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Amir honors Kuwait University's finest



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah graces the Kuwait University honoring ceremony for outstanding graduates of the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years, held Wednesday at Al-Dana Theater in Sabah Al-Salem University City.

HH the Amir invites Lebanese President Aoun to visit Kuwait

BEIRUT, April 30, (KUNA): Lebanese President Joseph Aoun received on Wednesday an invitation from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to visit Kuwait on May 11-12.

The Lebanese Presidency said in a statement that the Charge d'affaires of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Lebanon, Yassin Al-Majed, delivered the letter to President Aoun.

The letter stated that the visit is an opportunity to enhance the existing cooperation in all fields, in order to achieve what serves the interests of the two brotherly countries and peoples.

Knowledge fuels national development: KU president

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait University honored its outstanding graduates, including bachelor's and postgraduate students, for academic years 2021/2022 and 2022/2023.

The ceremony was held at Al-Dana Theater in Sabah Al-Salem University City, under the patronage and in the presence of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The motorcade of His Highness the Amir arrived at the theater, where he was warmly welcomed by Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Al-Mailam and senior university officials.

Also present at the event were His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, President of the Supreme Judicial Council and Court of Cassation Counselor Dr. Adel Bouresli, Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, senior State officials, families of the graduating students and a large number of other citizens.

Continued on Page 5

Kuwait rallies GCC for economic synergy

SMEs key to Gulf growth: Minister Al-Ajil



GCC Commerce and Industry Ministers pose for a group photo during key meetings in Kuwait focused on advancing regional economic integration.

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajil affirmed on Wednesday, Kuwait's keenness to strengthen GCC economic and industrial integration, highlighting the importance of coordinating trade and industrial policies and unifying Gulf positions in light of the rapidly changing global economic landscape.

This came in a speech delivered by Minister Al-Ajil during the 68th ministerial meeting of the Trade Cooperation Committee and the 54th ministerial meeting of the Industrial Cooperation Committee, which is hosted by Kuwait.

He emphasized that achieving Gulf economic integration requires more consultation, exchange of expertise, and coordination of efforts within an organized institutional framework, hoping that these meetings would contribute to a qualitative leap in the course of joint Gulf cooperation.

Al-Ajil praised the efforts of the General Secretariat of the GCC in following up on the implementation of committee decisions and coordinating joint work among member states, which supports the Council's path toward greater progress and prosperity in the commercial and industrial fields.

In his speech at the meeting, he said: "Today, our region has become an influential economic power on the global map, and the historical ties, strategic interests, and massive market size we share give us a great opportunity to turn challenges into opportunities, boost trade exchange among our countries, and open new horizons for Gulf capital, products, and distinguished services."

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8 Gulf Bank posts
KD 9.4 mln net
profit in Q1 2025



8 Zain: Instilling
positive values
and raising digital
awareness among
youth



9 NBK hosts
'Bankee' program
event for schools

Diplomats unite in mourning as Iran probes port explosion

By Fares Al-Abdan

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: "On behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the assistants and employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; we express the condolences of the State of Kuwait to the Islamic Republic of Iran over the explosion at Bandar Abbas Port, which resulted in a number of deaths and hundreds of injuries," says Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat.

He added "we sympathize with Iran, its government and people for

Continued on Page 5



Photo by Samer Shiger
Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Totonji receives one of the ambassadors offering condolences.

Iraq's court defers Khor Abdullah decision again

BAGHDAD, April 30, (KUNA): Iraq's Federal Supreme Court on Wednesday reviewed appeals filed by President Abdullahatif Rashid and Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Sudani regarding the Khor Abdullah agreement between Kuwait and Baghdad. The court scheduled hearings for June 22, without any pleading.

This marks the second postponement

of the case, and no explanation was given for the delay. Outside the court, a protest by lawmakers and citizens took place, calling for the judge to dismiss the appeals and uphold the previous ruling that invalidated the treaty.

In 2023, the Federal Supreme Court deemed the agreement unconstitutional, citing a violation of Article 61 of the Iraqi Constitution.

Day by Day

THE more you love someone, the more upset you get with them over trivial matters. Such a reaction is not aggressive behavior, but rather an expression of your care and concern for them. The more a person reaches the highest stages of love and attachment to someone, the deeper their emotional reactions become. If there is someone in your life with these traits, rest assured they have reached the highest level of love.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

12-hour water flow cut to hit key areas

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy announced that maintenance work will be carried out on the water network at the Doha Water Distribution Complex on Friday at 8:00 pm for a period of 12 hours, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry stated that this work will result in reduced freshwater flow in the following areas: Ardiya, Sabah Al-Nasser, Rihab, Ishbiliya, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, and Firdous.

Kuwait, UK Naval Forces boost ties with joint drills

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan, Wednesday, discussed exchanging expertise and enhancing cooperation in the military training field with Commander at the Royal Navy's Minehunter HMS Middleton Lieutenant Colonel Kyle O'Regan.

This came in a statement issued by the General Staff of Kuwait Army after Al-Hamlan received O'Regan on his official visit to the country, which will last for several days.

The two sides will carry out joint naval exercises that contribute to raising the level of readiness and operational capabilities, added the statement.

It noted that a number of naval force officers visited the ship and were received by the ship's commander, where they were briefed on the ship's advanced capabilities in naval mine countermeasures.



Kuwait Army photo
Commander of Kuwait Naval Forces Rear Admiral Saif Al-Hamlan discusses exchanging expertise and enhancing cooperation in the military training field with Commander at the Royal Navy's Minehunter HMS Middleton Lieutenant Colonel Kyle O'Regan.

Prayer Timings			
Fajr	03:42	Asr	15:21
Sunrise ..	05:08	Maghrib ..	18:24
Zohr	11:45	Isha	19:47

Local

Expected weather for next 24 hrs:

By Day: Hot, partly cloudy and relatively humid with light variable wind to light to moderate southeasterly wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

By Night: Rather hot, partly cloudy and relatively humid with

Weather

light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 10-35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait Airport	39	29
Abdaly	41	28

Bubyan	40	29
Jahra	41	30
Failaka Island	39	31
Salmiyah	35	27
Ahmadi	37	24
Jal Aliyah	40	29
Nuwaib	36	29
Wafra	38	25

Kuwait Amir invited by Azeri president to visit

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a letter on Wednesday addressed to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah from President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

The letter, handed by Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov during a reception at Bayan Palace, focused on bilateral relations and ways to develop them and the latest regional and international developments.

It also included an invitation for His Highness the Amir to visit Azerbaijan.

Present at the reception in Bayan Palace were Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, head of His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan retired Lieut General Jamal Al-Theyab, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Mazen Al-Issa, Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Saqad Marafi, and Azerbaijani Ambassador to Kuwait Emil Karimov.

‘Emirati Cultural Nights’ planned for May 5-7: UAE envoy to Kuwait

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi has announced that the “Emirati Cultural Nights in Kuwait” will be held on May 5-7 2025.

The embassy will organize the event, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NC-CAL); coinciding with the selection of Kuwait as the Arab Capital of Culture for 2025.

Al-Neyadi pointed out that organizing this event is a manifestation of the leading position of Kuwait in the Gulf and Arab cultural arenas, and its active role in supporting creativity and cultural movement in the region. He affirmed the depth of fraternal relations between the UAE and Kuwait; citing the significant momentum in the form of mutual visits between the



Dr. Al Neyadi

leaders of the two countries, ongoing consultations, agreements and memoranda of understanding that promote the strategic partnership in various sectors.

He said the initiative is in coordination with several Emirati entities concerned with heritage and culture; such as the Founders Office, Fujairah Fine Arts Academy, Hamdan Bin Mohammad Heritage Center, Sharjah Heritage Institute, Fujairah Tourism and Antiquities Authority, and National Archives and Library.

He revealed the event will be held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and will include performances of the UAE’s land and maritime folk heritage, along with a cultural and artistic exhibition with the participation of Emirati folk groups.

He added the activities on the second day -- May 6 -- will be held at the Avenues Mall; including heritage performances, a corner for traditional handicrafts, and a visual arts pavilion featuring the works of Emirati female artists. He stated the event will conclude on May 7, with a distinguished Emirati theatrical performance titled ‘Samra’ on the stage of Dasma Theater; featuring a selection of Emirati artists.



KUNA photo
Kuwait's new Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden Mohammad Yaqub Hayati poses for a picture with the King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf.

Corridor to beat traffic chaos

South Kuwait flourishes in major new projects

By Inaas Awadh
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Municipal Council member Fahad Musaed Al-Abduljader on Wednesday submitted a proposal to establish a strategic corridor called ‘New Ahmadi Highway’, which is parallel to King Fahad Road and Fahaheel Expressway.

In a press statement, Al-Abduljader explained that he presented the proposal in view of the increasing traffic congestion and population density in the southern part of the country due to the implementation of major housing projects like Wafra, Khairan and Sabah Al-Ahmad residential cities; not to mention the traffic



Al-Abduljader

jam to and from Nuwaiseeb border.

He said the proposed highway starts in Subhan through an extension of King Faisal Road (Airport Road), going towards the South to link with King Fahad Road in Julai’a or extending to Nuwaiseeb border. He believes the highway will alleviate traffic congestion, ease movement between the Capital and southern areas, support urban expansion and future development plans, and improve connectivity between the inland and coastal areas.

He stressed the need for full coordination with the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) and Ministry of Public Works in conducting the necessary technical and traffic studies; while ensuring the comprehensiveness of the project in terms of routes, intersections and the environmental impact.

He reiterated that this project is a strategic development artery that improves connectivity between the inland and coastal areas, while supporting the national vision on modernizing the transportation system and infrastructure in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable development for the country.

Meanwhile, the Capital Governorate Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Dr. Hassan Kamal, will hold its meeting on Monday to discuss several

items on its agenda.

The most important item on the agenda of the committee is the amendment of the decision that the council took on July 20, 2023; approving the donation of National Real Estate Company to construct a multi-storey parking building and beautify the adjacent public squares in Sharq, Block Seven. The building will consist of a basement, a ground floor, five floors and a rooftop in accordance with the regulations.

This is in addition to the proposal of council member Abdullahif Al-Da’i on the temporary allocation of a walkway in Kaifan, Block Seven.

The committee will also deliberate on the following:

■ Request of the Interior Ministry to allocate a portion of its site in G1 area -- measuring 3,000 square meters -- for the main transformer station of the Ministry of Electricity;

■ Request of the Justice Ministry to renew the allocation decision regarding the land for the Family Court building in Granada, Capital Governorate, Block Three measuring 5,000 square meters; as well as the allocation of parking spaces with a total size of 4,150 square meters and amending the parking spaces in a way that does not conflict with the right-of-way of Jahra Road.

Genuine desire seen for change

‘Everyone List’ emerges victorious in Kuwait Fishermen Union poll

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The ‘Everyone List’ has emerged victorious in the election of Kuwait Fishermen Union (KFU) , winning nine seats in the Board of Directors of the union.

The election was held Monday at the headquarters of the union in Sharq, in the presence of the union’s legal advisor and a committee from Kuwait Lawyers Association.

Union President Abdullah Al-Sarheed praised the efforts of the General Assembly members and their eagerness to attend and elect a new board that meets the aspirations of fishermen. He congratulated them on the success of the election, which effectively expressed a genuine desire for change.

He affirmed that the members of the General Assembly are the supreme authority in selecting the board and their will prevailed. He explained that winning the election places a huge responsibility on the new board and that they will strive to fulfill their aspirations and demands in cooperation with State institutions and open a new page to achieve the desired goals through new ideas agreed upon with relevant government agencies.

He said the new board has clear plans to develop fishing and regulate the fishing industry, indicating that the coming period will witness intensified efforts to ensure food security and reduce prices. He added the union is

extending support to relevant government agencies.

He added the government seeks to preserve national products; while praising the efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister and the wise government. He explained that achieving sustainable food security is one of the most important pillars of Kuwait Vision 2035.

On the other hand, former President of the union Dhafer Al-Suwaian asserted that the board has always been committed to protect the rights of fishermen and address their demands.

He also disclosed that the union’s bonds and funds increased from KD591,774 to KD1,129,542 during his tenure. “We knocked on the doors of officials and followed up the implementation of demands. We did not hesitate to serve all license holders. The union has imported fishing equipment and provided it at cost to license holders; thereby, alleviating the burdens of fishermen,” he added.

He said the union succeeded in conveying the messages of fishermen to the concerned officials, highlighting issues that hinder fishing trips, and bringing fishermen’s issues to the attention of the Council of Ministers and many esteemed government members; hence, the numerous accomplishments.

Moreover, a committee from Kuwait Lawyers Association monitored the election. Lawyer of the union At-

torney Khaled Al-Ansari was present as well. He praised the democratic process in the elections of civil society organizations, public benefit associations, unions and labor unions. He described the atmosphere at the election of the Fishermen Union as cordial -- among the competing lists and the members of the General Assembly.

He confirmed that the financial and administrative reports were sent to all members of the General Assembly, which they reviewed and unanimously approved. He said these reports are accurate this year’s General Assembly proceeded better than the previous years.

Attorney Mustafa Youssef -- a member of the association -- disclosed that the role of the association in the election of the Fishermen Union is to supervise the electoral process, from voting to the counting of votes and the announcement of results. He added the association has supervised the election for three consecutive terms, praising the organization of the election and the association’s commitment to the democratic process.

He asserted that the association plays an important role in civil society; so it is committed to participate in the electoral process, achieve democracy, and ensure air elections that fulfill voters’ aspirations.

Attorney Abdullah Al-Ali stated that the electoral process proceeded smoothly and that there was significant cooperation from the union to ensure a smooth democratic process. He disclosed that the union has 400 members -- 300 of whom have paid their annual dues. He praised the senior citizens’ eagerness to participate in the election.



Photos show destruction caused by the A-Bomb.

Nuke horrors revisited

Japan keen to cooperate with Kuwait in peace moves: envoy

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Embassy of Japan in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP), hosted the opening ceremony of the second Hiroshima and Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Poster Exhibition; with the participation of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, Embassy of Kuwait in Japan and Hiroshima Entertainment Organization.

In his inaugural address, Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Kenichiro Mukai underscored the importance of spreading the culture of peace, while reaffirming Japan’s

commitment to nuclear disarmament and preventing the recurrence of such tragedies.

The Japanese ambassador affirmed Japan’s willingness to cooperate with Kuwait due to the country’s humanitarian history . Mukai said that Kuwait has consistently shown a deep respect for peace and humanitarian values.

He pointed out that what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki does not concern Japan alone, but rather a part of the shared history of humanity.

He revealed this exhibition coincides with the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize win for the Federation of Atomic Bomb Survivors’ Organizations of Japan (Nihon Hidankyo), which reinforces the importance of the message the exhibition conveys for world free of nuclear weapons.

A large number of diplomatic, cultural and artistic figures; as well as businesspersons and students attended the event, reflecting a growing interest in issues of peace and historical memory in Kuwait.



Kenichiro Mukai

Other Voices

Rabbi Mizrachi and his advice to the Arab Zionists

By Ahmad alsarraf

THERE are Arabs who are described as friends of Israel. These individuals work for its interests, either openly or covertly, driven by material, emotional motives, or sometimes out of hatred for their enemies. It is not difficult to identify these individuals through their explicit positions, statements, articles, and television interviews. Those who oppose Hamas, however, do not fall into this group of Israel supporters.

For various reasons, Rabbi Yosef Mizrachi is regarded as one of the most well-known, outspoken, and controversial Jewish clerics in New York.

In his sermons and speeches, Rabbi Mizrachi often expresses strong and controversial views. He is known for his vocal criticism of certain groups and his advocacy for policies he believes will support Israeli interests. He has been outspoken in his opposition to the Palestinian cause, asserting that Palestinians who remain in Israel must be slaves, reflecting the views of some Arab Zionists.

