon to say that President Donald Trump is violating his order - as the AP suggests.

“We are not at the point where we can make much of a determination one way or another,” said McFadden, ruling from the bench. “I don’t intend to micromanage the White House.” (AP)

Zimbabwean art challenges colonial legacy at exhibition

Zimbabwe’s stone carvers seek a revival at Oxford

CHITUNGWIZA, Zimbabwe, April 20, (AP): A pair of white hands blinding a Black face. A smiling colonizer with a Bible, crushing the skull of a screaming native with his boot. Chained men in gold mines, and a pregnant woman.

These stone sculptures from Zimbabwe will take center stage at an upcoming exhibition at Oxford University in Britain, aiming to “contextualize” the legacy of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes with depictions of religious deception, forced labor and sexual abuse.

Rhodes conquered large parts of southern Africa in the late 19th century. He made a fortune in gold and diamond mining and grabbed land from the local population. His grave lies under a slab of stone atop a hill in Zimbabwe.

Oxford’s Oriel College, where the exhibition will be held in September, is a symbolic setting. A statue of Rhodes stands there despite protests against it since 2015. Rhodes, who died in 1902, was an Oriel student who left 100,000 pounds (now valued at about 10.5 million pounds, or \$13.5 million) to the school. His influence endures through a scholarship for students from southern African countries.

For Zimbabwean stone carvers at Chitungwiza Arts Center near the capital, Harare, the exhibition is more than an opportunity for Western audiences to glimpse a dark history. It is also a chance to revive an ancient but struggling art form.

Stone sculpture, once a thriving local industry, has suffered due to vast economic challenges and declining tourism.

“This will boost business. Buyers abroad will now see our work and buy directly from the artists,” said sculptor Wallace Mkanka. His piece, depicting the blinded Black face, was selected as the best of 110 entries and will be one of four winning sculptures on display at Oxford.

Zimbabwe, meaning “House of Stone,” derives its identity from the Great Zimbabwe ruins, a 1,800-acre Iron Age city built with precision-cut stones delicately stacked without mortar. It is a UNESCO World heritage site.

Sculpture

The southern African country has long used stone sculpture as a form of storytelling to immortalize history. The craft survived close to a century of colonial rule that sought to erase local traditions, religion and art forms.

It thrived internationally instead. Thousands of pieces were plundered from Africa. Some later became subjects of repatriation campaigns. Others became prized by tourists and collectors. A permanent collection of 20 Zimbabwean stone sculptures is displayed in a pedestrian tunnel at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, one of the world’s busiest.

At its peak following independence, Zimbabwe’s stone sculpture industry thrived, with local white farmers purchasing pieces for their homes and facilitating international sales.

“Customers were everywhere. They would pay up front, and I always had a queue of clients,” recalled Ta-

fadzwa Tandi, a 45-year-old sculptor whose work will feature in the Oxford exhibition.

However, the industry has struggled over the past two decades.

Zimbabwe’s global image suffered after controversial land reforms more than two decades ago displaced over 4,000 white farmers to redistribute land to about 300,000 Black families, according to government figures. Late ruler Robert Mugabe defended the reforms as necessary to address colonial-era inequities, but they had unintended economic consequences.

“Many of our customers were friends of the farmers. That is where the problem originated from,” said Tendai Gwaravaza, chairman of Chitungwiza Arts Center.

At the center, the sound of grinders filled the air as sculptors carved. Hundreds of finished pieces, ranging from small carvings to life-sized sculptures, waited for buyers.

“The only solution now is to get out there to the markets ourselves. If we don’t, no one will,” Gwaravaza said.

The Oxford exhibition represents such an opportunity for exposure, he said.

It is the brainchild of the Oxford Zimbabwe Arts Partnership, formed in response to the “Rhodes Must Fall” campaign during the Black Lives Matter protests in the U.S.

The group, consisting of Zimbabwean artists, an Oxford alumnus and a professor of African history, initially envisioned a larger project titled “Oxford and Rhodes: Past, Present, and Future.”



Gift Mutsauni holds his winning sculpture that will be part of an upcoming exhibition at Oxford University aiming to contextualize the legacy of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes at the Chitungwiza Arts Centre near Harare, Zimbabwe, on March 8, 2025. (AP)

Theme Park



Guests ride a roller coaster in the How To Train Your Dragon - Isle Of Berk at Epic Universe theme park at Universal Resort Orlando Thursday, April 10, in Orlando, Fla. (AP)

New park promises magic, monsters and mayhem

Universal goes big with Epic Universe in Fla

ORLANDO, Fla., April 20, (AP): From Harry Potter to Super Mario Bros. to Frankenstein’s monster, Universal Orlando Resort is pulling out all the pop culture stops at its newest and largest theme park in Florida.

With five distinctively-themed sections and a 500-room hotel, the multibillion-dollar Universal Epic Universe is slated to open to the public on May 22, just in time for the start of summer, when the Orlando area’s theme parks are usually jammed with families and young park-goers fresh out of school.

It’s the first major, traditional theme park to open in Florida since 1999, when Universal Islands of Adventure debuted, though Universal opened a themed Orlando water park, Volcano Bay, in 2017. The addition of Epic Universe brings the total number of parks at the Florida resort to four, including Universal Studios.

The opening also raises the stakes in Universal’s competition with crosstown rival Walt Disney World for a greater share of Orlando’s annual influx of 74 million tourists.

Universal officials also describe Epic Universe as the company’s most technologically advanced theme park. For example, it uses a facial recognition system for ride express lines.

Universal’s owner, Comcast NBCUniversal, also announced plans this month for its first Universal-branded theme park and resort in Europe, at a location north of London. A year-round horror entertainment experience in Las Vegas should open later this year and a family-oriented theme park is slated to open next year in a Dallas suburb.

Epic Universe is making its big bang, with single-day tickets starting at \$139 for adults and increasing

to \$199 during peak periods, just as the Trump administration stirs up economic uncertainty.

US tariff announcements threaten to limit the desire of some Americans to spend on vacations. And the rough treatment that some US visitors have experienced on arrival, as well as a boycott of the United States by some Canadians, are raising fears that international tourists will stay away.

Tax receipts show Orlando’s tourist economy was booming last year, with Orange County collecting a record \$359 million in tourist taxes.

Here’s a look at Epic Universe’s different sections.

Celestial Park is the hub in the spoke-like design of Epic Universe, connecting the other “worlds.”

Characters

The astronomically-themed section is the only one with original characters not based on pre-existing intellectual property. Centered around a football field-sized water fountain and filled with abundant, colorful flowers, it’s an oasis of calm between the sensory overload of the four sections.

That’s not to say excitement can’t be found in Celestial Park, which is home to a 133-foot (40.5-meter) high dual launching roller coaster, Stardust Racers, and an enormous carousel.

Super Nintendo World is the definition of sensory overload, from its bright primary colors that scream “Look at me!” to the loudness of the steel-drum-thumping syncopated calypso music.

It has two levels - rare for theme parks - and creates a completely immersive experience since nothing outside Super Nintendo World can be seen be-

yond the towering walls of Peach’s Castle and Mt. Beanpole. There is an augmented reality dark ride, a kid-friendly, slow-moving omni-mover ride and a Donkey Kong-themed coaster. Character performers dressed as Mario and Luigi greet members of the crowd in a roped-off area.

Dark Universe is a throwback to Frankenstein’s monster, Dracula and the Invisible Man movies that launched Universal’s career in horror franchises.

Visitors enter through a recreated central European village that has a storyline about vampires inhabiting the ground underneath. There is a dark ride through Frankenstein’s castle, a family-friendly coaster based on the werewolf legend and a tavern topped by a windmill with blades engulfed by flames every few minutes.