His comments regarding Palestinians, including his opposition to providing them with medical assistance and his extreme rhetoric that his group will one day slaughter them, have sparked significant controversy. Mizrachi has also publicly rejected Palestinian culture,

including their food, and said if he could, he would bomb Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Mizrachi has previously stated that much of the support Israel receives from the United States can be attributed to the beliefs held by the Protestant evangelical movement, particularly the ideology of “Christian Zionism.” This movement views the return of Christ to Palestine as conditional upon the return of Jews to the land, the establishment of a Jewish state, and the rebuilding of Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem. According to this perspective, this cannot be achieved prior to the establishment of the State of Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates.

When these conditions are met, the Battle of Armageddon will take place, and Christ will emerge to rule the world for a thousand years. Therefore, supporting Israel and its expansion is seen as both a religious and political duty.

Rabbi Mizrachi said he and other Israeli leaders are aware of the evangelical agenda, and that evangelicals know that the Jews are aware of this as well. However, both parties continue to pursue their respective goals, each convinced of the validity of their own beliefs and

the invalidity of the other’s. In a well-known sermon, Rabbi Mizrachi stated that Azerbaijan is Israel’s largest ally among Islamic countries, highlighting Israel’s heavy reliance on Azerbaijan’s logistical support, to the point where it almost feels like an extension of Israeli territory.

He said while Azerbaijanis do not particularly like Jews, they depend on them for protection, adding that Israel would never find itself in such a position.

Rabbi Mizrachi also said Israel had previously supported the Kurds of Iraq in various ways, but ultimately abandoned them when the Iraqi government, backed by American and Iranian support, became stronger. While Israel maintained good relations with Saddam Hussein, it abandoned him when he was no longer of use. Israel also established the Free Lebanon Army in the south, led by Antoine Lahad, providing full support to resist Hezbollah. However, when Lahad’s forces collapsed against Hezbollah, Israel left him to face his fate. Rabbi Mizrachi’s words serve as a warning to all non-Jewish supporters and advocates of Israel, whether paid or not. Israel, he cautioned, will not come to their aid in times of trouble or crisis, but will abandon them just as it has done to others in the past.

□ □ □

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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



As long as our sword is sharp, the enemy will not see our clothing

People are respected not for the elegance of their clothing or the prestige of their positions, but for the power and wisdom they embody. History is filled with countless stories, some grounded in reality, while others are embellished with myth and exaggeration.

What follows is not a myth or an exaggeration, but a true account that illustrates how powerful countries command respect.

The following story teaches us how connotations can be used to demonstrate a country’s super power.

It took place during the reign of Ottoman Sultan Selim I (1470–1520), the ninth ruler of the empire.

Sultan Selim gave little importance to outward appearance. His ministers and senior officials followed his example, to the extent that the royal court was completely free of luxury or refined clothing. Yet, no one dared to raise the issue with the Sultan directly.

One day, the Grand Vizier seized the opportunity during a visit by a European ambassador to the court. Approaching the Sultan cautiously, he said, “Your Majesty, our enemy lacks sound judgment. He tends to focus on superficial matters and places excessive importance on appearances. Therefore, it may be fitting, Your Majesty...”

Before he could finish, Sultan Selim interrupted by saying, “Yes, let’s do it. You too prepare elegant clothing for your-

The first Sultan paid little attention to his appearance.

His court was free of ostentation and elegant clothing.

The Grand Vizier used the opportunity to draw the Sultan’s attention to his old clothing.

Our enemy is shallow-minded and overly concerned with people’s appearances.

The Sultan ordered a sword to be unsheathed and placed beside the throne.

The ministers were stunned when the Sultan entered the court wearing his old clothes.

The ambassador said, “The unsheathed sword caught my eye, and I did not notice the Sultan.”

Today, we are swordless, as we are preoccupied only with appearances.

similarly adorned.

Sultan Selim had ordered an unsheathed sword to be placed on the throne shortly before the ambassador’s arrival.

The ministers and senior state officials gathered in the royal court, eagerly awaiting the Sultan’s arrival. They anticipated that the Sultan would attend the occasion dressed differently than usual.

To their surprise, the Sultan entered wearing his same old clothes. The ministers were taken aback and embarrassed, as their own attire was more elaborate and expensive than that of the Sultan. They stood in silence, and waited for an explanation to know the reason.

At the appointed time, the ambassador entered and stood before the Sultan, bowing, kneeling, and trembling. After exchanging a few words, the ambassador quickly departed.

The Sultan then instructed one of his ministers to ask the ambassador’s opinion about the Sultan’s attire. The ambassador’s response was startling, “I did not notice the great Sultan. The unsheathed sword fastened to the throne caught my attention, and I saw nothing else.”

Upon hearing this, the Sultan pointed to the sword, which was still positioned next to the throne, and said, “As long as the edge of the sword is sharp, the enemy’s eye will neither see nor pay attention to our attire. Today, we are devoid of swords, and all we care about is clothing and appearances.”

■ When the rich sneeze, the hypocrites quickly say, “May God bless our beloved brother.”



■ When the poor sneeze, they groan and say, “Who on earth is that disgusting person who’s making us suffer with his cold!”



■ Suspending the purchase of unused holidays is a wise decision. Some individuals who sell their leave to the government raise doubts about their actual commitment to attending their offices. In some cases, these individuals do not show up at work, and their colleagues turn a blind eye to their absence and lack of professionalism.



■ The government should adopt housing plans in collaboration with real estate developers. This will facilitate the creation of fully self-sufficient residential cities in terms of electricity, water, sanitation, and road infrastructure. The management of these cities will then be overseen by the residents themselves.



■ In most countries around the world, nationality laws consist of a single article that distinguishes citizens from non-citizens - an American from a non-American, a British from a non-British, and so on. In Kuwait, however, the nationality law has more than eight articles.



■ One of the greatest achievements of this era is the development and amendment of outdated laws. Some laws have remained unchanged for over 60 years.



KUNA photo
Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai, Deputy Commander of the National Guard, presents a certificate to one of the graduates.

Training courses help enhance skills of First Sergeants: Al-Rifai

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Lieutenant General Engineer Hashim Al-Rifai, Deputy Commander of the National Guard, attended the graduation ceremony for the latest cohort of First Sergeants, held at the central hall of Al-Sumoud Camp.

In a statement during the event, Lt. Gen. Al-Rifai expressed the National Guard’s pride in the graduating group of non-commissioned officers, who successfully completed a comprehensive course in military sciences and field training.

He emphasized that the course plays a vi-

tal role in preparing and qualifying first sergeants, enhancing their combat readiness, and equipping them with the skills necessary to carry out their duties with competence and professionalism.

Lt. Gen. Al-Rifai also conveyed congratulations and greetings from National Guard Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Chief Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He commended the graduates for their strong performance throughout the course and their grasp of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.



Colonel Staff Engineer Yousef Khalil Al-Shatti

Running in uniform ... record set

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): Colonel Staff Engineer Yousef Khalil Al-Shatti has set a new world record for Kuwait; earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for completing the Fastest Marathon in Full Military Uniform in Aveiro, Portugal.

Wearing full military gear -- including a helmet and bulletproof vest; Al-Shatti completed the 42-kilometer marathon in an impressive time of 3 hours, 39 minutes and 35

seconds; surpassing the previous record of 3 hours, 40 minutes and 7 seconds.

This is his second Guinness World Record; as in February 2023, he earned his first title for Kuwait as the Fastest Swimmer to Cross a Sea Cave (male category).

His latest achievement is a testament to perseverance, discipline and national pride -- an inspiring representation of the strength and dedication of the Kuwait Armed Forces on the global stage.

Hearing in ‘royal’s’ funds fraud case adjourned to next month

Cryptocurrency mining case under probe

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Ministers’ Court has adjourned to May 20 the case filed against Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad for embezzlement and other charges. Accompanied by his defense lawyer, Sheikh Ahmad denied all accusations, and his office manager also rejected the charges.

Sheikh Ahmad is facing four charges - embezzling KD 400,000, illicitly gaining KD 215,000, purchasing six vehicles using the Ministry of Defense’s budget, and intentionally concealing his vehicle ownership when submitting declarations to Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha). His office manager is charged with being involved in the first two charges.



Case under probe: The Commercial Affairs Prosecution at the New Justice Palace is currently conducting an investigation into the unlicensed cryptocurrency mining case.

A total of 58 individuals, including landlords who leased properties where the activities allegedly took place, are under scrutiny. According to the prosecution, the defendants are facing charges related to acts deemed harmful to national interests and the unauthorized operation of cryptocurrency mining facilities.

The alleged activities are believed be in violation of regulations issued by Kuwait Municipality, Public Authority for Industry and Communications Authority, particularly concerning energy usage and unauthorized consumption of State-supplied electricity. During the investigation, criminal reports and confiscated equipment were presented as evidence. However, the defendants denied the charges.



Drugs-linked lawyer sacked: Kuwait Lawyers Association Secretary Khaled Al-Suwaifan said the Board of Directors of the association suspended the registration of a lawyer facing allegations related to the possession and trafficking of controlled substances.

This measure has been taken to uphold the integrity of the legal profession, protect its reputation, and ensure compliance with Law No. 42/1964, which governs legal practice in courts.

The decision is in line with the registration protocols and ethical standards of the association, which are designed to preserve the dignity and esteemed standing of the legal profession. Al-Suwaifan clarified that the suspension is a precautionary action based on the ongoing judicial investigation and will remain in effect until a final ruling is issued

He reaffirmed the commitment of the association to maintain the highest ethical and legal standards among its members and its readiness to take firm action against any conduct that could undermine public trust in the legal profession.



Encroachments removed: The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality revealed that the Violations Removal Department of Farwaniya Municipality carried out a campaign which resulted in the removal of 25 encroachments on state property and the issuance of 45 warnings , reports Al-Seyassah daily .

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Graduates suitable for local and global markets eyed

Plan to streamline admission schedule, create seats for higher education

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The annual coordination meeting of higher education institutions, chaired by Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, will facilitate synchronized admission plans in diverse higher education institutions, including internal and external scholarships for the 2025/2026 academic year.

The objective is to ensure availability of seats for students who want to enroll in higher education institutions or scholarship programs.

The meeting tackled the coordination and establishment of application deadlines for external scholarships administered by the ministry; internal scholarships overseen by the Secretariat General of the Private Universities Council; and admissions to Kuwait University, Abdullah Al-Salem University, and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET).

Al-Jalal underscored the necessity of regulating application submission periods to prevent duplicate applications in educational institutions. "This measure will optimize the utilization of available seats in academic institutions. The determination of accepted student numbers will be contingent upon each institution's capacity and adherence to their respective academic standards and requirements," he clarified.

He confirmed the ministry's dedication to refine admission procedures to be in line with national development plans and to match educational outcomes with the needs of the labor market. He said the ministry's ambition is to cultivate highly proficient graduates capable of excelling in both the local and international job markets to achieve Kuwait's sustainable development goals.

He then announced the application deadlines for higher education institutions and scholarships as follows:

External scholarships: June 11, 2025 to July 3, 2025
Abdullah Al-Salem University: July 7, 2025 to July 17, 2025
Kuwait University: July 19, 2025 to July 29, 2025
Private university scholarships: Aug 4, 2025 to Aug 14, 2025
PAAET: Aug 7, 2025 to Aug 20, 2025

Present at the meeting were Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Lamia Al-Mulhim; Secretary General of the Public Universities Council Dr. Jassim Al-Ali; Secretary General of the Private Universities Council Adel Al-Bader; founding board member of Abdullah Al-Salem University Dr. Fawaz Al-Enezi; Deputy Director General for Academic Support Services at PAAET Dr. Mishaal Al-Mansouri; Assistant Undersecretary for Scholarships, Equivalencies and Cultural Relations at the Ministry of Higher Education Ghaida Madkour; deans of Admissions and Registration at Kuwait University, Abdullah Al-Salem University, PAAET and private universities; and representatives of the Ministry of Education.

Minister sanctions excellent job bonus for 19,000 MEW workers

'Grievance window to receive complaints later'

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff & Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem on Sunday signed the excellent job performance bonus for around 19,000 eligible employees.

Sources from the ministry disclosed that the disbursement of the bonus is expected to start on Monday, affirming the ministry remains committed to the implementation of all applicable rules and regulations set by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Sources said the ministry will also open the grievance window at a later date to receive complaints from employees who were excluded from the bonus.

Sources added the concerned departments exerted tremendous efforts, in coordination with various sectors, to complete the excellent job performance lists in record time.

Meanwhile, the newspaper obtained information that the Central Agency for Public Tenders

(CAPT) has opened bids for the installation of a 400 kV overhead line from Shagaya Solar Power Plant to the main transformer station in Wafra. CAPT has accepted three bids and excluded the Article 40 bid. The highest bid was KD49.584 million, while the lowest was KD41.450 million.

Sources said CAPT will refer the accepted bids to the ministry for technical review, indicating a recommendation will be submitted to CAPT to make the award decision in accordance with its regulations and laws.

Sources confirmed the tender will then be sent to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for preliminary oversight, review and auditing; followed by the contract signing and implementation of the project.

Sources explained that the importance of the tender lies in its ability to transfer the energy produced from Shagaya Solar Power Plant to the main

transformer station in Wafra to support the electricity grid and ensure the continuous availability of electricity without challenges or obstacles.

Evaluation in final stages: The Public Authority for Disabled Affairs (PADA) is nearing the final stages of its annual evaluation process for employees in all sectors and job titles, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources confirmed that the evaluation was conducted in line with the mechanism approved by the Civil Service Commission (CSC); which specified the criteria such as adherence to attendance, number of days absent, work productivity, and tenure of at least two years at the authority or at any other government institution.

Sources said the evaluations are expected to be finalized by next week. "Once completed, the names of eligible employees will be reviewed and approved by the Personnel Affairs Committee. Disbursements for those who qualify will be issued in the second half of May. The authority will open a 60-day window to receive and review grievances related to the annual evaluation," sources explained.



Young students salute the Kuwait national flag.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah inaugurates the exhibition.

Farwaniya Gov pledges support for educational process at event

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Under the patronage of Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, the World of Values Exhibition was inaugurated Monday morning at Umm Al-Hakam Bint Abi Sufyan High School for Girls.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the opening ceremony of the event, which was organized by the Educational Technology Department in Farwaniya Educational Zone, was attended by the Director of the Educational Technology Department Dr. Ghanem Al-Salmari, Acting Supervisor of Educational Technology and Libraries Faleh Al-Ajmi, along with school principals and supervisors from the educational zone.

The opening ceremony featured various works and innovations presented by the Educational Technology Department.

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah expressed his pleasure in participating in the exhibition, and affirmed his support for the educational process.

He highlighted the exhibition's role in instilling values and building a culture of rational thought, all aimed at serving and achieving community goals.

At the end of the ceremony, the Farwaniya Governor praised the efforts of the exhibition organizers, which reflect the exceptional talent displayed by the participating students.

He emphasized that teamwork plays a major role in shaping and enhancing the personality of the Kuwaiti citizens.

State-of-the-art construction eyed

Three new cities in offing to meet demands of applicants

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: While the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) denied the accuracy of circulating lists of housing alternatives being offered for public auction; Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdullahif Al-Mishari announced the launching of consultancy bidding for Khairan, Nawaf Al-Ahmad and Al-Sabriya cities to meet the needs of 170,000 housing applicants.

In a press statement Tuesday, Al-Mishari disclosed that three biddings for special consultancy services will be launched; including studies, plans, design and preparation of tender documents for the construction and maintenance of main roads and major infrastructure networks for Khairan, Nawaf Al-Ahmad and Al-Sabriya.

He said these projects will be offered to consultancy firms to expedite implementation following approval by the Board of Directors of PAHW.

He affirmed that the implementation process for these new residential cities started after obtaining the approval of the Board of Directors; with the aim of accelerating the pace of work and the documentation cycle, removing obstacles, and ensuring the provision of adequate hous-

ing for citizens to address the housing issue.

He confirmed that the new cities will be established according to the highest quality standards; revealing that bidding for planning, design and implementation will be limited to specialized companies and offices to ensure the execution is in accordance with the best international methods and practices. He said the bidding is open to local and international companies.

He disclosed the three cities will provide 170,000 housing units; keeping pace with the advanced construction and infrastructure systems and building codes, ensuring the housing needs of Kuwaiti families are met while diversifying their options.

He added these cities are divided into two parts -- one for residential areas designated for citizens; and the other for services, commercial, investment, craft, and other areas."

He said Khairan Residential City measures 135 square kilometers with around 60,000 housing units; Nawaf Al-Ahmad City measures 125 square kilometers with about 55,000 housing units; and Al-Sabriya City measures 80 square kilometers with 55,000 housing units.

He stressed that PAHW is keen on expediting the implementation of these projects in coordination with other government entities.

He indicated that plots will be offered for planning and design for gradual implementation in line with the general plan for the primary infrastructure of the country.



Al-Mishari

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Some photos during the event.

Over 40 Belgian firms explore investment opportunities in Kuwait

Kuwait hosts Belgian trade delegation eyeing green energy and tech

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms disclosed that he is happy and proud to welcome the Belgian economic delegation, comprising of more than 40 companies and institutions, currently on an official visit to Kuwait.

He revealed this visit -- the largest in years -- reflects the dynamism of the Kuwaiti market and the promising opportunities it offers in various fields.

He made the statement at a reception in his residence Wednesday evening in honor of the visiting delegation, with Assistant Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs Sami Al-Hamad in attendance.

He affirmed that this visit is an extension of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of bilateral relations between the two countries last year.

He said preparations are underway to hold political consultations in Brussels in June, following the last round held in Kuwait in June 2023. He added "we are arranging the visit of the Kuwaiti deputy foreign affairs minister to Brussels to meet his Belgian counterpart. We hope it will be a fruitful visit."

On the prospects for cooperation between the two sides, he stressed that Belgium has vast experience in the fields of renewable energy and artificial intelligence. He revealed that a delegation from the Belgian company iMac -- a global leader in artificial intelligence and semiconductors -- visited Kuwait last year as part of efforts to develop strategic partnerships in these vital sectors.

He pointed out that the volume of trade exchange between Kuwait and Belgium currently stands at around 800 million euros annually. "We aspire to raise this figure to more than one billion euros annually, as there is significant



Belgium's Ambassador to Kuwait Christian Dooms addressing the attendees.

untapped potential," he stated.

He said Belgium offers luxury products and a distinct shopping experience that could be popular with Kuwaiti consumers, whom he described as "really sophisticated and demanding."

He expressed regret over the lack of direct flights between Kuwait and Brussels, considering this a challenge he intends to address.

He asserted that Belgium not only boasts of attractive shopping centers and commercial streets; but it also offers a unique tourism experiences that include nature, recreation, Formula One and family entertainment facilities.

He went on to disclose that the Belgian companies participating in the visit represent diverse sectors like energy, waste treatment, medical sector and modern technologies. He said the delegation visited Qatar before arriving in Kuwait, where it began its activities through fruitful meetings with Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).

According to Dooms, four Belgian companies gave presentations highlighting their successful experience and best practices. He added that the participating companies include John Cockerill that specializes in energy and waste treatment solutions, HUB Medical and Meyvaert that manufacture glass display cases for museums.

He confirmed that Meyvaert has existing partnerships in Kuwait, particularly with the National Bank of Kuwait; in addition to its presence in global cities like Dubai, New York, Chicago and Singapore.

He concluded "we are medium-sized countries that share values of humility and openness. We seek to build partnerships based on trust and continuity, not casual meetings. Field presence is the foundation for building successful economic and human relations."

PAM, Kuwait envoy discuss Filipino worker recruitment

Al-Nibari applauds labor reforms

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: During a meeting with the Ambassador of Kuwait to the Philippines Meshari Al-Nibari, the acting Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Marzouq Al-Otaibi discussed the latest developments on the recruitment of Filipino workers and ways to strengthen cooperation between the two sides, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Otaibi briefed his guest on PAM's efforts to fa-

cilitate the transfer of workers to Kuwait, highlighting the benefits and protections provided by Kuwait's Labor Law.

He affirmed PAM's commitment to preserving the rights of expatriate workers in Kuwait, particularly those employed in sectors that contribute to the labor market.

He also expressed the readiness of PAM employees to cooperate with government agencies to support Kuwait's development and humanitarian goals.

Meanwhile, Ambassador Al-Nibari praised PAM officials for their efforts in the labor sector in Kuwait and expressed his willingness to further develop relations and enhance cooperation with PAM.

Literary scene gains momentum

Kuwaiti intellectuals illuminate Muscat fair with cultural power



Part of the exhibition.

MUSCAT, April 30, (KUNA): A number of Kuwaiti authors and writers affirmed on Wednesday that participating in cultural forums and Arab and international book fairs enhances the presence of Kuwaiti books on the map of intellectual and cultural production.

This came in separate remarks to KUNA on the sidelines of their participation in the 29th Muscat International Book Fair, which kicked off last Thursday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre and will continue until May 3.

Writer and Owner of Book Land Publishing and Distribution House, Jassim Al Omran, said that participation in book fairs contributes to strengthening the cultural and scientific movement in Arab societies, in addition to its pivotal and clear role in the renaissance of peoples and their awareness.

He stressed the importance of highlighting Kuwaiti intellectual and cultural productions to readers and book fair visitors, in addition to shedding light on the cultural and historical heritage of Kuwait.

For his part, writer and founder of Majra Publishing and Distribution House, Abdulmalik Al-Othman, said that this is his third participation in the Muscat Book Fair.

Writer Fahad Al-Bashara affirmed that the readership in the Sultanate is very broad and they have a great passion for reading and studying, in addition to their keenness to acquire all the latest books and publications.

He expressed his happiness to participate in this exhibition, which was distinguished by its wonderful organization and the great variety of useful books, in addition to containing many enjoyable events and activities.

In turn, writer Abdullah Al-Enezi said that book fairs have witnessed an increase in the number of visitors in recent years, as they are leading cultural gatherings and centers that contribute to strengthening the publishing industry,

enriching the cultural movement, expanding the horizons of reading, and opening the window to knowledge.

He pointed out that participation in these fairs has a significant impact on cultural integration and intellectual interaction.

Al-Enezi stressed the importance of Kuwaiti authors, writers, and literary figures attending these major events to represent their country in the best possible light, meet readers of various cultures and ages, and promote distinguished Kuwaiti publications.



Writer and Owner of Book Land Publishing and Distribution House, Jassim Al Omran.

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait rallies

He pointed to the growing importance of supporting entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), now more than ever, adding that these businesses are the ones that will drive change, invest in innovation, create job opportunities, and contribute to building a bright future.

He expressed his hope that GCC governments would continue their unwavering support for entrepreneurs and SMEs, calling on the assembled ministers to adopt joint initiatives and practical plans that enable these businesses to stabilize, grow, and become milestones in national economies and influential forces on both regional and international levels.

Al-Ajil affirmed that today marks the beginning of a new phase of action and development, where strong will meets great ambition, explaining that "it is our responsibility to seize this moment to build a Gulf economy that remains resilient in the face of challenges an economy based on sustainability, innovation, and close cooperation between the public and private sectors.

He also referred to the statement made by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who said: "In light of the extremely complex circumstances that are casting shadows over the global economy and threatening the development and prosperity of our peoples. We must accelerate our efforts toward achieving Gulf economic integration through policy unification, diversification of non-traditional income sources, facilitation of trade and investment flows, support for local industries, and expansion of innovation and entrepreneurship, especially in emerging fields such as artificial intelligence to enhance the competitiveness of our countries' economies on both regional and international levels."

Amir honors

In his speech, Al-Jalal pointed out that His Highness the Amir's patronage of the ceremony reflects the interest of the wise leadership in education and the people. He said this proves that HH the Amir prioritizes higher education in line with his vision for the nation.

He asserted "this blessed gathering combines the honor of Science with the support of the wise leadership. Thus, we express our great gratitude to His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince for their generous patronage of outstanding students. The presence of His Highness the Amir is a reflection of his belief that the renaissance of nations is built by the efforts of their educated citizens."

He stated that the political leadership's support for higher education institutions has contributed to achieving a qualitative scientific renaissance. He affirmed that Kuwait University is an academic model, which embraces ambitious minds, instills the values of research and innovation in its students, and develops an integrated educational environment that keeps pace with global changes and contributes to building a sustainable knowledge economy.

He then addressed the graduates stressing that "today, you are on the threshold of a new phase of giving. Write a glory worthy of your ambitions and raise the name of your country. Make this excellence a springboard toward broader horizons of excellence and creativity to serve Kuwait."

He expressed his gratitude to the faculty members and parents; empha-

sizing that this excellence is the result of a joint effort in which everyone participated with dedication and responsibility, making educational outcomes a cornerstone in building society and in achieving a thriving knowledge economy.

On the other hand, Kuwait University President Dr. Dina Al-Maillem said "the presence of His Highness the Amir in this celebration reflects the commitment of the wise leadership to support higher education, while promoting the path of Science and innovation."

She thinks this support instills determination and perseverance in students and embodies the deep belief that knowledge is the foundation of the advancement and prosperity of nations.

She attributed the remarkable development in education and scientific research at the university to ambitious national vision that believes in the importance of the university's role in preparing generations capable of meeting the challenges of the times.

She confirmed that the university works hard to develop its academic programs in accordance with international standards; linking them to the manpower needs of the labor market and focusing on the concepts of sustainability, quality, and excellence.

She also revealed that this year, the university celebrated the graduation of 352 graduates at the bachelor's, masteral and doctoral levels. She stressed this confirms the commitment of the university to produce competent individuals who will contribute to national development. "The university also focuses on empowering students with special needs and providing an inclusive educational environment," she added.

She highlighted the university's achievements in the field of space, including the establishment of Kuwait National Center for Space Research in cooperation with Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS); as well as the development of programs related to cybersecurity and artificial intelligence as part of the drive toward a digital economy.

She thanked His Highness the Amir for his continued support for the university, indicating that the university continues to fulfill its academic and research mission and is committed to the national vision of achieving excellence and leadership.

and Chairman of Kuwaiti-Iranian Friendship Association Ambassador Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled.

He affirmed that such a level of support has "a significant impact on healing the wounds and alleviating the pain. The fraternal sympathy we witnessed from the Kuwaiti people and those present at the condolence book ceremony reflects the strength of fraternal ties between the two neighboring peoples, proving that neighbors come before families."

In another development, he confirmed that indirect negotiations are proceeding. "The third round of negotiations was held this week in Muscat under Omani mediation and witnessed the participation of a group of experts and specialists. The discussions focused on technical issues, particularly the nuclear file and lifting the blockade imposed on Iran, which aspires to conclude an agreement and has the qualifications to do so. The other party must avoid imposing unrealistic demands that failed previously."

He affirmed the commitment of Iran to international agreements and treaties, as well as its efforts to maintain the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, as manifested in "the continuous visit of the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to Tehran."

On the other hand, Russian Ambassador Vladimir Zheleznikov revealed "I visited the embassy to express our condolences over such a tragic incident that claimed the lives of dozens of innocent Iranians. We sympathize with the Iranian people and wish speedy recovery for the injured."

He described Russia's relationship with Iran as "very good and has risen to the level of strategic relations. We always sympathize with the Iranian people in moments of grief."

Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub stated that "on behalf of the Palestinians residing in Kuwait, I offer my deepest condolences to Ambassador Mohammad Totonji and to the government and people of the friendly Republic of Iran over the victims of the Bandar Abbas Port accident. I pray that Allah will accept them as martyrs, grant the wounded speedy recovery, and protect the friendly Iranian people from all harm."

Lebanese Chargé d'Affaires Ahmed Arafat stated "it is with deep sorrow that we received the news of the painful explosion in Bandar Abbas, which claimed the lives of several martyrs and injured several others."

He affirmed his country's solidarity and support for friendly Iran, its government and people. He offered his sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq Al-Munhal Al-Safi said "with hearts that believe in Allah's will and destiny, we received with deep sadness the news of the painful explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas, which resulted in numerous casualties and injuries. On behalf of the staff of the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq, I offer my deepest condolences and sympathy, imploring Allah Almighty to have mercy on the victims and accept them into His spacious Paradise, to give their families and relatives patience and solace, and grant the injured a speedy recovery."

Italian Ambassador Lorenzo Morini, after offering his condolences, expressed his deep sorrow, saying, "We are saddened by this tragic incident, as people were simply performing their duty. We feel that we want to be close to the families of the victims to support them, at least morally, under these tragic circumstances."

We are on track: Johnson

House GOP wants to pump billions into Trump deportations, detentions as part of tax bill

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): As part of their big tax bill, Republicans in Congress are pumping billions of dollars into President Donald Trump’s mass deportation and border security plan with nearly 20,000 new officers, stark new \$1,000 in fees on migrants seeking asylum and \$46.5 billion for a long-sought border wall.

Tuesday launched the first of back-to-back public hearings as House Republicans roll out the fine print of what Trump calls his “big, beautiful bill” - which is focused on \$5 trillion in tax breaks and up to \$2 trillion in slashed domestic spending. But it also pours some \$300 billion to beef up the Pentagon and border security as the Trump administration says it’s running out of money for deportations.

House Speaker Mike Johnson is pushing to have the bill wrapped up by Memorial Day and then send it to the Senate, which is drafting its own version.

“We are on track,” Johnson, R-La., said at his weekly press conference.

This was always expected to be the hard part, where Republicans who have control of the House and Senate begin to fill in the difficult details of what, until now, has simply been a framework for Trump’s tax package

at the cornerstone of the GOP’s domestic agenda.

As Trump rounds his 100th day in office, the GOP’s stiff immigration provisions come as Americans are showing unease with the president’s approach, with just half saying he’s focused on the right priorities. The White House is battling high-profile court cases after it mistakenly deported a Maryland man to El Salvador and, over the weekend, Trump’s team rounded up countless immigrants, including foreign-born parents who were deported with their American-born toddlers and small children in tow.

Democrats are fighting back in the House and Senate, and the halls of public opinion, but as the minority party in Congress, they have little ability to stop the forward march of the package.

Instead, they used Tuesday’s hearings to try to shame Republicans into rethinking their approach.

“Do a little soul searching before you vote for this,” said Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the top Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee, at one point during the debate.

Central to the Homeland Committee’s section of the legislation is \$46.5 billion to revive construction of Trump’s wall along the US-Mexico



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., talks to reporters just after House Republicans narrowly approved their budget framework, at the Capitol in Washington, on April 10. (AP)

border, with some 700 miles of “primary” wall, 900 miles of river barriers, and more.

There’s also \$4 billion to hire an additional 3,000 new Border Patrol agents as well as 5,000 new customs officers, and \$2.1 billion for signing and retention bonuses.

Democrats kept the committee in session for hours, submitting some

three dozen amendments to change the package. They all failed.

Among the first Democratic amendments offered was from Rep. Troy Carter of Louisiana to prohibit the use of funding to deport American children. Another from Rep. Seth Magaziner of Rhode Island would stop the money from being used to send Americans to foreign prisons.

“What world are we living in?” Magaziner asked.

He said allowing Republicans to “keep trampling on rights, soon everyone’s rights” will be under threat.

Chairman Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., as he gaveled the committee open, said, “It is critical that the Republican majority do what the people elected us to do.” The committee approved its bill on a party line vote.

For the first time, the US under the legislation would impose a \$1,000 fee on migrants seeking asylum - something the nation has never done.

Experts said the new fee on asylum seekers would put the U.S. on par with a few others, including Australia and Iran. And that’s not all. The Judiciary Committee is expected to meet Wednesday on its \$110 billion section of the package.

There would be new fees on various other legal paths to entry, including a \$3,500 fee for those sponsoring unaccompanied children to enter the U.S., a \$2,500 penalty if sponsors of unaccompanied children skip court appearances and a \$1,000 fee for individuals paroled into the U.S.