This is the third installment of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter attractions that turbocharged the Florida resort into a genuine challenger to Disney World’s dominance.

The arched doorways, wrought-iron balconies and cobblestoned streets make visitors feel like they have parachuted into the Fantastic Beasts films set in 1920s Paris. The land’s highlight is the Battle at the Ministry’s omnidirectional lift ride, whose green-tiled, faux-gold-plated atrium is on a scale reminiscent of New York’s Grand Central Terminal.

Next-generation animatronic dragons are the stars in this section, based on the “How to Train Your Dragon” franchise.

Anchored by a lagoon at its center with Viking statues, the Viking-inspired land has a coaster, a boat ride and meet-and-greets with the surprisingly agile dragons, these aren’t your father’s animatronics.

Homes

Home not Insta-worthy?

Tips to beat ‘house shame’, open your doors to others

NEW YORK, April 20, (AP): Robbie Randolph is a real estate agent and interior designer for the rich, yet even he’s not immune from the anxiety of “house shame.”

That’s the judged, bullied, defeated feeling you can get when Pinterest-perfect syndrome takes over, either in our own minds thanks to social media or fed by the side eye of a friend with impeccable digs.

House shame can make you reluctant to invite people over, and in some cases lead to isolation and despair.

“House shaming is actually how designers kind of get business,” Randolph said. “A client will go over to another home that’s professionally designed and they’ll be like, ‘Oh my gosh, my house isn’t that nice.’ They then seek out an interior designer.”

Randolph, in Greenville, South Carolina, said interior designers themselves are just as vulnerable. So are exhausted parents with young children, people who just don’t love to clean, those who can’t afford home updates, or folks who really have a lot of books and/or love collectibles.

“I’ll do an Instagram post of an amazing, immaculately decorated house and I go, ‘Wow, my house stinks,’” said Randolph. “And everyone walks into my home and tells me how amazing it is. At the end of the day, I’m still human and I still get trapped by the devil of comparison.”

Remembering one’s humanity in a world where true perfection is elusive goes a long way, he and other experts noted.

expensive ways people can help themselves feel better about their living spaces if they so choose.

The issue is often just too much stuff. She sees a lot of homes with row upon overlapping row of framed photos in ancient (not in a good way) frames. She suggests paring them down to the bare minimum and stashing the rest in a decorative box that can be pulled out for perusal.

Like Randolph, Fight has seen it all: People overloaded with things they’ve inherited from dead relatives. A young woman who wouldn’t bring her fiancé to her parents’ house, “because it’s such a mess.”

Different

Fight suggests: “Take away a third of what’s out.” One client, she said, “had this long, narrow, beautiful table in her living room first filled with stuff. It was the first thing you saw when you walked in. I said to her, ‘It’s going to take me 15 minutes to make this look Instagram-worthy.’ About five pieces stayed on there. About 10 things were thrown out, and we found a different place for the rest.”

Jamila Musayeva is the author of “The Art of Entertaining at Home” and hosts a lifestyle YouTube channel with over 1 million subscribers. She’s also an etiquette coach.

“A home doesn’t have to be perfect to be welcoming,” she said. “It simply has to feel cared for. If you’re worried about how your space might be perceived, start by focusing on what you can control.”

That could mean freshening up an entrance with a lit candle and a small flower arrangement to shift the mood for guests.

“Think ahead about the rooms your guests will actually see. Give those areas some attention rather than overwhelming yourself with the whole house. A clean bathroom with a fresh hand towel, good lighting in the living room and somewhere cozy to sit go much further than expensive décor,” Musayeva said.

Wendy Trunz, co-owner of the Long Island home organizing company Jane’s Addiction Organization, said she grew up in the smallest house in her family’s circle of friends and family. Now, with a husband and two kids, she lives in the smallest house among her neighbors and loved ones.

“My mom’s door was always open. Their table always had an extra seat. You just knocked and came in, and my mom just believed the more the merrier, this is where the memories are made and don’t mind the mess. And there’s something great about that,” she said.

Hoarding

Not wanting to entertain at home can simply mean spending time together elsewhere, in restaurants, at the theater or in the homes of others, for instance. But it can also bring on hoarding or other traumatizing behaviors like losing the will to clean.

“I have a friend who refuses to have people over because she’s so ashamed of her house,” Randolph said.

His friend didn’t have the money or the will to fix up the house after her abusive husband moved out.

“I think house shaming is about comparison, but it can also be about a person’s own struggles,” he said.

Barbara Fight was a TV producer for Martha Stewart for 12 years before going into home organizing in New York. She said house shame got way worse with the rise of social media and its idealized depictions of homes most people can’t afford or otherwise will never have.

But there are lots of easy, in-

A look inside Maine’s hidden gem

‘Sistine Chapel’ inspires artists with 70-yr-old frescoes



This photo shows a detail of a fresco painted in the 1950s on a wall at the South Solon Meeting House, Sunday, April 6, in Solon, Maine. (AP)

SOLO, Maine, April 20, (AP): From the outside, it looks like any other New England church building: a boxy, white structure with a single steeple surrounded by an old stone wall, set against rolling hills and pine forest.

Inside, though, the South Solon Meeting House has a secret unknown even to some who drive through the tiny Maine town every day. The interior of the building is covered in 70-year-old fresco murals that encourage some in the state’s art community to describe it as “Maine’s Sistine Chapel.”

The murals were painted by artists in the 1950s and, while they have long been appreciated by visitors, the recent creation of a website dedicated to them by students at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, has generated new interest in the paintings.

Véronique Plesch, a Colby professor of art, hopes the building inspires more appreciation of frescoes.

“I fell in love with the place, because I have studied frescoes all my life,” said Plesch, who is a member of the board of the historical society that cares for the meeting house. She added that the paintings should stay in public places and not be in private institutions.

The meeting house was built in 1842 and hosted church services until the 1940s, though there were periods of closure, such as times of war. A decade later, Margaret Day Blake found the building in a state of disuse and the former student at the nearby Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture put out a call for young artists to paint frescoes under the school’s supervision in 1951.

The artists were given creative freedom and told there would be no limits to subject matter, but that Biblical scenes would “offer rich and suitable” imagery. The interior was covered in such scenes from 1952 to 1956 and the walls remain adorned with frescoes, including one

that references Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper.”

Another fresco depicts the binding of Isaac, in which a hooded Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son on God’s orders. The Great Flood is depicted as it was by Michelangelo at the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.

Two of the 13 artists - Sigmund Abeles of New York City and Sidney Hurwitz of Newton, Massachusetts - both in their 90s, are still living. Both spoke fondly about their time at the meeting house.

“We would go out there and paint and then take a lunch break in the cemetery behind the building. It was a very idyllic time,” Hurwitz said. “I very much enjoyed it.”

Today, the meeting house, which is open to the public without locks on its doors, serves as a community gathering and performance space. Many of its old features, including box pews made for smaller people of a different time, are still intact.

Kuwait achieves medical milestone

Kuwait doctors implant stents via neck vein in medical first

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: The Chest Diseases Hospital has confirmed the successful implantation of two coronary artery stents for two patients with intractable angina pectoris -- a medical achievement considered the first of its kind in Kuwait and the Middle East.

In a press statement on Saturday, Head of the Cardiology Department at the hospital Dr. Abdullah Al-Enezi disclosed that the two operations were performed under local anesthesia, through the jugular vein in the neck. "A catheter was inserted and the stent was implanted in the coronary artery to improve blood flow to the heart muscle, which contributed to an improvement in the symptoms

of angina pectoris. This was done in collaboration with Head of the Cardiac Catheterization Unit at the hospital Dr. Khaled Al-Marri," he explained.

Al-Enezi pointed out that this achievement is a manifestation of the commitment of the Health Ministry to provide the latest treatment technologies to serve patients and improve the level of healthcare, particularly in the field of heart disease.

He said such cases were previously referred for treatment abroad, but today they are treated locally with high efficiency, reflecting the contribution of modern technologies in reducing the need for patients to be sent abroad.

He disclosed that the two patients were suffering from severe coronary artery stenosis, adding that despite under-

going therapeutic catheterization and open-heart surgery to replace the arteries, they still suffer from intractable angina.

Warning that atherosclerosis is one of the most common diseases and the leading cause of death in Kuwait and the world; he asserted that the disease is usually treated with medication, interventional catheterization or open-heart surgery to replace the arteries. "However, some patients do not respond to these treatments and continue to suffer from intractable angina, which significantly impacts their quality of life," he clarified.

He stated the ministry remains committed to the provision of the latest global technologies and modern techniques, which play a significant role in helping provide the best medical services to patients in the country.



KUNA photo
Dr. Abdullah Al-Enezi and Dr. Khaled Al-Marri

Climate change extends allergy seasons

Spring allergies are back: Tips to track pollen and stay sneeze-free

ATLANTA, April 20, (AP): Allergy season can be miserable for tens of millions of Americans when trees, grass, and other pollens cause runny noses, itchy eyes, coughing and sneezing.

Where you live, what you're allergic to and your lifestyle can make a big difference when it comes to the severity of your allergies. Experts say climate change is leading to longer and more intense allergy seasons, but also point out that treatments for seasonal allergies have become more effective over the last decade.

Here are some tips from experts to keep allergy symptoms at bay - maybe even enough to allow you to enjoy the outdoors.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America issues an annual ranking of the most challenging cities to live in if you have allergies, based on over-the-counter medicine use, pollen counts and the number of available allergy specialists.

This year, the top five cities are: Wichita, Kansas; New Orleans; Oklahoma City; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Memphis.

There are three main types of pollen. Earlier in the spring, tree pollen is the main culprit. After that grasses pollinate, followed by weeds in the late summer and early fall.

Some of the most common tree pollens that cause allergies include birch, cedar, cottonwood, maple, elm, oak and walnut, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Grasses that cause symptoms include Bermuda, Johnson, rye and Kentucky



An oak tree with new leaf growth also shows pollen hanging amongst the branches at a park in Richardson, Texas, Thursday, March 21, 2024. (AP)

bluegrass.

Pollen trackers can help you decide when to go outside. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology tracks levels through a network of counting stations across the U.S. Counts are available at its website and via email.

The best and first step to controlling allergies is avoiding exposure. Keep the windows in your car and your home closed, even when it's nice outside.

If you go outside, wearing long sleeves can keep pollen off your skin to help ward off allergic reactions, said Dr. James Baker, an allergist at the University of Michigan. It also provides some sun protection, he added.

When you get home, change your clothes and shower daily to ensure all the pollen is off of you - including your hair. If you can't wash your hair every day, try covering it when you go outside with a hat or scarf. Don't get in the bed with your outside clothes on, because the pollen will follow.

It's also useful to rinse your eyes and nose with saline to remove any pollen, experts said. And the same masks that got us through the pandemic can protect you from allergies - though they won't help with eye symptoms.

Over-the-counter nasal sprays are among the most effective treatments for seasonal allergies, experts said.

Rheumatology conference discusses scientific advances

Kuwait strengthens rheumatology care with new medical registries and clinics

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Support Services at the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Faris said the ministry is focusing on the development of services in various medical fields like rheumatology.

In his opening speech at the third annual conference of the Kuwait Association of Rheumatologists on behalf of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi who sponsored the event on Saturday; he confirmed the establishment of national medical registries for rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, lupus erythematosus and pediatric rheumatism. He explained these registries are considered a scientific database that supports healthcare and develops treatment and scientific research.

He said the first specialized clinic for the treatment of fibromyalgia was established at Sabah Hospital, in collaboration with rheumatologists and mental health specialists, to cover the need for integrated care for this chronic and complex disease.

He also mentioned the opening of a transition clinic at Adan Hospital, which aims to facilitate the transition of patients from childhood to adulthood, while ensuring efficient and smooth continuity of treatment.

He then pointed out that the conference is a high-level scientific platform for exchanging expertise and discussing the latest scientific developments

that contribute to improving the quality of healthcare provided to rheumatism patients at the local and regional levels.

He stressed that the ministry puts importance on qualifying national professionals by organizing advanced courses and workshops in cooperation with international experts to train doctors on the use of the latest diagnostic techniques like the ultrasound of the musculoskeletal system and the management of immune vascular diseases.

He considers the introduction of advanced diagnostic techniques in state-of-the-art hospitals --including peripheral capillary examination for Raynaud's patients and the opening of a vascular ultrasound clinic at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital to diagnose giant cell nephritis -- an added value to the healthcare system.

He said the ministry is keen to expand the integration of specializations by establishing joint specialized clinics that bring together rheumatologists with certain specialties such as Dermatology, Nephrology, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Respiratory Medicine, to provide comprehensive care.

He added that Kuwait is proud to host prestigious scientific conferences like ASAS International Conference on Ankylosing Spondylitis, Arab Rheumatology Associations Conference and the first unified Gulf conference for rheumatology associations. These events reflect Kuwait's pioneering role in supporting joint Gulf and Arab efforts in the medical field.

He affirmed the ministry is proud

of the participation of national professionals in international forums through scientific papers, research posters and modern treatment recommendations, which have had a positive impact on standardizing treatment practices in accordance with international standards.

He confirmed the commitment of the rheumatology units in public hospitals to organize annual awareness events such as World Rheumatism Day and Lupus Day, with the aim of raising public awareness and promoting the culture of good health among patients and their families.

On the other hand, conference Chairperson and President of the Kuwait Rheumatology Association Dr. Heba Al-Hajri revealed that the conference will host six international speakers, two regional speakers, and 25 local speakers.

"This will be part of a rich scientific program that includes panel discussions titled, 'Meet the Experts', focusing on lupus, vasculitis and ankylosing spondylitis. Workshops and lectures will be held for pediatricians, internists and primary care physicians," he stated.

She also unveiled an initiative to collaborate with international speakers to develop a unified Kuwaiti protocol for treating patients with autoimmune vasculitis.

She added the Kuwaiti Rheumatology Fellowship program will be launched soon, in cooperation with Kuwait Institute for Medical Specializations (KIMS) and with the support of the ministry.

Scientists are trying to measure the claims

Can microdosing improve mental health?

NEW YORK, April 20, (AP): Microdosing is gaining popularity with a new breed of health seekers. These self-experimenters take a very small amount of psilocybin mushrooms or LSD to try to reduce anxiety, stress and depression. Some claim the practice gives them access to joy, creativity and connection they can't get otherwise.

This isn't a full-blown acid trip - or even close. If you see visions, it's not a microdose. People who microdose don't do it every day. Instead, they take tiny doses intermittently, on a schedule or when they feel it could be beneficial.

One small study suggests any psychological benefits come from users' expectations - the placebo effect. But the science is still new and research is ongoing.

The substances are illegal in most places, but the wave of scientific research focused on the benefits of su-



Matt Metzger, a Marine Corps combat veteran, displays Psilocybe cubensis mushrooms, March 26, 2025, in Olympia, Wash. (AP)

pervised hallucinatory experiences has spurred Oregon and Colorado to legalize psychedelic therapy. Further opening the door to microdosing, a handful of cities have officially directed police to make psychedelics a low priority for enforcement.

"I started microdosing and within a couple of months, I had a general sense of well-being that I hadn't had

in so long," said Marine Corps combat veteran Matt Metzger.

He grows his own mushrooms in Olympia, Washington, where psilocybin has been decriminalized. Taking small amounts of psilocybin helps him cope with PTSD, he said.