Overall, the plan is to remove 1 million immigrants annually and house 100,000 people in detention centers. It calls for 10,000 more Im-

migration and Customs Enforcement officers and investigators.

Meanwhile, the House Armed Services Committee started drilling down Tuesday into its section of the package, with some \$100 billion in new spending, including some \$5 billion for border security.

But the hearing became tangled by questions from Democrats over funding for Ukraine, Trump’s plan for a big military parade and calls for Hegseth to be fired or resign.

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., a veteran herself, offered an amendment that would prohibit the provisions from going into effect until Hegseth “is no longer Secretary of Defense.”

Democratic Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts, a combat veteran, had an amendment to prevent money on Trump’s parade, which is planned for June in Washington, saying there shouldn’t be a military parade for a “draft dodger,” a reference to Trump’s medical deferral from Vietnam War-era service.

And Rep. Sara Jacobs, D-Calif., proposed halting any money for a make-up studio for the Pentagon secretary. It was reported that Hegseth, a former Fox News host, sought such a room for his appearances.

US government new policy terminates legal status of international students

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): The US government has begun shedding new light on a crackdown on international students, spelling out how it targeted thousands of people and laying out the grounds for terminating their legal status.

The new details emerged in lawsuits filed by some of the students who suddenly had their status canceled in recent weeks with little explanation.

In the past month, foreign students around the US have been rattled to learn their records had been removed from a student database maintained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Some went into hiding for fear of deportation or abandoned their studies to return home.

On Friday, after mounting court challenges, federal officials said the government was restoring international students’ legal status while it developed a framework to guide future terminations. In a court filing Monday, it shared the new policy: a document issued over the weekend

with guidance on a range of reasons students’ status can be canceled, including the revocation of the visas they used to enter the U.S.

Brad Banias, an immigration attorney representing a student whose status was terminated, said the new guidelines vastly expand ICE’s authority beyond previous policy, which did not count visa revocation as grounds for losing legal status. In the past, if a student had their visa revoked, they could stay in the US to finish their studies - they simply would not be able to reenter if they left the country.

“This just gave them carte blanche to have the State Department revoke a visa and then deport those students even if they’ve done nothing wrong,” Banias said.

Many of the students who had visas revoked or lost their legal status said they had only minor infractions on their record, including traffic violations. Some did not know why they were targeted at all.

Lawyers for the government provided some explanation at a hearing Tuesday in the case of Banias’ client Akshar Patel, an international student studying information systems in Texas. Patel’s status was terminated - and then reinstated - this month, and he is seeking a preliminary court ruling to keep him from being deported.



Banias

Several UN agencies that provide aid worldwide slash jobs or cut costs as US funding drops

UNITED NATIONS, April 30, (AP): Several UN agencies that provide aid to children, refugees and other vulnerable people around the world are slashing jobs or cutting costs in other ways, with officials pointing to funding reductions mainly from the United States and warning that vital relief programs will be severely affected as a result.

The UN World Food Program is expected to cut up to 30% of its staff. The head of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said it would downsize its headquarters and regional offices to reduce costs by 30% and cut senior-level positions by 50%.

That’s according to internal memos obtained by The AP and verified by two UN officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the internal personnel decisions. Other agencies like UNICEF, the UN children’s agency, and OCHA, the UN humanitarian agency, have also announced or plan to make cuts.

One WFP official called the cuts “the most massive” seen by the agency in the past 25 years, and that as a result, operations will disappear or be downsized.

The UN agency cuts underscore the impact of President Donald Trump’s decision to pull the U.S. back from its position as the world’s single largest aid donor. Trump has given billionaire



Food parcels provided by the World Food Program, part of the humanitarian aid shipments into Syria, are stacked at the Reyhanli border crossing with Syria, near Hatay, southern Turkey on May 24, 2017. (AP)

ally Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency power to redo the scale of the federal government, with a focus on slashing foreign assistance. Even before the administration’s move, many donor nations had reduced humanitarian spending, and UN agencies struggled to reach funding goals.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres was “deeply troubled by the drastic funding reduction.”

“The heads of our humanitarian agencies are being forced to take impossibly painful decisions as budget cuts have an immediate and often deadly impact on the world’s most vulnerable,” Dujarric said in a statement. “We understand the pressures on national budgets faced by governments, but these cuts come at a time

when military spending again hits record levels.”

The UN also is engaging in a larger reform effort ahead of its 80th anniversary this summer. Guterres’ office issued a system-wide memo last week ordering an internal “functional review” of all UN entities to make cost reductions and efficiencies.

“The UN80 Initiative aims to strengthen our programmes and operations, charting a path towards a sustainable United Nations for the future,” UN Undersecretary-General for Policy Guy Ryder said in the memo obtained by The AP.

The WFP, the world’s largest humanitarian organization, received nearly half of its funding from the United States in 2024.

Asked about the planned cuts, the organization said in a statement that “in this challenging donor environment, WFP will prioritize its limited resources on vital programs that bring urgently needed food assistance to the 343 million people struggling with hunger and increasingly facing starvation.”

The WFP internal memo said personnel cuts will “impact all geographies, divisions and levels” in the agency. It suggested further downsizing may be needed and said the agency will review its “portfolio of programs.”



Rescue workers clear the rubble of a house destroyed by a Russian airstrike in Kyiv, Ukraine, on April 24. (AP)

Kremlin says deal to end war with Ukraine can’t be achieved quickly

KYIV, Ukraine, April 30, (AP): Clinching a deal to end the Russia-Ukraine war “is far too complex to be done quickly,” a senior Kremlin official said Wednesday, as the US labors to bring momentum to peace efforts and expresses frustration over the slow progress.

Meanwhile, a nighttime Russian drone attack on Ukraine’s second-largest city of Kharkiv wounded at least 45 civilians, officials said. The United Nations reported that the number of Ukrainian civilian casualties in the more than three-year war has surged in recent weeks amid Washington’s attempts to broker a peace agreement.

Russian President Vladimir Putin backs calls for a ceasefire before peace negotiations, “but before it’s done, it’s necessary to answer a few questions and sort out a few nuances,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Putin also is ready for direct talks with Ukraine without preconditions to seek a peace deal, he added.

“We realize that Washington wants to achieve quick progress, but we hope for understanding that the Ukrainian crisis settlement is far too complex to be done quickly,” Peskov said. “There are many details and an array of nuances that need to be solved before a settlement.”

US President Donald Trump has previously expressed frustration over the slow pace of progress in negotiations aimed at stopping the war, which he said he could end in the first 24 hours of his new administration in January. Western European leaders have accused Putin of stalling while his forces seek to grab more Ukrainian land. Russia has captured nearly a fifth of Ukraine’s territory since Moscow’s forces launched a full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

Trump has chided Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for steps that he said were “prolonging” the “killing field,” and the U.S. leader has rebuked Putin for complicating negotiations with “very bad timing” in launching deadly strikes that battered the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv.

Trump has long dismissed the war as a waste of American taxpayer money and of lives lost in the conflict. Senior U.S. officials have warned that the administration could abandon the peace efforts, if it sees no solution. That could spell an end to crucial military help for Ukraine and heavier economic sanctions on Russia.

The US State Department on Tuesday tried again to push both sides to move more quickly.

“We are now at a time where concrete proposals need to be delivered by the two parties on how to end this conflict,” department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce quoted U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio as telling her.

“How we proceed from here is a decision that belongs now to the president,” she told reporters, relating a conversation that she had with Rubio. “If there is not progress, we will step back as mediators in this process.”

Russia has effectively rejected a US proposal for an immediate and full 30-day ceasefire, making it conditional on a halt to Ukraine’s mobilization effort and Western arms supplies to Kyiv.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed Wednesday that Ukraine had accepted an unconditional truce only because it was being pushed back on the battlefield, where the bigger Russian forces have the upper hand.

“In the context of the developments on the ground, along the front line where the Kyiv regime is increasingly in retreat, they have made an about-turn and started demanding an immediate ceasefire without any preconditions,” Lavrov said at a briefing in Rio de Janeiro where he was attending a ministerial meeting of the BRICS grouping.

Trump eyes strategic Arctic island

Danish King Frederik X visits Greenland

NUUK, Greenland, April 30, (AP): King Frederik X of Denmark arrived in Greenland on Tuesday, kicking off a visit to the semiautonomous territory that US President Donald Trump wants to annex because of its strategic Arctic location.

Frederik’s trip to the island’s capital city of Nuuk follows the new Greenlandic prime minister’s visit to Copenhagen earlier this week. Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen accompanied the monarch to Nuuk.

The king wore a jacket with emblems of the Danish and Greenlandic flags as he disembarked from the plane to applause.

Danish broadcaster TV2 asked Frederik about his mission during his trip. He said he wasn’t on a mission, and he was happy to be there.

Nielsen also told reporters that the Danish royal house’s love for Greenland can’t be questioned. He added that the monarch is well-liked on the island.

The flight was originally scheduled for Monday, but was delayed because of poor weather conditions.



Denmark’s King Frederik, (right), and Greenland’s head of government Jens-Frederik Nielsen in front of an iceberg during a boat trip in Nuuk fjord, in Greenland, Tuesday April 29. (AP)

Frederik is expected to meet with the new Greenlandic government this week, as well as attend a traditional “kaffemik,” or coffee break, to meet with Greenlanders, the royal house said.

Weather forced him to cancel the anticipated trip on Wednesday to Station Nord, the island’s northernmost military and scientific station, plus forgo a meeting with an elite dogsled unit of the Danish special forces that patrols the remotest parts of northeast Greenland.

‘Protesting citizens want similar changes’

EU’s Kos urges Serbia to push forward reform

BELGRADE, Serbia, April 30, (AP): The European Union’s enlargement commissioner on Tuesday urged Serbia’s new government to push forward democratic reforms needed for membership in the bloc, saying that the Balkan nation’s protesting citizens have been seeking similar changes.

Marta Kos spoke after meeting Serbia’s new Prime Minister Djuro Macut, a political novice who took office earlier this month facing monthslong anti-corruption demonstrations triggered by a train station concrete canopy collapse that killed 16 people in November.

Many in Serbia blamed the crash in the northern city of Novi Sad on alleged rampant corruption in the government’s infrastructure deals with China, which, along with Russia, is a close ally of Belgrade despite its formal intention to join the EU. The student-led protests have been demanding justice for the victims and the rule of law in the country firmly led by ruling populists.

Kos said that the EU has a “once in a generation opportunity to complete the unification of Europe” and wants to embrace Serbia and other candidate countries in the Western Balkans. But she said



Commissioner for enlargement of the European Commission Marta Kos speaks during a press conference after talks with Serbia’s Prime Minister Djuro Macut in Belgrade, Serbia on April 29. (AP)

Serbia must first reform the judiciary in order to fight corruption, ensure freedom of the press and free and fair elections.

“Without these changes Serbia cannot progress in the European path and I know that what we are asking for is

very close to the demands of the citizens who are and were protesting on the streets of Serbia,” Kos said. “A democratic Serbia inside the European Union is possible and it is what citizens of Serbia ask for and deserve.”

Philippines signs military pact with NZ to widen alliances while facing assertive China

MANILA, Philippines, April 30, (AP): The Philippines signed a military pact with New Zealand Wednesday, allowing their forces to hold joint exercises as Manila continues to build security alliances as it faces an increasingly aggressive China in the disputed South China Sea.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. witnessed the ceremony in Manila, where Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. and his New Zealand counterpart, Judith Collins, inked the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement.

The treaty sets the legal framework to allow military engagements of both countries, including joint drills in each other's territory and other cooperative activities. It has been approved by New Zealand officials, but still needs to be ratified by the Philippine Senate for it to take effect. China has frowned on the security alliances being pursued by the Philippines, one of the staunchest allies of the United States in Asia, under Marcos.

When the Philippines signed a similar agreement with Japan in July, China's Foreign Ministry said the region did not need "military blocs, let alone small groupings that instigate bloc confrontations or a new Cold War."

Philippine officials said then that China has no business meddling with their domestic affairs.

"These partnerships have become very important in the face of all that



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. (center), Philippine Foreign Minister Enrique Manalo, (rear right), and New Zealand Ambassador to the Philippines Catherine McIntosh, (rear left), observe as New Zealand Defense Minister Judith Collins, (left), and Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro sign the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVFA) at the Malacanang Palace in Manila on April 30, 2025. (AP)

is happening," Marcos said during Wednesday's ceremony.

Ahead of the signing, Collins said in a statement that "we are committed to reinvigorating our security relationships, to playing our part and working with regional partners such as the Philippines to uphold the international rules-based order."

Teodoro told The Associated Press

in an interview last month that the Philippines would continue to build security alliances with other friendly countries to deter China's aggression.

China's hostile actions, Teodoro said, should be regarded as a global threat because they could eventually restrict movement in the South China Sea, a key global trade route crucial for global supply chains.

Vietnam celebrates 50 years since war's end with focus on peace and unity

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam, April 30, (AP): Vietnam on Wednesday celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the war with the United States and the formation of its modern nation with a military parade and a focus on a peaceful future.

The fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975 marked the end of a Vietnam divided into the communist North and US-allied South, and the country's top official told crowds the past decades had led to ever increasing unity. "All the Vietnamese are the descendants of Vietnam. They have the rights to live and work, to have freedom to pursue happiness and love in this country," said To Lam, the Vietnam Communist Party's general secretary.

"In a spirit of closing the past, respecting differences, aiming for the future, the whole party, the people and the army vow to make Vietnam become a country of peace, unity, prosperity and development," he added.

Thousands camped overnight on the streets of the former South Vietnamese capital, which was renamed Ho Chi Minh City after it fell to North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, to get the best vantage point for the



Vietnamese veteran soldiers take part in a parade during the 50th anniversary celebration of the end of the Vietnam War on April 30, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. (AP)

parade. Many lingered on the streets later in the afternoon and had picnics while waiting for drone and fireworks shows scheduled for the evening.

The red and yellow of Vietnam's national flag was everywhere in the city - fluttering from buildings, painted on the faces of eager teenagers and on the T-shirts of those who had traveled to the city from all over the country.

"Now it's time for peace," said

spectator Nguyen Thi Hue, a city resident. "Peace is the dream that everyone in the world wants."

One float carried the mythical Lac bird, Vietnam's emblem, another a portrait of Ho Chi Minh.

Chinese, Laotian and Cambodian troops marched behind Vietnamese army formations, including some wearing uniforms similar to what was worn by northern Vietnamese troops during the war.

About 4,700 N.Korean soldiers killed or wounded fighting for Russia: South Korea

North Korea's leader Kim watches missile test-firings from country's first destroyer

SEOUL, South Korea, April 30, (AP): North Korea said Wednesday leader Kim Jong Un observed the test-firings of missiles from a recently launched destroyer - the first such warship for the North - and called for accelerating efforts to boost his navy's nuclear attack capabilities.

North Korea last week unveiled the 5,000-ton destroyer equipped with what it called the most powerful weapons systems built for a navy vessel. During Friday's launching ceremony at the western port of Nampo, Kim called the ship's construction "a breakthrough" in modernizing North Korea's naval forces.

Outside experts say it's North Korea's first destroyer and that it was likely built with Russian assistance. They say North Korea's naval forces lag behind South Korea's but still view the destroyer as a serious security threat as it could bolster North Korea's attack and defense capabilities.

The official Korean Central News Agency said Wednesday that Kim watched the tests of the destroyer's supersonic and strategic cruise missiles, anti-aircraft missile, automatic guns and electronic jamming guns earlier this week.

He appreciated the ship's combination of powerful strike weapons and conventional defenses and set tasks to speed the nuclear-arming of his navy, the report said.

During the ship's launching ceremony, Kim said the destroyer will be deployed early next year. He said the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine would be his next big step in strengthening his navy. He underscored the need to beef up North Korea's deterrence capability to cope with what he called escalating U.S.-led hostilities targeting the North.

An analysis of photos of the warship shows that its anti-air radar system is likely from Russia, said Lee Illwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea. He said the warship's engine system and some of its anti-air weapons systems also likely came from Russia.

North Korea and Russia have been sharply expanding military and other cooperation in recent years, with the North supplying troops and conventional weapons to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine. The US, South Korea and their partners worry Russia will likely in return provide North Korea with high-tech weapons technologies that can enhance its nuclear program as well as shipping other military and economic assistance.

South Korea's military said Wednesday that South Korean and US intelligence



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, (front right), and his daughter visit to observe the test-firings, conducted on April 28 and April 29 of missiles from a newly-launched destroyer 'Choe Hyon' at an undisclosed place in North Korea. (AP)

authorities were closely monitoring North Korean warship development. South Korea's spy agency separately told lawmakers that North Korea won't likely be able to deploy a nuclear-powered submarine anytime soon without Russian support. In March, North Korea unveiled a nuclear-powered submarine under construction. Many civilian experts said at the time that North Korea may have received Russian technological assistance to build a nuclear reactor to be used in the submarine.

Lee said the deployment of a warship with an advanced radar system off North Korea's west coast could sharply bolster its air defense capabilities for Pyong-

yang, the capital. Lee said South Korea, which has 12 destroyers, still vastly outpaces North Korea's naval forces. But he said the North Korean destroyer, which can carry about 80 missiles, can still pose a big threat, as South Korea's navy hasn't likely braced for such an enemy warship.

Also:

SEOUL: An estimated 4,700 North Korean soldiers have been killed or wounded while fighting alongside **Russia** against Ukrainian forces, **South Korea's** spy agency told lawmakers Wednesday.

The assessment came two days after **North Korea** confirmed for the first time that it had sent combat troops to help Russia recapture parts of the Kursk region, which it lost control of to a surprise Ukrainian incursion last year.

In a closed-door parliamentary committee briefing, South Korea's National Intelligence Service said North Korea had suffered 4,700 casualties, including 600 deaths, on the Russia-Ukraine battlefronts, according to **Lee Seong Kweon**, one of the lawmakers who attended the meeting.

Lee told reporters the NIS said that 2,000 injured North Korean soldiers were repatriated to North Korea by air or train between January and March. He cited the NIS as saying the dead North Korean soldiers were cremated in Russia before their remains were sent back home.

In January, the NIS said about 300 North Korean soldiers had died and another 2,700 had been injured, and the South Korean military increased the estimated casualties to 4,000 last month.

On Monday, North Korea announced that leader **Kim Jong Un** had decided to dispatch troops to "annihilate and wipe out the Ukrainian neo-Nazi occupiers and liberate the **Kursk** area in cooperation with the Russian armed forces." Russian President **Vladimir Putin** later issued a statement thanking North Korea and promising not to forget the sacrifices of North Korean soldiers.

Both Kim and Putin said the North Korean deployment was made under their countries' landmark 2024 defense treaty, which requires each side to provide aid if the other is attacked. The U.S., South Korea and their partners say North Korea has been supplying vast amounts of conventional weapons to replenish Russia's depleted stocks as well. They suspect Russia is providing North Korea with military and economic assistance in return.



Firefighters inspect a hotel building which caught fire on Tuesday resulting in several deaths, in Kolkata, India on April 30. (AP)

Hotel fire in India's Kolkata kills 14 people

A fire tore through a hotel in the city of Kolkata in eastern India, killing at least 14 people, police said Wednesday.

Senior police officer Manoj Kumar Verma told reporters that the fire broke out Tuesday evening at the Rit-uraj Hotel in central Kolkata and was doused after an effort that took six fire engines. The cause of the fire was not immediately clear.

Photos and videos carried in Indian media showed people trying to escape through the windows and narrow ledges of the building.

Kolkata's The Telegraph newspaper reported that at least one person died when he jumped off the terrace trying to escape.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X that he was "anguished" by the loss of lives in the fire. (AP)



Wildfires burn on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa on April 28. (AP)

Large fires burning on slopes of South Africa's Table Mountain

Helicopters dropped water on large fires burning on the slopes of South Africa's Table Mountain on Tuesday as police investigated whether arson was the cause.

Table Mountain National Park first reported the fires on Friday. It said in a statement it believed that three fires were started deliberately. Police said they had arrested one person on suspicion of arson.

The city of Cape Town said the latest fires were part-

ly under control but there were fears over more flare-ups. Wildfires there are often fanned by strong coastal winds that can cause them to move swiftly and burn out of control again.

No injuries were reported and no private residences had been damaged, city official JP Smith said. He said four vehicles and a motorcycle in a car park had been destroyed and other cars were damaged. (AP)

HRW urges US and other governments to hold Maduro accountable for repression

MEXICO CITY, April 30, (AP): A global human rights watchdog on Wednesday urged the United States and other governments to bolster their support for people seeking democratic change in Venezuela and to hold President Nicolás Maduro accountable for the crackdown on dissent he intensified after the country's presidential election last year.

Human Rights Watch specifically called on the US to consider imposing additional sanctions on Venezuelan government officials and members of state security forces. HRW also called for sanctions on ruling party-loyal armed groups linked to the widespread rights violations that followed the July 28 vote that Maduro claims to have won despite credible evidence to the contrary.

At the same time, the organization recommended the US rescind an executive order President Donald Trump signed in February imposing sanctions



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro speaks at the Supreme Court in Caracas on Venezuela, July 31, 2024, three days after his disputed reelection. (AP)

on the International Criminal Court over investigations of Israel. The order, according to the watchdog, could affect

an ongoing investigation by the court's prosecutor into possible crimes against humanity committed in Venezuela.

Africa

Algeria drafts bill: Algeria's government proposed a law to streamline military mobilization amid tensions with neighboring countries Morocco and Mali, as well as former colonial ruler France.

The debate on the general mobilization law comes as Algeria's strongman leader, army chief of staff Said Changriha, makes a series of trips to military regions in the border areas to oversee military manoeuvres.(AP)

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Nigeria bombs kill 26: Improvised explosive devices detonated on a road in northeastern Nigeria killing at least 26 people in several vehicles, including women and children, police said Tuesday.

An Islamic State group affiliate in the West African country claimed responsibility for the Monday attack. The blasts happened on a busy road connecting the towns of Rann and Gamboru in Borno state. (AP)

Intelligence suggests Indian army action likely soon, says Pakistan

ATTARI, India, April 30, (AP): Pakistan said Wednesday it had "credible intelligence" that India is planning to attack it within days, as soldiers from both sides exchanged gunfire along their borders and Pakistanis headed home in compliance with New Delhi's orders for them to leave the country following last week's deadly attack in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

India's moves to punish Pakistan after accusing it of backing the attack in Pahalgam, which Islamabad denies, have driven tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals to their highest point since 2019, when the two sides came close to war after a suicide car bombing in Kashmir.

Pakistan said Wednesday the intel-

ligence shows that India plans to carry out military action against it in the "next 24-36 hours on the pretext of baseless and concocted allegations of involvement in the Pahalgam incident."

There was no immediate comment from Indian officials.

However, Indian government officials said Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has "given complete operational freedom to the armed forces to decide on the mode, targets and timing of India's response to the Pahalgam massacre." They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive deliberations.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in separate phone calls with India and Pakistan, stressed the need to "avoid a confrontation that could result in tragic consequences."

The US State Department also called for de-escalation and said that Secretary of State Marco Rubio would be speaking to the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers.



Modi

Kuwaiti oil price drops to \$67.42 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 30, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by USD 2.12 to USD 67.42 per barrel on Tuesday as opposed to USD 69.94 per barrel the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Wednesday.

At the global level, the price of the Brent crude went down by USD 1.61 to USD 64.25 per barrel, the same occurred to the West Texas Intermediate, which went down by USD 1.63 to USD 60.42 pb.

UAE regains top oil supplier spot

Kuwait’s crude oil exports to Japan grow 2.3pct in March

TOKYO, April 30, (KUNA): Kuwait’s crude oil exports to Japan in March grew 2.3 percent from a year earlier to 5.23 million barrels, or 169,000 barrels per day (bpd), marking the first expansion since September 2023, government data showed Wednesday.

As Japan’s third-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.7 percent of its total crude imports, compared with 6.9 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan’s overall imports of crude oil in the reporting month increased 5.4 percent year-on-year to 2.52 million bpd, up for the first time in two months. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 96.9 percent of the total, up 2.2 percentage points from the year before.

The United Arab Emirates returned to the top spot in March, although imports from the country edged down 0.9 percent from the year before to 1.05 million bpd, followed by Saudi Arabia with 996,000 bpd, up 1.4 percent. Qatar ranked fourth with 139,000 bpd and Oman fifth with 80,000 bpd, respectively. Japan is the world’s-third biggest oil consumer after China and the US.

KOC workforce at 10,585 employees

KPC to appoint new senior and middle leaders in 2025

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The oil sector will witness senior and middle leadership changes in 2025, say sources from the sector.

Sources said Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Al-Saud Al-Sabah is keen on appointing experienced and competent individuals to senior and middle management positions in oil companies affiliated with KPC, as this will positively impact the performance of the oil sector as a whole.

Sources clarified that despite the competence and experience of some mid-level oil executives who retired or reached the retirement age; the oil sector remains committed to revitalizing its leadership structure, considering they manage the natural oil and gas wealth of the country.

Sources pointed out that this step is vital, especially since KPC aims to increase oil production to four million barrels per day by 2040. They explained that the desired increase will not be achieved unless this is accompanied by continued development of human resources, which are primarily responsible for improving production capabilities.

Sources affirmed that KPC’s subsidiaries are committed to addressing several challenges, particularly Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC). Sources said these challenges include increasing gas quantities, so that the country stops the

import of gas.

In another development, sources attributed the recent retirement surge in companies affiliated with KPC to some employees reaching the legal retirement age, while others have completed their years of service to qualify for pension.

Sources confirmed that KPC closely monitors job developments and other matters in its subsidiaries, especially since the issue of increasing retirements, according to established procedures, occurs in all sectors of the State, and the oil sector is no exception.

Sources indicated that future vacancies will be filled by young leaders whose profiles demonstrate commitment and competence without any blemish.

Sources said KPC’s delay in conducting job tests for applicants was aimed at resolving some employment issues.

Sources added KPC is coordinating with the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University to conduct the tests, scheduled for May 2025, in order to select qualified personnel without any middlemen interfering in the appointment process.

According to the latest statistics from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) on the number of nationals working in Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) as at the end December 2024 reached 9,585 -- 7,437 males and 1,700 females; while the number of non-Kuwaitis reached 1,448 and the total number of employees reached 10,585 by the beginning of 2025.



Photo during the meeting.

Kuwait attends 2025 World Bank & IMF Spring Meetings in Washington

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: A delegation from Kuwait participated in the 2025 Annual Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, D.C. from April 21 to 26.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Finance, the Kuwaiti delegation was headed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Aseel Sulaiman Al-Munifi.

This participation highlights the ministry’s commitment to enhancing Kuwait’s presence in international forums and actively contributing to global economic and financial discussions.

It also aims to explore opportunities for deepening cooperation with international partners to promote financial stability and sustainable growth.

On the sidelines of the event, Al-Munifi held a series of meetings with several specialized technical teams and sector managers at the International Monetary Fund to discuss issues such as public finance reforms, subsidy reforms, and salary adjustments.

She also met with the World Bank’s specialized technical team to discuss ways to benefit from their expertise in combating money laundering and terrorist financing.

Loan book grows 3% to KD 5.6 bln

Gulf Bank posts KD 9.4 mln net profit in Q1 2025

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced its financial results for the first three months ending 31 March 2025. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 9.4 million, a decline of KD 3.5 million or 27% compared to 2024first three months net profit of KD 12.9 million.

In addition, Gulf Bank recorded an operating income of KD 44.0 million for the first three months of 2025, representing a decline of 9% compared to the same period of last year. Moreover, operating profit before provisions and impairments was KD 20.9 million, representing a decline of 22% compared to the first quarter of 2024.

Financial Performance

The decline in net profit for the first quarter of 2025 is attributed to the decline in net interest income of KD 3.3million or 9%, coupled with a decline in non-interest income of KD 1.0 million or 10%, compared to the same period of prior year, respectively. In addition, operating expense has increased by KD 1.5 or 7%, when compared to first quarter of 2024.

However, this was offset by a decline in the total provisions which reached KD 11.0 million in the first quarter of 2025, down by KD 2.1 million or 16% when compared to the same period of last year.

As for asset quality, the non-performing loans (NPL) ratio was 1.5% as of 31 March 2025, compared to the prior year level of 1.2%. Additionally, the Bank continues to have significant non-performing loans coverage ratio of 305% including total provisions and collaterals.

Total credit provisions as of 31 March 2025 reached KD 277 million whereas IFRS 9 accounting requirements (i.e., ECL or expected credit losses) were KD 183 million. As a result, the Bank has a healthy excess provision level of KD 94 million, above and beyond what is required by the IFRS 9 accounting requirements.

Compared to 31 December2024, total assets increased by 1% to KD 7.5 billion, net loans and advances increased by 3% to KD 5.6 billion, while total deposits stood at KD 5.5 billion and total Shareholders’ equity reached KD 808 million.

The Bank’s regulatory Tier 1 ratio of 14.9% was 2.9% above the regulatory minimum of 12% and the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 17.0% was 3.0% above the regulatory minimum of 14%.

On the 22ndof March 2025, Gulf Bank held its Annual General Assembly Meeting, where shareholders approved the distribution of a cash dividend of 10 fils per share for the year 2024, representing a 63% cash payout ratio per share, in addition to a distribution of 5% bonus shares.

Growth Foundations

Commenting on the financial results for the first quarter of 2025, Gulf Bank Chairman Mr. **Ahmad Mohammad Al-Bahar** stated: “Gulf Bank’s financial performance in the first quarter of 2025 reflects the ongoing challenges facing the financial sector. Despite ongoing headwinds, Gulf Bank’s underlying fundamentals remain strong, supported by a resilient balance sheet, sound risk management, and a clear strategic direction.

While net profit of KD 9.4 million and operating income of KD 44.0 million in the first quarter of 2025 were lower than the same period last year, this was driven by systemic factors, including a declining interest rate environment, which continued to exert pressure on net interest margins and overall profitability.”

He continued: “The global economic landscape remains volatile. Geopolitical tensions, newly imposed tariffs, and ongoing trade restrictions are weighing on market confidence. These recent developments may affect government capital spending, particularly on development projects, which could slow credit demand and investment momentum.”

“Locally, recent government reforms present a promising outlook for national development. The approval of the long-anticipated Public Liquidity and Finance Law, with a borrowing ceiling of KD 30 billion, will enable the government to finance strategic infrastructure initiatives and support efforts to diversify revenue sources beyond the oil sector. This measure is expected to stimulate overall activity and create new oppor-



Ahmad Mohammad Al-Bahar



Waleed Khaled Mandani

Ahmad Mohammad Al-Bahar:

- We have begun the groundwork to the potential conversion of the Bank into a Sharia-compliant institution in alignment with our long-term vision for sustainable growth.
- Gulf Bank’s financial performance in the first quarter of 2025 reflects the ongoing challenges facing the financial sectorincluding a declining interest rate environment.
- Recent government reforms present a promising outlook for national development.
- The proposed Real Estate Financing Law is designed to ease existing difficulties in the public housing segment and open a new revenue and growth stream for local banks.

Waleed Khaled Mandani:

- While our financial performance was impacted by sector-wide factors, we made meaningful progress on several strategic fronts.
- Gulf Bank successfully closed its debut international syndicated loan transaction, raising US\$650 million through a senior unsecured term facility.
- We continued to invest in the long-term strength of our leadership team by advancing experienced professionals into key executive roles.
- We remain committed to supporting our clients, driving operational excellence, and executing on our strategic initiatives.

tunities for growth within the banking industry. Furthermore, the proposed Real Estate Financing Law is designed to ease existing difficulties in the public housing segment by permitting commercial banks to provide housing finance solutions, thereby opening a new revenue and growth stream for local banks.