In Loveland, Colorado, Aubrie Gates said microdosing psilocybin has made her a better parent and enhanced her creativity.

"It makes you feel viscerally in your body a new way of being, a more healthy way of being," Gates said. "And so instead of just like thinking with your conscious mind, 'Oh, I need to be more present,' you feel what it feels like to be more present."

These kinds of claims are hard to measure in the lab, say scientists studying microdosing.

For starters, belief is so important to the experience that empty capsules can produce the same effects.

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Michigan wins men’s title

Oklahoma women claim seventh NCAA gymnastics championship

FORT WORTH, Texas, April 20, (AP): Audrey Davis posted a 9.9250 on the uneven bars in the final rotation on Saturday, and Jordan Bowers followed with a 9.8875 to help the Oklahoma Sooners win their seventh NCAA women’s gymnastics championship.

Oklahoma finished with 198.0125 points in their 11th trip to the Final Four in the last 12 seasons. UCLA - with eight national titles - placed second with 197.6125. Missouri (197.2500) was third and Utah (197.2375) fourth. The Tigers previous best finish was fifth in 2022. The Utes - with 49 straight championship appearances - lead with nine titles but none since 1995. It was Utah’s fifth Final Four appearance in a row.

Six of Oklahoma’s championships have come since 2016 under coach K.J. Kindler, who took over the reins in 2006.

Oklahoma and UCLA were tied for first after the first rotation, with the Sooners opening on the balance beam and the Bruins beginning with the floor exercise.

The Sooners moved to floor in the second rotation and gained some separation thanks to a 9.9625 effort from Faith Torrez. Jordan Bowers, Danielle Sievers and Elle Mueller all posted scores above 9.9000.

Torrez topped the Sooners with a 9.9375 on the vault and Davis led the way on the bars.

Michigan’s Fred Richard and Paul Juda finished first and second in the all-around and Wolverines team total of 332.224 edged them past five-time defending champion Stanford (332.961) to win their first NCAA men’s gymnastics title since 2014.

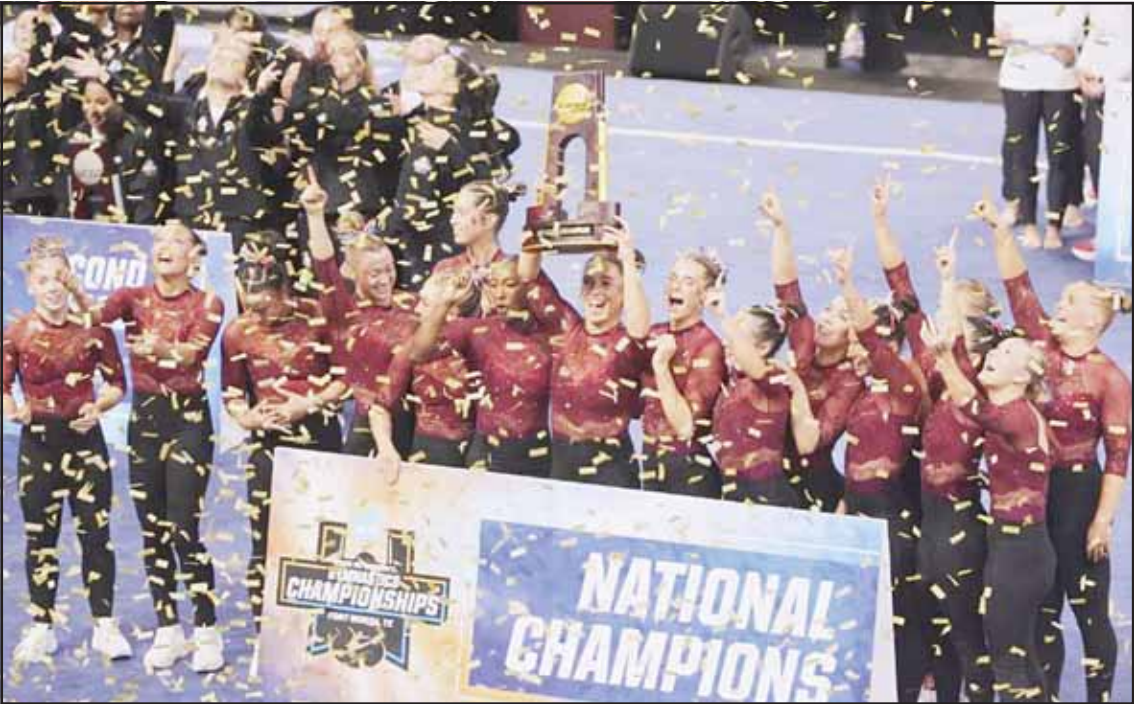
Juda, the individual champion on the parallel bars with a score of 14.200 and host Michigan’s last competitor of the day, scored

a 13.966 on the vault to clinch the program’s seventh national title. The Wolverines finished second, 5.635 points behind Stanford, at the 2024 championships.

Oklahoma finished third with 327.891, ahead of Nebraska (326.222), Penn State (317.258) and Illinois was sixth with 316.293. Penn State and Oklahoma each hold a record 12 national titles.

Stanford’s Asher Hong took home the individual title in the floor exercise (14.600) and defended his crown with a score of 14.433 on the rings. Patrick Hoopes of Air Force scored a 14.833 to win the horse championship, Ohio State’s Kameron Nelson (14.633) won the vault title and Emre Dodanli claimed the high bar championship for Oklahoma with a score of (13.833).

Richard and Juda won bronze medals for Team USA at the Paris Olympics.



Oklahoma celebrates winning the NCAA women’s gymnastics championship in Fort Worth. (AP)

Buttler powers Gujarat to top of IPL, Lucknow stuns Rajasthan by 2 runs



Gujarat Titans’ Jos Buttler plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Delhi Capitals at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)

Titans down Capitals by seven wickets

AHMEDABAD, India, April 20, (AP): Jos Buttler scored 97 not out off 54 balls as Gujarat Titans beat Delhi Capitals by seven wickets and moved atop the Indian Premier League.

Buttler never had a crack at the century in the last over, when 10 runs were needed, because teammate Rahul Tewatia smashed a six and a four off the first two balls.

Elsewhere, pacer Avesh Khan bowled a tremendous final over for Lucknow Super Giants to stun hosts Rajasthan Royals by a slender two runs in Jaipur.

Khan defended nine needed off six balls, conceding only six even as the drama was wound up by teammates dropping a catch and fumbling away a second run.

Rajasthan squandered a winning position from 156-2 after 17 overs and finished on 178-5 in reply to Lucknow’s 180-5, powered by Aiden Markram and Ayush Badoni fifties.

Buttler missed out on a record-equalling eighth hundred as he hit 11



Lucknow Super Giants’ Ravi Bishnoi bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Rajasthan Royals at Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur, India. (AP)

fours and four sixes to complete Gujarat’s chase with four balls to spare.

Sherfane Rutherford, 43 off 34, combined with Buttler for 119 off 69

for the third wicket - the stand underpinning Gujarat’s 204-3 in 19.2 overs.

This was after Delhi Capitals made 203-8 led by skipper Axar Patel’s 39 off 32.

Gujarat replaced Delhi on top of the table on run-rate.

Chasing a tall score, Gujarat lost skipper Shubman Gill, run out for 7. But that brought in Buttler, and he shared 60 off 35 with Sai Sudharsan for the second wicket.

Sudharsan scored 36 off 21 to the eighth over and Gujarat was at a comfortable 74-2.

Buttler reached 50 off 32 and picked up the scoring pace in Rutherford’s company. After they achieved Gujarat’s highest third-wicket partnership, the game took a sudden twist at the finish.

Rutherford was out caught in the penultimate over off Mukesh Kumar, leaving 10 needed off the last six deliveries. But Buttler was stranded on 97 when two big blows by Tewatia off Mitchell Starc finished the match.

Earlier, Delhi struggled, especially against pacer Prasidh Krishna, who picked up 4-41 in four overs.

The big moment came when Krishna trapped Lokesh Rahul for 28 off 14 in the fifth over.

The best stand was between Axar Patel and Tristan Stubbs of 53 off 36. Ashutosh Sharma’s cameo - 37 off 19 with three sixes - pushed Delhi across 200.

Opting to bat, Lucknow lost the in-form Mitchell Marsh (4) and tournament top-scorer Nicholas Pooran (11) early. Skipper Rishabh Pant fell for 3 and Lucknow slipped to 54-3 in 7.4 overs.

Markram, though, held one end, and rebuilt the innings with Badoni.

South African batter Markram scored 50 off 31, hitting three sixes and five fours, in his fourth half-century of the season. Badoni powered to 50 off 34, including five fours and a six.

Both perished in the space of 11 deliveries to leave Lucknow at 143-5, but Abdul Samad stepped in and smacked four sixes off the last four deliveries to finish the innings on a high.

Rajasthan began its chase by debuting 14-year-old opener Vaibhav Suryavanshi, the youngest IPL cricketer. He didn’t show any nerves, smacking his first ball for a six.

Filling in for the injured Sanju Samson, Suryavanshi scored 34 off 20 balls before he was stumped while fellow opener Yashasvi Jaiswal fired his fourth half-century, 74 off 52.

PSG closer to unbeaten Ligue 1 season after beating Le Havre

PARIS, April 20, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain labored past lowly Le Havre 2-1 and moved closer to finishing Ligue 1 unbeaten.

In other games, Marseille thumped rock-bottom Montpellier 5-1 to reclaim second place by one point from Monaco, which drew 0-0 at home with fifth-placed Strasbourg.

PSG has already clinched the league title, and coach Luis Enrique rested 21-goal top-scorer Ousmane Dembélé and gave 17-year forward Ibrahim Mbaye a chance up front.



PSG’s Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, left, challenges for the ball with Le Havre’s Antoine Joujou during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Le Havre at the Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris. (AP)

Another teenage forward, Désiré Doué, gave PSG an early lead with a deflected strike after being set up by winger Bradley Barcola’s league-leading 10th assist.

The second goal came in the new

half when 18-year-old midfielder Senny Mayulu broke down the left and allowed center forward Gonçalo Ramos an easy tap-in.

Sloppy defending from a corner let striker Issa Soumaré head a goal back on

the hour for Le Havre, which remained 16th and in the relegation playoff spot.

PSG is on course for the first treble in its history.

It travels to Arsenal on April 29 in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal, and takes on Reims in the French Cup final on May 24.

The top three sides in France gain automatic entry into next season’s Champions League while the side in fourth spot enters qualifying.

Marseille looks well set with only four games left.

English forward Mason Greenwood scored twice against a woeful Montpellier to take his league tally to 18, with only Dembélé ahead of him.

Greenwood scored from the penalty spot eight minutes into a one-sided contest at Stade Velodrome.

Then defender Amir Murillo found Greenwood just inside the penalty area and he controlled the ball before finishing with a neat side-footed shot.

The visitors pulled a goal back before France midfielder Adrien Rabiot completed the scoring with a cool finish from Ismaël Bennacer’s pass.

Montpellier is almost relegated after an 11th straight loss.

Cincinnati tops Fire
Cremaschi lifts Miami to victory over Crew

CLEVELAND, April 20, (AP): Benjamin Cremaschi scored on a diving header in the 30th minute and Inter Miami beat the Columbus Crew 1-0 on Saturday.

The matchup between the lone remaining undefeated teams in Major League Soccer drew 60,614 fans to Huntington Bank Field, a single-game record for a Crew home match and the largest non-NFL event in stadium history.

The match was moved from Columbus to the home of the NFL’s Cleveland Browns due to the popularity of Inter Miami superstar Lionel Messi.

It is the second time this season and ninth since Messi joined MLS in 2023 that Inter Miami has had a road crowd of at least 60,000.

Cleveland Cavaliers coach Kenny Atkinson, center Tristan Thompson and Browns wide receiver Jerry Jeudy were among the crowd.

Inter Miami improved to 5-0-3 while Columbus dropped to 5-1-3.

Evander Da Silva Ferreira scored a goal in each half and FC Cincinnati upped its win streak to four with a 3-2 victory over the Chicago Fire.

Evander staked Cincinnati (6-2-1) to a 1-0 lead in the 9th minute with an assist from Sergio Santos. His second goal - and sixth in his first season with the club - came in the 71st minute with an assist from Luca Orellano for a 3-1 lead.

Evander had 24 goals in his two seasons with the Portland Timbers before coming over.

Theo Corbeanu scored his first MLS goal in the ninth minute to help Toronto FC beat Real Salt Lake 1-0 and snap an eight-game winless streak to open the season.

Corbeanu dispossessed Salt Lake’s Bode Hidalgo near the penalty arc, cut back to evade a defender and the rolled a shot from just inside the penalty area that slipped inside the post to make it 1-0.

Diego Luna was shown a straight red card in the 61st minute for violent conduct and Salt Lake (3-6-0) played a man down the rest of the way.

Liel Abada scored early on Pep Biel’s league-leading sixth assist and Charlotte FC rolled to a 3-0 victory over expansion side San Diego FC.

Kristijan Kahlina, the reigning goalkeeper of the year, finished with two saves on the way to his fourth clean sheet this season for Charlotte (6-2-1). Charlotte is the last remaining club with a perfect home record after its fifth straight victory.

Ignatius Ganago had a goal and an assist - both the first of his career - to lead the New England Revolution to a 2-0 victory over New York City FC.

Aljaž Ivacic finished with two saves on the way to his third clean sheet this season for the Revolution (3-4-1), whose three wins have come in the last four weeks.

Neither team scored until Leo Campana found the net in the 43rd minute to give the Revolution a 1-0 lead at halftime. It was the first goal for Campana in his fifth appearance for New England.

João Peglow scored twice in the first half, his first two goals in MLS, to help D.C. United beat the New York Red Bulls 2-1 to snap a four-game losing streak.

D.C. United (2-4-3) - which went into the game with a minus-9 goal differential, tied with CF Montreal for worst in the Eastern Conference, and winless in five straight - won for the first time since 2-1 home victory over Sporting Kansas City on March 8.

Luis Barraza played a long goal kick to the attacking third, where Peglow flicked a header forward to himself and beat goalkeeper Carlos Miguel Coronel from the center of the area to give D.C. United a 1-0 lead in the 35th minute. It was Barraza’s second career assist and his first since the 2021 season.

Danny Musovski scored a goal for the second consecutive game and Stefan Frei had eight saves to help the Seattle Sounders beat Nashville SC 3-0.

Pedro de la Vega and Paul Rothrock each added a goal and an assist for Seattle (3-3-3), which has just one loss in its last six matches.

After Rothrock played an entry from the left side, Ferreira’s one-touch shot was redirected by Musovski’s backheel shot, deflected off the fingertips of goalkeeper Joe Willis and rolled into the net to give the Sounders a 1-0 lead in the 19th minute.

Homegrown product Quinn Sullivan scored in the first half and Danley Jean Jacques and Tai Baribo added second-half goals as the Philadelphia Union breezed to a 3-0 victory over Atlanta United.

Andre Blake saved three shots in goal for the Union (5-3-1) to earn his third clean sheet of the season and put an end to the club’s three-match winless streak.