These legislative, among other advancements, align with Kuwait’s Vision 2035 and are expected to boost investor confidence and support long-term prosperity.”

Strategic progress

Commenting on the operational performance of Gulf Bank, Acting Chief Executive Officer Mr. **Waleed Khaled Mandani** said: “As we reflect on our performance in the first quarter of 2025, we remain focused on delivering long-term value, amidst the pressures of the macroeconomic landscape. While our financial performance was impacted by sector-wide factors, we made meaningful progress on several strategic fronts that reinforce the Bank’s underlying strength and long-term direction.

During the quarter, Gulf Bank successfully closed its debut international syndicated loan transaction, raising US\$650 million through a senior unsecured term facility. The transaction, which was significantly oversubscribed, attracted strong participation from both regional and global institutions, underscoring investor confidence in the Bank’s credit profile and strategic vision. This diversifies our funding base, enhances financial flexibility, and positions us to support future growth opportunities more effectively.

In parallel, we continued to invest in our most valuable asset, our people. During the quarter we continued to invest in the long-term strength of our leadership team by advancing experienced professionals into key executive roles. This reflects our commitment to developing national talent and building leadership from within. By nurturing internal capabilities, we promote continuity, reinforce our culture, and enhance our ability to navigate a dynamic and evolving market landscape.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to supporting our clients, driving operational

excellence, and executing on our strategic initiatives, as we navigate the evolving economic landscape with resilience and purpose.”

Credit Ratings

Gulf Bank’s financial strength and operational resilience were affirmed by leading credit rating agencies. Fitch Ratings assigned a Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) of ‘A’ with a Stable Outlook, while Moody’s rated long-term deposits at ‘A3’ with a Positive Outlook. Capital Intelligence affirmed a Long-Term Foreign Currency rating of ‘A+’ with a Stable Outlook, further highlighting the Bank’s stability and sound risk management practices.

Appreciation

Mr. Al-Bahar concluded his remarks by saying: “As we progress through 2025, Gulf Bank remains focused on executing its strategic priorities with discipline and resilience. In line with our long-term vision for sustainable growth, we have initiated the groundwork for the potential conversion to a Sharia-compliant institution (subject to regulatory approvals), an important step aligned with our long-term vision for sustainable growth.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend our sincere appreciation to our shareholders for their continued trust, our employees for their dedication, and the Regulatory Authorities for their valued support. Most importantly, we thank our customers for their loyalty and reaffirm our commitment to delivering a best-in-class banking experience.”

Key Financial indicators for the first quarter 2025:

1. First Quarter 2025 net profit of KD 9.4 million.
2. First Quarter 2025 operating income of KD 44.0 million.
3. Net loans and advances grew by 3% year-to-date to reach KD 5.6 billion.
4. Non-performing loan ratio for the First Quarter 2025 was 1.5%, with a solid non-performance loan coverage ratio of 305%including total provisions and collaterals.
5. Capital ratios as of 31 March 2025, Tier 1 ratio was 14.9% and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) was 17.0%.

Company sponsored the First GCC Conference for High School Students

Zain: Instilling positive values and raising digital awareness among youth

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: As part of its efforts to instill positive values and raise digital awareness among youth, Zain sponsored the First GCC Conference for High School Students, held under the theme Health Awareness with a Gulf Vision, in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, Interior, and Defense, the Kuwait Society for Awareness and Prevention (Ghiras), and the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States.

Zain took part in the conference’s opening ceremony, which was held under the patronage and presence of H.E. Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, Dr. Ahmad Al-Shatti, CEO of the Ghiras Project, Dr. Mohammed Al-Mugbil, Director General of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, and Waleed Al-Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait, along with a number of ambassadors, officials, and representatives of participating entities from Kuwait and other GCC countries.

In his opening remarks during the event, Waleed Al-Khashti said: “We at Zain are proud to be the main sponsor of this first-of-its-kind GCC conference for high school students, which serves as a pioneering platform to promote health awareness and instill positive values among Gulf youth. It also allows us to highlight the importance of digital awareness in light of the rapid technological changes of our time.”

He added: “Our participation comes as part of our solid strategy to support national and regional initiatives focused on youth, education, and public health. At Zain, we believe that investing in awareness and knowledge is the true investment in our nations’ future.



Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei honoring Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain’s support of the conference.

As part of our social responsibility, we continue our efforts to empower future generations and support the efforts of government entities and civil society in building a conscious and resilient community.”

Al-Khashti continued: “Over the past years, we have been committed to

launching awareness campaigns and forming strategic partnerships with various entities – most notably the Ministries of Education and Interior – to shed light on issues that directly impact our society. Recently, we also launched innovative digital campaigns aimed at raising societal awareness, especially among youth.”

The conference aimed to promote health and social awareness among youth across GCC countries. It is the first of its kind in the region to focus specifically on high school students.

The event saw the participation of student delegations from all GCC nations, alongside students from different educational districts across Kuwait.

The program featured a range of activities and interactive sessions, including workshops and lectures addressing critical youth-related topics such as digital addiction and its societal effects, psychological and family therapy, personal development, and raising awareness of the health, social, and psychological risks of drug and substance abuse.

Participating students were also given the opportunity to share their views and exchange solutions regarding common challenges faced by youth.

At the conclusion of the conference, a set of recommendations was compiled and submitted to the relevant official bodies in Kuwait and other Gulf countries to ensure proper follow-up and practical implementation.

Zain continues to align with the national agenda in the areas of youth empowerment and social development, as one of the country’s leading institutions committed to playing a vital role in advancing and prospering the community.



The bank's executive management in a group photo with school students participating in 'Bankee' program.



Some more photos of the students participating in 'Bankee' program.

‘The program’s exceptional content encouraged many schools to join’

NBK hosts ‘Bankee’ program event for schools

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: National Bank of Kuwait hosted several schools participating in Bankee to explore and simulate the practical application of the program that comes in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), and Creative Confidence.

NBK’s executive management attended the event as part of its commitment to track the progress of Bankee and the extent to which schools are benefiting from the program, as well as measure its effect upon the students and teachers.

The event consisted of four main pavilions simulating classrooms and student-interaction methods, in addition to a corner specifically designed for the store where students are taught the fundamentals of spending, as well as a corner for interactive activities about earning and spending money, and finally a corner for donations to endorse the culture of aiding others and paying back to society.

The schools that participated in the event were Al-Fadhl Ibn Al-Abbas Elementary School for boys, Lulwa Mulla Saleh Al-Rabi’a Elementary School for girls, Um Al-Munthir Elementary School for girls, and Al-Sulaibikhat Elementary School for girls.

Bankee is the largest and first program in Kuwait,

which is offered by NBK in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha). It aims to teach students core economic concepts and behaviors such as earning, spending, saving, and financial commitments, and instill core values such as honesty, integrity, personal development, accountability, and teamwork. The program also aspires to raise a generation that understands the importance of financial independence and stability and has the financial knowledge and skills to help achieve sustainable development and economic welfare for individuals and society.

The event witnessed remarkable interaction between the students and teachers about how the program operates in schools and the way students deal with its rich content, which raises their financial awareness.

From their part, the Bankee teachers expressed their appreciation for NBK’s efforts to support education and instill positive concepts in future generations, highlighting that Bankee has remarkably contributed to enhancing the financial literacy, skills and behaviors of the students.

Moreover, this event echoes NBK’s commitment to follow up with the program and trace its positive

influence on the students’ behaviors by supplementing them with the necessary skills needed in managing their financials, in addition to the noticeable progress in their financial knowledge after applying the program in their schools.”

As part of its commitment to enriching the (Bankee) content, NBK has launched accounts on different social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to enable all participants to access valuable content, activities, and events from schools around the year. Additionally, the program’s website has been launched in both Arabic and English, and the admission for the academic year 2025-2026 is now open.

The executive management’s follow-up visits to the schools further highlight the program’s significance. Many parents attended these visits, in which they expressed their pleasure with the positive influence they noticed in their children’s financial knowledge and behaviors.

The National Bank of Kuwait believes in the importance of initiatives between the private and government sectors, as they provide the youth with the needed and necessary knowledge and skills to achieve prosperity and well-being for Kuwaiti individuals and society.

Economic growth rebounds to 4-5% range

Egypt strengthens FX flexibility, fiscal discipline

By National Bank of Kuwait

Egypt’s commitment to FX flexibility and fiscal discipline is becoming more deeply rooted, with limited foreign asset drawdowns in the banking sector and continued subsidy reforms. A new monetary easing cycle began in April driven by sharply lower inflation, and further interest rate cuts will support investment and reduce debt servicing costs. Economic growth is rebounding to the 4-5% range supported by rising capacity utilization and improving prospects for consumer purchasing power. Although FDI inflows will inevitably slow from last year’s exceptional levels, we expect Gulf investments to be sufficient to help bridge an expected cumulative \$10–12bn external gap over the next two years.

Strong commitment on FX flexibility and fiscal discipline

With more than a year having passed since the March 2024 currency devaluation, the policy of a more flexible FX regime has started to become more

deeply embedded even amid major economic challenges caused by the US’s ‘liberation day’ tariff announcements, an emerging market debt sell-off and ongoing regional conflict. There has also been a very limited drawdown of banking sector net foreign assets over the past period (previously used as a tool to stabilize the currency). A clear commitment to this FX policy is especially crucial as the IMF program comes to an end (late 2026).

The government has also continued its fiscal consolidation measures, raising oil prices by around 17% and maintaining progress even as fiscal pressures are helped by the lower global oil price environment. On top of this, both the finance and investment ministers have recently introduced new measures to enhance the business environment that include steps on taxation, the business climate and trade.

A new era of falling interest rates and lower inflation

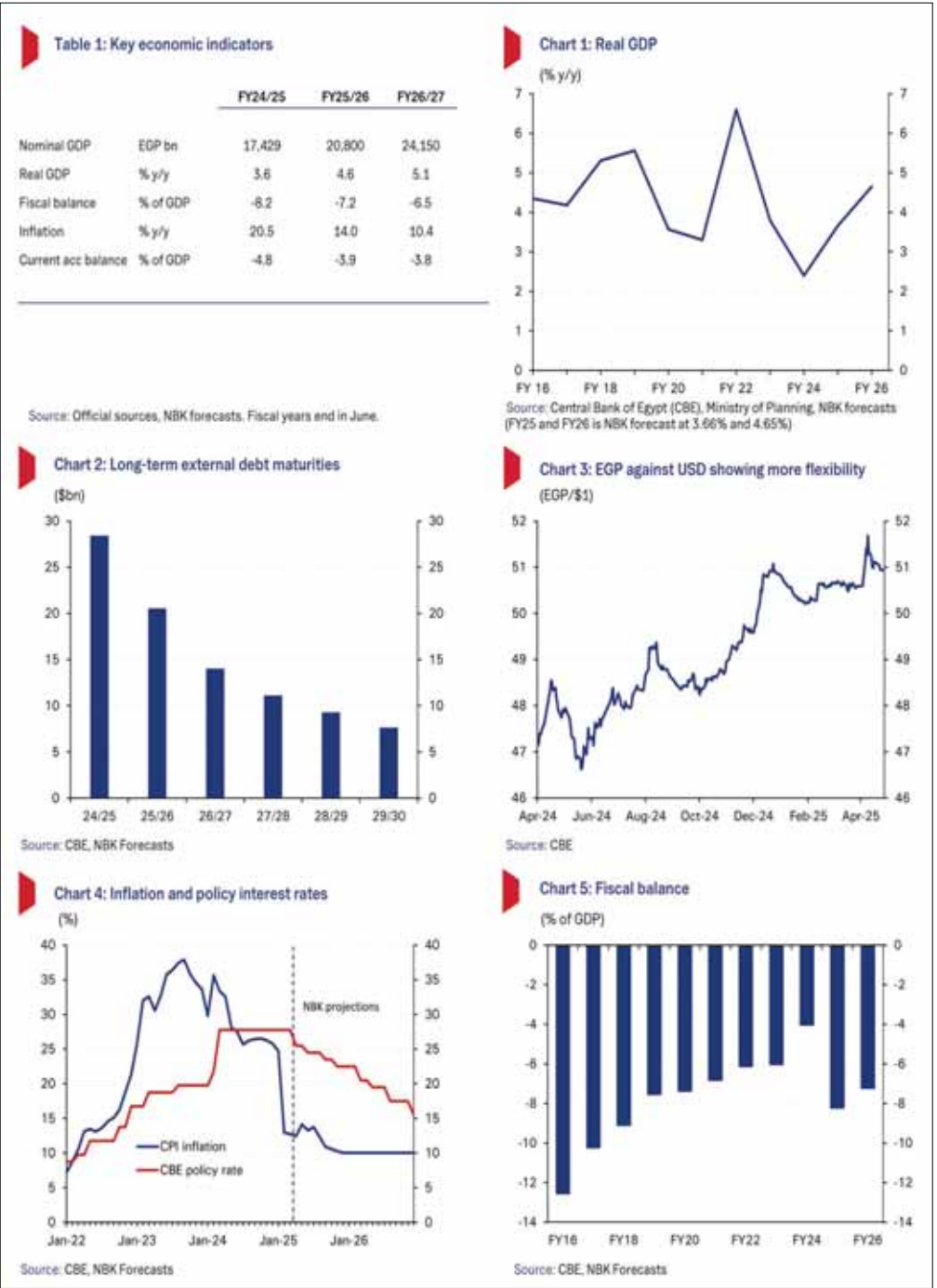
The central bank commenced its policy easing

cycle in April, cutting interest rates by 225bps to 25.5% following a plunge in inflation to 13.6% y/y in March (January 24%). Inflation should remain in the range of 14-16% for the rest of this year, providing space for interest rates to fall further: we expect them to end the year at 21-22%. In 2026, we see inflation averaging 12%, allowing for a further 4-5% cut in interest rates.

This new environment will improve credit transmission to the private sector and corporates’ appetite to borrow (see below). Furthermore, it will help to contain the ballooning interest payments that are eating up more than 50% of total public spending. Finally, we also see lower interest rates improving valuations of most companies, thus providing a boost to the privatization program.

Capacity utilization to pick up on cheaper borrowing

GDP growth continues to show signs of solid recovery, reaching 4.3% y/y for Q4 24 from 3.5% in the previous quarter, and may have improved even further in Q1 25. The commencement of the monetary easing cycle (especially if accompanied by further cuts over the coming six months) will boost corporate borrowing, though initially, given still low capacity utilization levels of 60-70%, this borrowing may focus mostly on OPEX; while corporates will now have better visibility regarding CAPEX plans, the investment cycle may take more time to materialize. Banks will start to shift more of their funds to corporate/retail lending versus treasury bills, especially as yields continue to fall; yields currently average 21% (net of tax), versus above 25% at the end of 2024. We also expect the economic recovery to give a strong push to nominal wages that causes a pickup in consumption activity. We see GDP growth accelerating to 3.66% and 4.7% in FY24/25 and FY25/26, respectively, from 2.4% in FY23/24. Sectors like export-led manufacturing, tourism, retail and wholesale trade, banking & financial services, in addition to IT services, will be the main sources of economic growth.



CEO highlights strong financial growth

Kuwait Insurance approves 40% cash dividends for shareholders

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: The Ordinary General Assembly of Kuwait Insurance Company met on Monday, April 28, 2025, and approved all agenda items, including, the distribution of cash dividends to the shareholders at a rate of 40%, i.e. Forty fils per share.

The Gross Profit achieved for the current period amounted to KD 12.5 million (USD 40.7 million) with earnings per share of 67.9 fils (US Cents 22.1).

The Net Profit amounted to KD 10.9 million (USD 35.5 million) with earnings per share of 59.1 fils (US Cents 19.3), after deducting the realized gain from the sale of investments during the year 2024, amounting to KD 1.6 million (USD 5.2 million), which is directly recorded in the retained earnings.

The Gross Written Premium for the current period amounted to KD 69.5 million (USD 226.4 million), compared to KD 53.7 million (USD 174.9 million) last year, reflecting an increase of KD 15.8 million (USD 51.5 million) equal to 29%.

The Net Operating Income reached KD 5.6 million (USD 18.2 million).

Net investment income for the current period amounted to KD 5.5 million (USD 18 million) compared to KD 5.4 million (USD 17.6 million) for the same period last year, representing an increase of 1.2%.

Retained earnings amounted to KD 85.5 million (USD 278.5 million) during 2024 compared to KD 80.5 million (USD 262 million) for the previous year, reflecting an increase of KD 5 million (USD 16.3 million) equal to 6.2%.

The CEO of the company, Mr. Sami Sharif, stated that all the success we have achieved are the results of significant effort made in the previous years to build the foundation that allows sustainable growth in profits and premiums. The company enjoys a strong and stable financial base. The company was awarded the “Most Trusted Insurance Company” title by “The Global Economics” magazine, a foundation specializing in launching annual rankings in economics and business for 2024.

Mr. Sharif added that in addition to profits and premiums, the company maintains an excellent credit rating from AM Best and Moody’s at A- and A3, respectively, with a stable outlook. We are proud to continue receiving these ratings, placing us among the leading local and regional companies in the insurance services sector.

On another note, we have made significant progress in our digitization project, where customers can easily upload some insurance documents via mobile phones by scanning a barcode.

Aiming to focus on the principle of corporate social responsibility, Kuwait Insurance Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity. KIC aims to contribute by sponsoring specialized and diverse programs in the fields of science and technology for children and youth to hone their skills and develop their talents and abilities. The company also collaborated with Tadwire to collect and recycle electronic waste as part of its commitment to applying sustainability principles and solutions across all areas of the organization and the society, overall. The company also sponsored the Kuwait Sustainability Exhibition to promote the culture of sustainability in society and spread awareness about the importance of creating a sustainable society for future generations. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, the company, in cooperation with the Kuwait Food and Relief Bank, carried out its charitable campaign “Iftar for the Fasting,” distributing Iftar meals to fasting workers and people belonging to low-income groups.

Kuwait Insurance Company is keen in investing and developing the staff by providing training and enrolling them for educational programs, which will develop them in providing insurance services to organizations, individuals, and stakeholders. With this step, they not only serve the interests of the society but also of the State of Kuwait.

We continue to look forward to accomplishing a lot in the coming years and we take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed in helping us achieve our goals, including the Board of Directors, the shareholders, and the company’s employees.

In conclusion, Mr. Sharif expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the Insurance Regulatory Unit for raising the standards of the Kuwait Insurance sector globally and for making the Insurance activities regulated and organized in the State of Kuwait. In addition to the above Mr. Sharif would also commend the Capital Markets Authority, the Ministry of Commerce, and all regulatory bodies in Kuwait for their active role in fostering a professional business environment.



Ali M. Behbehani and Sami Sharif during the general assembly.

‘Focus on internal talent development’

Marmore MENA named ‘Gold Employer’ by CFA Society India

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Marmore MENA Intelligence, the research arm of Kuwait Financial Centre “Markaz”, was felicitated by the CFA Society India as a ‘Gold Employer’ under their ‘Employer Recognition Program’ on 25th April 2025 in Mumbai, India. Mr. M.R. Raghu, CEO of Marmore MENA Intelligence and the Economic Advisor for Markaz received the award at the event. Marmore was among 20 organizations recognized for collaborating with the CFA Institute and CFA Society India, after an evaluation of over 400 employers in India. Marmore is privileged to receive this prestigious award from the CFA Society India for the second consecutive year, having been awarded Silver Employer last year. Candidates who have already obtained the CFA Charter or in the process of appearing for their CFA Level II & III exams are a part of the Marmore team.

Marmore is committed to the upskilling of its employees with employees benefiting from regular training sessions, mentorship opportunities, and knowledge-sharing platforms designed to keep them aligned with industry developments. Through the upskilling program, employees are eligible for reimbursement of fees paid for all three levels of the CFA (US) examination. The program also offers five days of study leave per level to support employees in preparing for and appearing in the exams. Furthermore, employees who have successfully completed all three levels and are members of the CFA Society are entitled to reimbursement of the annual CFA charter fees.

Commenting on the win, Mr. M.R. Raghu, said: “We would like to thank the CFA Institute and the CFA Society India for recognizing Marmore’s role and collaboration with the CFA society. Receiving this accolade, and for the second consecutive year, is a testament to Marmore’s pivotal role in fostering young talent and driving career development. We remain dedicated to strengthening this partnership in the future, particularly in talent acquisition, training, and internships.”

Career advancement is actively encouraged, with a clear preference for internal talent development and leadership roles frequently filled from within. Marmore maintains a well-structured rewards and recognition framework that acknowledges individual and team achievements, reinforcing a culture of excellence and appreciation.

Marmore fosters a positive and enriching work culture that places strong emphasis on continuous learning and professional development. The team of analysts engage with a diverse range of intellectually stimulating management consulting projects spread across key verticals, including capital markets, economic research, and industry analysis, enabling them to broaden their expertise and build a solution-oriented mindset. The organization strives to provide a collaborative environment that values open communication, cross-functional teamwork, and a strong sense of community, while also supporting a healthy work-life balance.



CEO M.R. Raghu receives Gold Employer Award in Mumbai.

Providing university students with an interactive and knowledge-driven experience as part of its educational ‘upgrade’ initiative

stc concludes largest university trivia league in collaboration with Seen Jeem



Amer Atoui and Ahmed Al Nowaibet with the first place winners.



Group photo of the winners.



stc team with Amer Atoui, Chief Consumer Officer of stc in the middle.

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Telecommunications Company – stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the conclusion of the largest university trivia league in collaboration with Seen Jeem, Kuwait’s most popular educational platform offering a group-based trivial experience through its innovative application. The event was hosted in Al Hamra Tower, welcoming participating teams at a special ceremony attended by Eng. Amer Atoui, Chief Consumer Officer of stc, representatives from the 5 participating universities, and stc’s partners including CHERY Alghanim, Foot Locker, Mawqif, and Sultan Center.

In the trivia league finale, the team from Gulf University for Science and Technology, consisting of Hammoud Al-Muqahwi, Abdulaziz Al-Adsani, and Khaled Al-Hasawi, claimed victory over the team from Abdullah Al-Salem University, which included Bader Abdullah, Ali Al-Manea, and Youssef Al-Rashed.

The initiative is part of stc’s educational ‘upgrade’ initiative and aims to provide university students with an interactive and knowledge-driven that enhances their cultural understanding while promoting a healthy competitive environment. Organized in collaboration with various public and private universities, the university trivia league hosted by stc brought together over 650 teams of students from universities across Kuwait.

The competition provided students with an opportunity to showcase their knowledge across a variety of categories designed to test their general awareness and encourage intellectual development in an interactive and stimulating environment. Through an interactive experience, the Seen Jeem platform combines education and entertainment, enabling stc to inspire participants in exploring new perspectives,

thinking beyond textbooks, and embracing learning in a new and exciting manner.

The tournament commenced in February 2025 at the College of Engineering and Petroleum in Kuwait University, followed by Abdullah Al-Salem University, Kuwait College of Science and Technology, and Gulf University for Science and Technology, before concluding at the American University of Kuwait. Two male and female teams from each university qualified for the semifinals. The final match, hosted at Al Hamra Tower, who are also stc’s strategic partner for the event, marked the conclusion of the competition.

In a statement, stc indicated that the winning team of the university trivia league will be awarded three ARRIZO 4 cars in collaboration with CHERY, while all finalist teams will receive a one-year free subscription to youth from stc plans. The valuable prizes aim to instill a sense of health competition while encouraging participants to place forth their best effort in order to win the league. Additionally, stc will be recognizing the winning team for their exceptional knowledge, skills, and teamwork, highlighting their dedication and perseverance throughout the competition.

Commenting on the initiative, Ahmed Al Nowaibet, Manager of Public Relations and Social Media at stc, said, “We are proud to partner with a pioneering platform that aims to educate the public through creative and impactful methods, aligning with our strategy to enable digital transformation that supports growth. We strongly support the use of technology in various forms to help platforms like ‘Seen Jeem’ spread knowledge and foster education within the community.”

He stated, “As a leader in our field, we at stc greatly value partnerships and collaborations with institutions that can help us positively impact people’s lifestyles. Since educa-

AI Nowaibet:

■

We at stc greatly value partnerships and collaborations with institutions that can help us positively impact people’s lifestyles

tion serves as a key pillar under stc’s CSR program, we will continue to focus on exploring new concepts and platforms that aim to empower the community by fostering knowledge and promoting learning.”

Al Nowaibet added, “Through this collaboration, our goal was to equip participants with valuable tools that could help them develop and innovate in their personal and professional lives. In line with our commitment to the ‘upgrade’ educational initiative, we believe it is essential to provide accessible educational platforms that allow individuals to discover new interests and passions. Over the years, we have worked on executing our comprehensive CSR strategy, focusing on building partnerships with various entities to support the core mission of our sustainability program. Based on that, we have entered into multiple partnerships with leading institutions in Kuwait to raise awareness and create a positive impact within the community.”

In conclusion, Al Nowaibet extended his appreciation to the Al Hamra Real Estate Company team, the Seen Jeem application team, all participants, and the stc team for their dedication in successfully organizing the tournament. He emphasized that the initiative has proven to be a successful program in line with stc’s comprehensive CSR framework,

which aims to continuously support the SME sector and the broader community.

On this occasion, Abdulaziz Al-Dhuwahi, Marketing and Public Relations Manager at Al Hamra Real Estate Company, said, “At Al Hamra Real Estate, we believe that supporting cultural and educational initiatives is a fundamental pillar in strengthening societal cohesion and elevating awareness and intellectual growth. This tournament stands as a testament to the role that knowledge plays in uniting youth on a single platform that promotes dialogue, nourishes minds, and sparks creativity. Our strategic partnership with stc extends from this vision to support young individuals, and we are proud to be part of an initiative that touches the minds and hearts of university students, uniting them in an atmosphere of meaningful and constructive competition.”

As part of its CSR framework, stc continues to actively support initiatives that empower the younger generation and contribute to Kuwait’s educational landscape. Through its educational ‘upgrade’ initiative, the Company remains committed to equipping students with the knowledge, tools, and platforms that encourage creativity, innovation, and lifelong learning, while emphasizing its ongoing efforts to support national talent and local institutions by encouraging a culture of learning and intellectual development. The Company reaffirmed its belief in the power of education and innovation as essential pillars in shaping Kuwait’s future and expressed its dedication to initiatives that inspire and empower the leaders of tomorrow.

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

Trump offers automakers some relief on his 25 percent tariffs

Offer tied to worries the taxes could hurt US factories

WASHINGTON, April 30, (AP): President Donald Trump signed executive orders Tuesday to relax some of his 25% tariffs on automobiles and auto parts, a significant reversal as the import taxes threatened to hurt domestic manufacturers.

Automakers and independent analyses have indicated that the tariffs could raise prices, reduce sales and make U.S. production less competitive worldwide. Trump portrayed the changes as a bridge toward automakers moving more production into the United States.

“We just wanted to help them during this little transition, short term,” Trump told reporters. “We didn’t want to penalize them.”

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who spoke earlier at a White House briefing on Tuesday, said the goal was to enable automakers to create more domestic manufacturing jobs.

“President Trump has had meetings with both domestic and foreign auto producers, and he’s committed to bringing back auto production to the U.S.,” Bessent said. “So we want to give the automakers a path to do that, quickly, efficiently and create as many jobs as possible.”

Trump signed one order on Tuesday that amended his previous 25% auto tariffs, making it easier for vehicles that are assembled in the U.S. with foreign parts to not face prohibitively high import taxes.

The amended order provides a rebate for one year of 3.75% relative to the sales prices of a domestically assembled vehicles. That figure was reached by putting the 25% import tax on parts that make up 15% of a vehicle’s sales price. For the second year, the rebate would equal 2.5% of a vehicle’s sales price, as it



US President Donald Trump waves as he boards Air Force One, Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at Joint Base Andrews, Md. (AP)

would apply to a smaller share of the vehicle’s parts.

A senior Commerce Department official, insisted on anonymity to preview the order on a call with reporters, said automakers told Trump that the additional time would enable them to ramp up the construction of new factories, after automakers warned that it would take time for them to shift their supply chains. The official said automakers would over the next month announce additional shifts for workers,

new hires and plans for new facilities.

Stellantis Chairman John Elkann said in a statement that the company appreciates the president’s tariff relief measure.

“While we further assess the impact of the tariff policies on our North American operations, we look forward to our continued collaboration with the U.S. Administration to strengthen a competitive American auto industry and stimulate exports,” he said.

Zuckerberg chats with Nadella

Meta launches AI app

MENLO PARK, Calif., April 30, (AP): Working to differentiate itself in the crowded field of artificial intelligence, Meta Platforms has launched a standalone AI app - with a social media component - to compete with OpenAI’s ChatGPT.

The Meta AI app, built with the company’s Llama 4 AI system. It includes a “discover” feed that lets users see how others are interacting with AI. It also has a voice mode for interacting with the AI.

“It’s smart for Meta to differentiate its ChatGPT competitor by drawing from the company’s social media roots. The app’s Discover feed is like a version of the OG Facebook Feed but only focused on AI use cases,” said Forrester research director Mike Proulx.

By letting users link their Facebook and Instagram accounts, the Meta AI app “gets a leg up on instantly personalizing its user experience with social media context.”

Meta has taken a different approach to AI than many of its rivals, releasing it for free as an open-source product. The company says more than a billion people use its AI products each month.

At the Menlo Park, California-based tech giant’s inaugural conference, LlamaCon, on Tuesday Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg chatted with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella in a technical discussion around the speed of AI development and how the technology is shifting both their companies - where AI is already writing code - as well as the world.

Acknowledging there is a lot of “hype” around AI, Zuckerberg said “if this is going to lead to massive increases in productivity, that needs to be reflected in major increases in GDP.”

“This is going take some multiple years, many years, to play out,” Zuckerberg said. “I’m curious how you think, what’s your current outlook on what we should be looking for to understand the progress that this is making?”

Nadella brought up the advent of electricity, saying that “AI has the promise, but you now have to sort of really have it deliver the real change in productivity - and that requires software and also management change, right? Because in some sense, people have to work with it differently.”



Meta Founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, left, speaks with Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella at LlamaCon 2025, an AI developer conference, in Menlo Park, Calif., Tuesday, April 29, 2025. (AP)

Toyota starts collaborating with Waymo on autonomous cars

TOKYO, April 30, (AP): Japan’s top automaker Toyota announced a partnership with U.S. autonomous driving technology company Waymo on Wednesday.

The move was somewhat anticipated, as the use of such technology speeds up around the world, and Toyota Motor Corp. has been aggressive about its intention to stay on top of such advances.

“Toyota is committed to realizing a society with zero traffic accidents and becoming a mobility company that delivers mobility for all. We share a strong sense of purpose and a common vision with Waymo in advancing safety through automated driving technology,” Toyota Executive Vice President Hiroki Nakajima said in a statement.

Waymo, which started out as the Google Self-Driving Car Project in



A Waymo self-driving vehicle sits curbside on Dec. 16, 2022, at the Sky Harbor International Airport Sky Train facility in Phoenix. (AP)

2009, now offers fully autonomous ride-hailing services in San Francisco, Phoenix, Los Angeles and Austin, and is rolling them out in other U.S. cities. It also has a partnership with ride-hailing leader Uber.

Trump’s tariffs darken outlook

Europe saw stronger growth at start of year

FRANKFURT, Germany, April 30, (AP): Europe’s economy grew more strongly in the first three months of the year, only to see hopes for an ongoing recovery quickly squelched by U.S. President Donald Trump’s trade war.