The Union grabbed a 1-0 lead in the 27th minute and took it into halftime on a goal by the 21-year-old Sullivan. It was his first goal this season and his 11th in 103 career appearance. Defender Kai Wagner notched his fourth assist, giving him 41 in 179 career appearances - all with the Union.

Maarten Paes finished with four saves for Dallas and Minnesota United’s Dayne St. Clair stopped three shots as the two clubs played to a scoreless draw on Saturday night.

Inter Miami CF defender Sergio Busquets, center, kicks the ball while surrounded by three Columbus Crew players during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Cleveland, Ohio. (AP)



Wilson loses in first round of worlds

SHEFFIELD, England, April 20, (AP): The world snooker championship opened with a huge shock when defending champion Kyren Wilson was beaten by tournament debutant Lei Peifan of China 10-9 at the Crucible Theatre.

It meant the so-called “Crucible Curse” continued - no first-time champion has ever gone on to retain the title since the world championship moved to the storied venue

in Sheffield, northern England, in 1977.

Wilson has been one of the best players in the world this season and arrived at the Crucible as the top seed and one of the favorites.

He looked in control when taking a 6-3 lead after the first session but Lei, a 21-year-old qualifier and the world No. 39, won a nervy final frame in the evening session to claim a famous victory.

Change Name

I, Vincent Francis Clemente, holder of Indian Passport No – V6050693, would like to correct my name as per my Birth Certificate from Vincent Francis Leo Clement to Vincent Francis Clemente, son of Mr. Leao Clemente (Father) & Mrs. Santan Assumpcao Alphonso (Mother) herein after in all my dealings and documents I will be known by my name Vincent Francis Clemente

Timberwolves rout Lakers in series opener



Indiana Pacers' Tyrese Haliburton (0) drives past Milwaukee Bucks' Ryan Rollins during the first half of a first-round NBA basketball playoff game in Indianapolis. (AP)



Minnesota Timberwolves forward Jaden McDaniels, left, and Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James grapple for the ball during the first half in Game 1 of an NBA first-round playoff series in Los Angeles. (AP)

Knicks beat Pistons with 21-0 fourth quarter surge

LOS ANGELES, April 20, (AP): Anthony Edwards was not at all surprised when the Minnesota Timberwolves showed enough talent and togetherness to turn Luka Doncic's playoff debut with the Lakers into a rout for the visitors.

Jaden McDaniels scored 25 points, Naz Reid added 23 with six 3-pointers, and the Timberwolves overcame Doncic's 37-point effort for a 117-95 victory Saturday night.

Edwards had 22 points, nine assists and eight rebounds in the first-round series opener for the sixth-seeded Wolves, who have won 18 of their last 22 games.

The Timberwolves weathered Doncic's 16-point first quarter in front of a roaring LA crowd before taking control with a 38-20 second quarter.

They poured it on after halftime, too. Julius Randle and Edwards hit four 3-pointers apiece as the Timberwolves made a franchise playoff-record 21 3-pointers on 42 attempts - with many of those shots taken without a defender in sight.

LeBron James had 19 points to begin his 18th NBA postseason, but the third-seeded Lakers were overwhelmed by the Wolves' shot-making and playoff poise.

While Los Angeles is still searching for chemistry after acquiring Doncic two months ago, Minnesota is eager to improve on last season's run to the Western Conference finals.

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is Tuesday night in Los Angeles.

One day after the Dallas Mavericks' season ended in the Play-In Tournament, Doncic produced the 11th-highest scoring playoff game of his career - and it wasn't nearly enough, thanks to the Timberwolves' prolific team effort.

Knicks 123, Pistons 112

In New York, Jalen Brunson scored 34 points, Cam Payne had 11 of his 14 in the fourth quarter and the New York Knicks stunned the Detroit Pistons with a 21-0 run in the final period to rally for a 123-112 victory in Game 1 of their first-round playoff series.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 23 points and 11 rebounds in his first playoff game with the Knicks and OG Anunoby also scored 23 points for the No. 3-seeded Knicks. They will host Game 2 on Monday night.

The Pistons held up well for more than three quarters of their first playoff game since 2019 and had a 98-90 lead, a little more than nine minutes from ending their NBA-record, 14-game postseason losing streak.

By the time they scored again, the Knicks were ahead by 13 points, the delirious fans inside Madison Square Garden roaring louder with every Pistons miscue after they played with such poise for much of the game.

Nuggets 112, Clippers 110, OT

In Denver, Nikola Jokic scored 29 points and Aaron Gordon added 25, including a pair of free throws with 12 seconds left, and the Denver Nuggets roared back from a 15-point first-half deficit to power past the Los Angeles Clippers 112-110

in overtime.

Jamal Murray added 21 points, nine boards and seven assists for the fourth-seeded Nuggets, who improved to 4-0 under interim coach David Adelman, Michael Malone's replacement.

The No. 5 seed Clippers' loss was their first since March 30 at Cleveland. They rolled into the playoffs having won 18 of 21, including their last eight, and they jumped out to an early lead that held until the final minutes of regulation.

Pacers 117, Bucks 98

In Indianapolis, Pascal Siakam kept it simple Saturday. He got to his spots, hit his shots and made the plays.

The three-time All-Star finished with 25 points and seven rebounds while Tyrese Haliburton added 10 points and 12 assists to lead the Indiana Pacers past the Milwaukee Bucks 117-98 for a 1-0 lead in the Eastern Conference best-of-seven first-round series.

Siakam took full advantage of the festive atmosphere as Indiana hosted its first series opener since 2014.

Team officials handed out gold T-shirts that lit up Gainbridge Fieldhouse. Fans repeatedly counted the seconds it took for two-time league MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo to shoot free throws and heckled Bucks forward Bobby Portis. And they roared with delight when WNBA star Caitlin Clark and others appeared on the video board.

But what they wanted - and needed most - was a fast start.

The Pacers certainly were balanced.



Players in an aerial battle for the ball.

Injuries rock Qadsiya, Salmiya ahead of clash

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Qadsiya and Salmiya are facing a wave of injuries ahead of their highly anticipated quarterfinal showdown in the Crown Prince Cup next Thursday, putting key players from both squads at risk of missing the crucial match.

For Qadsiya, team captain Khaled Ibrahim is sidelined with a torn adductor muscle and is expected to be out for 10 to 14 days. Abdullah Mutawa joins him on the injury list with a torn ankle, also requiring 10 to 14 days of recovery. Ad-

ditionally, Moaz Al-Dhafiri has suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury and is estimated to be out for up to 10 days.

Salmiya's injury concerns are even more extensive. Gambian midfielder Sang Pierre has sustained a torn hamstring and will need up to 10 days of recovery. Brazilian defender Alex Lima is also out with a bruised knee ligament, expected to miss one to two weeks.

Abdulmohsen Al-Turkmani is suffering from a hamstring tear and will be sidelined for a similar period. Team

captain Fahad Al-Mujammed is undergoing treatment for Achilles tendonitis and is expected to be out for two to three weeks. Goalkeeper Ali Fadel is recovering from a hamstring injury, while Othman Al-Dosari will miss the remainder of the season due to a cartilage injury.

With both teams battling fitness setbacks, Thursday's matchup promises to test the depth and resilience of both squads in their quest for a spot in the Crown Prince Cup semifinals.

Kuwaiti athletes capture multiple top spots at Oryx Island Aquathlon

DOHA, April 20: Several Kuwaiti athletes secured top positions at the Oryx Island Aquathlon, which took place in Doha, Qatar.

Khaled Al-Tawhid claimed first place in the over-50 age group, while Abdulmohsen Al-Fawzan earned second place in the under-15 category.

In the 15-19 age group, Fahad Al-Enezi took first place, and Jamal Al-Hudaib finished second in the 7-10 age group.

The aquathlon event consists of a run, followed by a swim, and concludes with another run.



Kuwaiti athletes on the podium displaying the national flag.

Best of the Rest

Ashun wins China Open: Wu Ashun made a Sunday charge on the back nine with five birdies for a 6-under 65 that enabled him to overcome a four-shot deficit and win the China Open for the second time.

The victory came 10 years after the 39-year-old Wu first won the China Open. It was his fifth career victory on the European tour.

Li Haotong and Eugenio Chacarra of Spain, who began the final round tied for the lead at Enhance Anting Golf Club, each closed with a 1-over 72.

Wu was three shots behind Chacarra when he made the turn and he promptly ran off three birdies in a four-hole stretch. The Spaniard, playing behind him, had three bogeys on the back nine and fell back.

Wu finished on 14 under to win by one shot over Jordan Smith of England, who birdied his last hole for a 67. Yan-nik Paul of Germany shot 69 and finished alone in third, while Li and Chacarra shared fourth place with Zecheng

Dou (70).

The European tour stays in China one more week for the Hainan Classic. (AP)

Visiting Zimbabwe in control: Visiting Zimbabwe took full control on the opening day of the first cricket test against Bangladesh after the home side put on a reckless batting performance to be all out for just 191 on Sunday.

Zimbabwe, in reply, reached 67 for no loss before bad light brought a premature close of play.

Brian Bennett was batting on 40 after hitting six fours in just 37 balls with Ben Curran on 17 as they dealt with Bangladesh's bowlers astutely to keep the side's advantage.

A familiar wayward batting show caused Bangladesh's downfall yet again.

Mominul Haque top-scored with 56 and skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto made 40 but no other batters managed to make an impact against a side that hasn't won a test since 2021.

Mahmudul Hasan and Shadman Islam began the innings watchfully after captain Shanto won the toss and elected to bat first but both openers failed to convert the start. (AP)

Kuwait Club ends regular season perfect

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Kuwait Club wrapped up the Merged Basketball League in style, securing a commanding 107-65 victory over Al-Qadisia in a postponed match at the Basketball Association Hall in Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex.

With this emphatic win, Al-Ameed finished the regular season unbeaten and topped the standings with 31 points. Al-Qadisia settled for third place with 28 points.

The Golden Square phase of

the Basketball League kicks off next Wednesday. Kuwait Club will face Al-Qurain at 5:00 pm, followed by a clash between Kazma and Al-Qadisia at 7:30 pm.

According to the format, the first-ranked team plays the fourth, and the second faces the third in a best-of-three playoff series. The second leg will be played next Saturday evening.

In the final regular-season encounter, Al-Qadisia delivered a disappointing and lackluster performance, continuing their poor run of form. The team has now suffered four consecutive second-half collapses, with loss-



Kuwait Club player shoots over defenders.

es to Al-Qurain, Al-Sulaibikhat, Kazma, and Kuwait Club.

On the other hand, Kuwait Club, led by newly appointed Serbian coach Dusan, displayed dominance throughout the game. The squad encountered little resistance from Al-Qadisia as they cruised to victory.

Kuwait Club's top performers included Jakar Sampson with 20 points, Robert Lowry with 17, Musaed Al-Otaibi with 16, and Hamad Adnan adding 14. For Al-Qadisia, Abdulaziz Al-Humaidi led the scoring with 16 points, while Cedric Henry contributed 13.

Zverev downs Shelton to win third Munich title

MUNICH, April 20, (AP): Top-seeded Alexander Zverev beat second-seeded Ben Shelton 6-2, 6-4 to win his third Munich title on Sunday.

It was the big-serving German player's first title of the year and 24th overall on the ATP tour. He previously won the clay-court tournament in 2017 and '18.

Shelton was playing in his fourth career final and second on clay after winning in Houston last year.

In sunny conditions at the BMW Open, Zverev served for the match and set up match point with a sliced backhand at the net that Shelton could not get back in.

He clinched the win with a sharp backhand volley at the net following a brief rally. It was a dominant performance on serve from the 27-year-old, who did not face a break point.

He has a shot at moving back into second place in the ATP rankings.

Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka won 7-5, 6-4 against Jasmine Paolini of Italy on Sunday to set up a clay-court Porsche Grand Prix final against unseeded Jelena Ostapenko.

The No.1-ranked Sabalenka has conserved some energy in the tournament. The 26-year-old Belarussian got a bye

through the first round and a walkover in the second.

Sabalenka looked sharp against the fifth-seeded Paolini, last year's French Open runner-up, breaking her serve six times.

The 27-year-old Ostapenko, who is Latvian, earlier won 6-4, 6-4 against Ekaterina Alexandrova.

Ostapenko won the French Open in 2017 with a high-risk brand of big-hitting tennis and improbable winners.

It is her only major title so far. She reached a career-best ranking of fifth the following year and is now ranked 24th.

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NEWS



Manchester United's Tyler Fredricson, right and Wolverhampton Wanderers' Marshall Munetsi vie for the ball, during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Wolverhampton Wanderers, at Old Trafford, Manchester, England. (AP)

Sports

Chelsea moves up to fifth by rallying to beat Fulham

Arsenal routs Ipswich to keep title race going and Man U loses again

MANCHESTER, England, April 20, (AP): Liverpool will have to wait at least another week to be crowned Premier League champion after Arsenal routed Ipswich 4-0 on Sunday.

Runaway league leader Liverpool needs six more points to claim a record-equalling 20th English title, but three would have been enough if Arsenal had lost at Ipswich.

Such an upset never looked likely after Leandro Trossard and Gabriel Martinelli gave Champions League semifinalist Arsenal a 2-0 halftime lead at Portman Road.

Trossard scored again after the break and Ethan Nwaneri rounded

off the win before Liverpool played Leicester City later Sunday.

Wolves beat Manchester United 1-0 after Pablo Sarabia's brilliant second half free kick.

Chelsea moved up to fifth by rallying to beat Fulham 2-1 with two late goals.

As Manchester City's players and coaches celebrated a crucial win in front of their travelling fans, Nico O'Reilly was happy to loiter in the background at Goodison Park.

Before long, the shy youngster was being pushed to the front as City's supporters chanted his name.

O'Reilly is proving to be an unlikely trump card in City's bid to secure

Champions League qualification from the Premier League, with the 20-year-old midfielder popping up to score the first of the team's two late goals in a 2-0 win at Everton on Saturday.

The victory lifted the soon-to-be-deposed champions into fourth place. The teams finishing in the top five will qualify for next season's Champions League and City is far from sure of being among them after a huge regression following an unprecedented four straight titles under Pep Guardiola.

With Aston Villa beating Newcastle 4-1 later Saturday, only two points separated third place (Newcastle) and sixth place (Villa) with five games left.

O'Reilly, a tall, Manchester-born kid who came through the City academy, had barely featured for City this season until a defensive injury crisis led to Guardiola playing him out of position at left back.

Not only has he been defensively sound, he's also scoring. There were two goals in a come-from-behind win over second-tier Plymouth in the FA Cup last month, while he netted his first Premier League goal last weekend in a big win over Crystal Palace.

On Saturday, O'Reilly swept home a cross from fellow full back Mathews Nunes to break the deadlock against Everton in the 84th minute. Substitute

Mateo Kovacic added another in stoppage time.

"He is very humble and shy - he doesn't talk much," City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan said of O'Reilly. "That is something good when you're new. He is observing and trying to learn what other players are doing."

"In terms of talent and quality, not just his size but playing in a position that isn't natural for him at left back, he's been doing amazing in recent weeks."

O'Reilly is not the first midfielder that Guardiola has converted to a left back at City. There was also Fabian Delph and Oleksandr Zinchenko.

"He's an attacking midfielder and

when you play as a full back, when the transition is quick, you can arrive there," Guardiola said. "He is always there."

City went above Nottingham Forest, which dropped to fifth place in its improbable bid to get into the Champions League. Forest visits Tottenham on Monday.

The race to finish in the top five got even tighter after Aston Villa crushed Newcastle, helped by a goal after 33 seconds by Ollie Watkins.

Watkins, who was picked ahead of Marcus Rashford, also set up Ian Maatssen for Villa's second goal, before an own-goal by Dan Burn and an edge-of-the-area strike by Amadou Onana.

Kuwait crushes Iran 11-0 to win bronze at Ice Hockey World Championship Division IV



Players celebrate with their medals.

KUNA pphotos

Al-Marri named Man of the Match



Man of the Match, Salem Al-Marri

YEREVAN, Armenia, April 20, (KUNA): Kuwait's national ice hockey team secured the bronze medal in dominant fashion, defeating Iran 11-0 in the Ice Hockey World Championship Division IV held in Yerevan.

The Kuwaiti squad showcased a strong performance throughout the tournament, recording impressive wins against Indonesia, host nation Armenia, Malaysia, and Iran.

Honorary President of the Kuwait Winter Games Club, Sheikh

Jaber Bander Al-Sabah, praised the team's outstanding efforts and success in winning four matches.

In a statement to KUNA, he attributed the team's rapid development to the continuous planning and dedication of Club Chairman Fuhaid Al-Ajmi, noting that this achievement will serve as a powerful motivator for the players in future competitions.

Salem Al-Marri, who was named Best Player of the Match, expressed his gratitude for the club's unwavering support, emphasizing its vital role in elevating the team's level of play and boosting player confidence.

Al-Amer, Al-Sharhan, Al-Hawqal and Abdulghani claim top honors

Kuwait Equestrian Championship concludes on high note

KUWAIT CITY, April 20: Amid intense competition among over 70 male and female riders from various local clubs, standout performances marked the Kuwait Equestrian Center's Dressage Championship under the Center's patronage.

Riders Abdullah Al-Amer, Dalal Al-Sharhan, Abdulrahman Al-Hawqal, and Amira Abdulghani claimed top honors in their respective categories, showcasing skill and poise in a highly competitive atmosphere.

The event was judged by a panel led by international judge Yuri Romanov, with judges Alaa Salem Al-Sultan, Naseeba Al-Muasherji, and Beverly McEvie also officiating.

The training level competitions were fiercely contested, with Amira Abdulghani securing first place. At the basic level, Dalal Al-Sharhan took the top spot, while the following category saw a victory by rider Abdulamir.

In the intermediate classes, Abdulrahman Al-Hawqal won the first category, while Abdullah Al-Amer triumphed in the second intermedi-



Winners on the podium with officials.

ate category—the highest level of the tournament.

Champions were crowned by referee Yuri Romanov and trainer Jas-

sim Al-Khalfan, who also serves as a coach at the Kuwait Equestrian Center. Al-Khalfan praised the success of the championship, noting it

set a new participation record for local dressage events, with over 70 riders and an average of 96 tests conducted.

Morocco crowned U-17 AFCON champion after beating Mali

RABAT, April 20, (KUNA): Morocco were crowned champions of the TotalEnergies CAF U-17 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) for the first time in their history, following a thrilling 4-2 penalty shootout win over Mali.

The tightly contested final, held at the Stade El Bachir in Mohammedia, ended goalless after regulation time, forcing the match into a nerve-racking penalty shootout.

Moroccan goalkeeper Zakaria Alaoui emerged as the hero, producing two crucial saves to secure the

historic victory and ignite celebrations among the home fans.

The win marks a major milestone for Moroccan football, as it brings an end to their long wait for continental success at the U-17 level. Just two years ago, Morocco fell short in the final against Senegal, making this triumph a moment of redemption.

For Mali, the defeat was a bitter disappointment in what was their fifth appearance in the U-17 AFCON final, missing out on the title once again despite a strong tournament performance.

Lewandowski asked to be substituted

Raphinha leads Barcelona's comeback victory over Celta

BARCELONA, Spain, April 20, (AP): Hansi Flick ran onto the field on the final whistle and lifted Raphinha off his feet in a bear hug.

The Brazil forward deserved being singled out for extra praise from Barcelona's coach. He had just led a thrilling 4-3 fightback over Celta Vigo by scoring two late goals including a clutch penalty for an injury-time winner.

Barcelona remained on pace for the Spanish league title.

"It was amazing to see at this stage how this team gives everything to never give up," Flick said. He added that at halftime he told Raphinha he needed him "as a leader" on the field.

Raphinha's double let him reach 30 goals in all competitions this season, the best of his career.

The loss might come at a price, however.

Barcelona top scorer Robert Lewandowski asked to be substituted in the final minutes while touching his left thigh.

"We have to wait until tomorrow," Flick said.

There is no let up for Barcelona with three titles in play.

Barcelona faces Mallorca in the league on Tuesday and Real Madrid in the Copa del Rey final next weekend. Four days after that it will start its Champions League semifinal against Inter Milan.

It looked like another easy win for Barcelona when Ferran Torres fired the hosts ahead early.

But Celta striker Borja Iglesias started his spectacular three-goal performance just three minutes later, scoring on the break after Barcelona goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny failed to reach a low cross.

Iglesias stunned the home fans again by scoring twice more in the 59th and 62nd from passes from Celta's own area that were poorly defended by Barcelona.

Iglesias got his second goal after Frenkie De Jong let a long goal kick



Barcelona's Raphinha heads the ball ahead of Celta's Iker Losada during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Celta de Vigo at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

that looked harmless bounce past him, apparently thinking a teammate would control it. Instead, Iglesias pounced on the ball and drilled a shot inside the far post. Iglesias made it a hat trick when Barcelona's defense let him run onto a long ball and dink his shot past Szczesny.

Barcelona looked done but Flick's side quickly rallied behind Raphinha - with some help from substitutes Olmo and Lamine Yamal.

Raphinha slipped a ball through for Olmo to take Barcelona's second goal. He then rose up to thump in Yamal's cross with a powerful header. And with Lewandowski on the bench, Raphinha beat goalkeeper Vincente Guaita from the high-pressure penalty deep in injury time after a video review convinced the referee to penalize a foul by Celta defender Yoel Lago on Olmo.

Celta, which held Barcelona to 2-2 in their other meeting this season, remained in seventh place and fighting for a European berth.

Best of the Rest

Skjelmose edges Pogacar: Danish rider Mattias Skjelmose beat cycling superstar Tadej Pogacar by less than half a wheel's length to win the Amstel Gold Race in a thrilling finish in the Netherlands on Sunday.

In a three-way sprint to the line, double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel appeared to have won but Pogacar nudged ahead of him with a couple of meters to go, only for Skjelmose to surge down the left and pip him at the line.

It was by far the biggest win of the 24-year-old's career and he was in tears afterward when the photo finish showed him winning the Ardennes classic.

It was a rare defeat for the three-time Tour de France champion and multiple classics winner Pogacar, who was second at the prestigious Paris-Roubaix classic last weekend.

Pogacar, who won Amstel in 2023, launched one of his trademark attacks with about 40 kilometers (25 miles) to go in the 255.9-kilometer (158.7-mile) race. But he kept looking over his shoulder, and his lead was shredded to 15 seconds by Evenepoel and Skjelmose entering the last 20 kilometers.

They caught up with 8 kilometers left. Approaching the line, Evenepoel was in front with Pogacar on his wheel and Skjelmose tucked in behind the Slovenian.

Evenepoel moved first with a strong attack, but may have gone too early. Still, it was another excellent ride from the 25-year-old Belgian, whose career was in danger following a heavy crash last year. He only returned to racing on Friday and won the Brabantse Pijl race at home in Belgium. (AP)