Gross domestic product in the 20 eurozone countries grew 0.4% in the first quarter, improving on 0.2% growth in the last part of 2024, according to official figures released Wednesday by European Union statistics agency Eurostat.

But on April 2, just two days after the end of the quarter, Trump announced an onslaught of new tariffs on almost every U.S. trading partner and hit goods imported from the EU with a 20% tariff rate. That has led to widespread downgrading of Europe’s growth outlook for the year since its economy is heavily dependent on exports and the U.S. is its largest single export destination.

Although Trump has announced a



Containers are piled up in a cargo terminal in Frankfurt, Germany, Monday, April 28, 2025. (AP)

90-day pause on what he calls his “reciprocal” tariffs - so named because they are based on how he feels other countries have been treating the U.S. -prospects that the EU can strike a bargain to reduce the 20% figure are highly uncertain.

Meanwhile, other tariffs - such as a 25% rate on steel and aluminum and

on cars, both of them for all trading partners, including Europe, remain in place. The costs of tariffs are paid by the companies that import European goods such as cars and pharmaceuticals, which then have to decide whether to swallow the costs or pass them on to the consumer in the form of higher prices.

Major companies face a difficult task in estimating the impact of tariffs on their business

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): Executives at some of the world’s biggest companies are faced with the tricky task of explaining how President Donald Trump’s tariffs are impacting their business as they discuss the latest financial results. Some are making their best estimate based on what they know at the moment; others are pulling their outlooks altogether.

The only certainty is that they’ll use a variation of the phrase “uncertain times” at least once as they speak with analysts.

Trump has imposed tariffs against key U.S. trading partners, while also postponing other tariffs to give companies a chance to negotiate. The process has left business and consumers uncertain amid a constantly shifting landscape. Over the last few months, tariffs have been announced and in some cases withdrawn within days.

Here’s what some of those companies are saying:

Kraft Heinz is cutting its earnings forecast for the year, citing a volatile environment.

The maker of food staples, including its namesake ketchup and boxed macaroni & cheese, is under pressure along with other food companies as inflation continues squeezing consumers. Tariffs could force companies to raise prices on consumer staples and food products, further fueling inflation.

“We’re closely monitoring the potential impacts from macroeconomic pressures such as tariffs and inflation,” said Kraft Heinz CEO Carlos Abrams-Rivera, in a statement.

JetBlue Airways pulled its financial forecast for the year

over worries about slowing travel demand as consumer confidence weakens.

The travel sector, including airlines, faces an indirect impact from tariffs. Tariffs threaten to raise prices on a wide range of consumer goods, worsening inflation and squeezing consumers. Discretionary spending on travel is often among the first budget items that households consider trimming or cutting completely in order to deal with higher costs elsewhere.

Broadway actor reveals the secret to stillness

Durand brings life to dead role in ‘Dead Outlaw’

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): One of Broadway’s more impressive performances this season is by Andrew Durand, who is a kinetic force in the first half of “Dead Outlaw” and absolutely motionless in the second. For some 40 minutes, he’s a corpse, standing in a coffin.

“Some nights I want to scream. Some nights I want to rip my skin off - that pressure that you can’t move starts to get to me. And so there are nights that it is very challenging,” says the actor.

Durand stars in the musical as Elmer McCurdy, a real-life alcoholic drifter-turned-failed bandit who was shot dead in 1911 but whose afterlife proved to be stranger than fiction.

His embalmed body becomes a prized possession for half a century, transported across the country to take part in carnival sideshows, wax museums, Hollywood horror movies, roadside attractions and, finally, a prop at an amusement-park ride in the 1970s.

“You watch him have this successful career as a corpse,” says Durand. “I think it just makes people really think about their own humanity: What’s important while we are alive? What do we do with the time that we have while we’re alive?”

The musical - conceived by David Yazbek, who wrote the “Dead Outlaw” music and lyrics with Erik Della Penna - reunites Yazbek with book writer Itamar Moses and the director David Cromer, who collaborated so winningly on “The Band’s Visit.”

It’s Durand’s first time as the lead on Broadway, following roles in “Shucked,” “Ink,” Head Over Heels” and “War Horse.” He spent many years with the Kneehigh Theatre Company, a troupe where the

ensemble was highlighted.

“My favorite thing about theater is the collaborative nature,” he says. “It’s a big moment for me, and I’m excited about it. But, yes, I’m trying to remain grounded.”

Durand, who hails from Rossville, Georgia, has been with “Dead Outlaw” from the beginning when he was cast in last year’s off-Broadway premiere. That’s a lot of standing and not moving.

“It’s different every night in terms of how easy it is on my body. Some nights I just sail through and I’m like, ‘Oh, I didn’t have to blink once and it was fine.’ And then other nights my toes are falling asleep and there’s tears running down my face.”

Restless

While in the first half he’s a hard-drinking, hard-fighting, table-jumping restless soul, he says he sets small goals during his time as a corpse, like waiting for the exact moment when a co-star walks in front of him so he can blink or swallow. He also plays word games in his head.

“I’ll think of a word like ‘pencil.’ And then I’ll try to think of a bunch of other words that start with the letter ‘P.’ And then if I find myself saying ‘pickle,’ then I start to think about foods,” he says. “It’s just like stream-of-consciousness things to keep me distracted from what’s going on.”

His nights would be easier if the show just replaced him with a dummy, but Cromer, at the first workshop, approached Durand and nixed that notion.

“He said, ‘Just so you know, if this show happens,

I’m not going to make a dummy version of you to put in that coffin. I think it’s very important to have the actual performer in that coffin so that we are constantly reminded of his humanity.’”

Cromer has been amazed at how Durand has created a character of straightforwardness and truthfulness simply from studying a photograph of McCurdy.

“Andrew Durand as a performer is a guy who you give him whatever the prompt is and he goes away and brings you 10 times more than you asked for and has completely created, well-thought-out version of things,” says the director.

“Dead Outlaw” is not Durand’s first time playing a corpse onstage. He portrayed a dead man as a teenager in a community playhouse production of “Arsenic and Old Lace.” Years later, he’s just trying to serve his new work.

“I look at it as just another challenge of the performance that I’m trying to give, you know? And so I take it just as seriously as any of the songs I sing.”

Durand finds himself in a Broadway season with plenty of corpses, albeit none as taxing as his own work. There’s “Operation Mincemeat,” about a real World War II mission in which Allied soldiers dressed up a corpse to divert their German foes, and there’s “Floyd Collins,” a musical about a cave explorer who slowly dies underground. Then there are all the dead people at the end of “Othello.”

“I think it’s just an odd coincidence,” says Durand.

One of his nightly rituals is to get on the empty stage at the Longacre Theatre about an hour before the curtain goes up to celebrate living - not death.



This image released by DKC/O+M shows Andrew Durand, center, with Julia Knitel, during a performance of ‘Dead Outlaw.’ (AP)

Media

‘Brutal year’

Post refocuses on journalism

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): After a brutal year of headlines about The Washington Post, executive editor Matt Murray sounded almost relieved to be talking about journalism.

In an interview, he was touting “100 scoops in 100 days” about the Post’s coverage of the Trump administration’s first weeks. What sounds like a publicist’s confection has truth behind it, with reporters putting their heads down and working, notably on stories involving the federal workforce and spending cuts.

Most stories about the Post in the past few months have been negative, including publisher Will Lewis’ botched reorganization that led to former executive editor Sally Buzbee’s resignation last June, owner



Trump

Jeff Bezos asserting himself over the opinion section and defections among journalists worried about the outlet’s direction.

“Great stories and great scoops are always good to remind people - both externally and internally - that it’s all about the journalism at the end of the day,” Murray said.

Research

Dan Diamond, Hannah Natanson, Carolyn Y. Johnson and Lena H. Sun are among the reporters who have dug into specifics about Department of Government Efficiency-inspired cuts and what they’ve meant for medical research and services for Social Security recipients. Natanson, Rachel Siegel and Laura Meckler have explored the use of government data to go after undocumented immigrants.

Adam Taylor and John Hudson have dug into proposed cuts at the State Department. Maria Sacchetti and Artur Galocha showed how half of the people the White House reported as immigration enforcement arrests were already behind bars. Jacob Bogage wrote about a Trump appointee asking the IRS to review an audit of conservative personality Mike Lindell.

It’s grunt work, developing sources and stories that build upon other stories, many involving federal workers - the industry that the city is built upon.

“The Post has an historic obligation - it’s right in our name, Washington - to write aggressively, truthfully, thoughtfully about the government and what’s happening there,” Murray said. “Obviously the Trump administration, whatever one thinks of them, has the most aggressive change program that we’ve seen in many administrations.”

The work breaking stories has been noticeable, said Margaret Sullivan, a former media columnist at the Post who still writes, teaches at Columbia University and runs the Craig Newmark Center for Journalism Ethics and Security there.

“I’ve been happy to see that,” she said. “The place has been through such a difficult time and it’s not due to the journalists there. It’s because of the ownership and management.”

The Post hasn’t yet earned its own Truth Social post about its reporting since President Donald Trump’s return - the ultimate sign it has gotten under Trump’s skin - but the White House labeled one of its stories about health funding “fake news.”

Film



Florence Pugh, a cast member in ‘Thunderbolts,’ poses at the premiere of the film at the Dolby Theatre, Monday, April 28, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Schreier’s film revitalizes MCU with emotional depth

Pugh powers Marvel’s ‘Thunderbolts’

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP): As they so often do in Marvel Land, worlds collide in “Thunderbolts.”

But in this refreshingly earthbound iteration of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, the collision isn’t a matter of interplanetary strife. “Thunderbolts” has been touted as the unlikely meeting of two of the dominant forces in 21st century American movies: Marvel and A24.

This isn’t a co-production, but much of the creative team and many of the stars have ties to the indie studio. “Thunderbolts” is directed by Jake Schreier, who has directed many episodes of the A24 series “Beef,” and was written by Joanna Calo (also a “Beef” veteran) and Eric Pearson (a Marvel veteran). The connections go further: cinematographer Andrew Droz Palermo (“A Ghost Story,” “The Green Knight”), editor Harry Yoon (“Minari”) and a score by the band Son Lux (“Everything Everywhere All at Once”).

Some trailers for “Thunderbolts” have highlighted these connections, perhaps in hopes of a little A24 auteur cool rubbing off on Hollywood’s superhero factory. It’s also a sign of how rough things have gotten for Marvel that, after a string of misfires, it’s leaning on the studio behind “Swiss Army Man” for its latest would-be blockbuster.

Does that make “Thunderbolts” a hipper superhero movie? Can you expect “Babygirl”-like scenes of Black Widow drinking a glass of milk? The answer, of course, is that “Thunderbolts” has no more indie cred than “Avatar.” What it is, though, is the best Marvel movie in years.

“Thunderbolts,” about a group of MCU rejects who band together after CIA director Valentina Allegra de Fontaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) tries to erase them and their covert program, is both a return to form for Marvel and something a little different. While there’s plenty of franchise building going on, “Thunderbolts” - the title of which bears an asterisk - is pleasantly stand-alone, and its spurts of spectacle more deftly proceed out of an tenderly told story.

If there’s an influence on “Thunderbolts,” it’s less A24 than James Gunn. It borrows a little of the misfit irreverence of “Guardians of the Galaxy” and “The Suicide Squad.” But Schreier’s film is leaner and less antic than those movies,

and it serves as an IMAX-sized platform for the increasingly obvious movie-star talents of Florence Pugh.

In the opening moments of “Thunderbolts,” Pugh’s Yelena Belova, a veteran of the Soviet assassin Black Widow program, melancholily stands atop a skyscraper. “There’s something wrong with me,” she says. “An emptiness.” She drops, a parachute opens, and her narration continues. “Or maybe I’m just bored.”

It’s a telling opening for a film that wrestles sometimes earnestly, sometimes a little glibly, with malaise and depression. Yelena is searching for meaning in her life, dragged down by guilt and shame from her past, a pain that even her relentlessly chipper father Alexei, the self-proclaimed Red Guardian (David Harbour, magnificent), can’t quell. When Yelena, on a mission, brutalizes a hallway full of armed guards - a shot that, as I critic, am contractually obligated to note is styled after the famous one from Park Chan-wook’s “Oldboy” - Schreier films it from overhead in a shadowy ballet.

Surprised

Shadows and death drape “Thunderbolts.” When Yelena is dispatched on what she says will be her last job, she’s surprised to encounter others like her - include the disgraced John Walker (Wyatt Russell) and the fight-mimicking Taskmaster (Olga Kurylenko) - sent to the same location. After some initial tussling, they realize they - like the protagonists of “Toy Story 3” - are standing inside of an incinerator. Adding to the confusion of their predicament is a guy with no apparent powers who simply introduces himself as “Bob” (Lewis Pullman,



This image released by Marvel Studios shows Florence Pugh in a scene from ‘Thunderbolts.’ (AP)

bringing a sensitivity rarely found in these movies).

They aren’t quite a bizarre Avengers, but they - including Sebastian Stan’s Bucky Barnes, who joins later - are all the products of dubious government programs that instill less patriotism than their more plainly heroic counterparts. As a group, they’re plagued by doubt and uncertainty, and they’re more inclined to bicker than give rousing speeches. And whenever anyone brushes too closely with Bob, they drift back into the darkest chapters of their own pasts that pull them like a deadweight toward suicidal thoughts.

Who, exactly, Bob turns out to be furthers this theme in “Thunderbolts,” which never feels like it’s lurching from one action set piece to another. That the final act of the movie is essentially set in a headspace, rather than above a threatened metropolis, is a testament to the interiority (not a word that often comes up in Marvel movies) of “Thunderbolts,” a film that finds vivid comic-book imagery to render authentic real-life emotions.

That’s always been the promise of a good comic book, but it’s fair to say that the Marvel movies have recently found that tone elusive. When Louis-Dreyfus, looking just as home in Washington, D.C., as she was in “Veep,” as De Fontaine declares, “The Avengers are not walking through that door,” it’s an acknowledgment - like then-Celtics coach Rick Pitino once vowed of Larry Bird - that “Thunderbolts” is here to make the most of what it’s got. Of course, that there are, in fact, more “Avengers” films on the way slightly diminishes the sentiment.

But they won’t be missed in “Thunderbolts.” All the assembled parts here, including an especially high-quality cast (even Wendell Pierce!) work together seamlessly in a way that Marvel hasn’t in some time. Most of all, Pugh commands every bit of the movie. It’s less a revelation than a big-budget confirmation of the screen power of an actor who also has gone from A24 (“Midsommar”) to Marvel stardom with ease.

“Thunderbolts,” a Walt Disney Co. release, is rated by the Motion Picture Association for strong violence, language, thematic elements, and some suggestive and drug references. Running time: 126 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Variety

NEW YORK: When Harvey Weinstein’s landmark 2020 #MeToo conviction was overturned, accuser Miriam Haley was frank about her feelings about participating in a retrial: “I definitely don’t want to actually go through that again.”

But on Tuesday, Haley became the first of the former movie tycoon’s accusers to take the witness stand as prosecutors seek to convict him again. Weinstein, 73, has pleaded not guilty and denies sexually assaulting anyone.

As Haley started what are expected to be multiple days of testimony, she walked quickly to the witness stand without looking at Weinstein. The ex-studio boss, sitting between his lawyers, looked at her as she passed by and again when prosecutors asked her to identify him from the stand.

Haley told the jury that when she went to meet Weinstein on the sidelines of the 2006 Cannes film festival, all she wanted was work.

“Did you have any interest whatsoever in the defendant, Harvey Weinstein, romantically or sexually?” prosecutor Nicole Blumberg asked Haley, 48.

“No, I did not, and I was there to try and find work,” said Haley, who’d been an assistant to another producer. (AP)

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SANTA FE, N.M.: Betsy Arakawa, the concert pianist who was married to actor Gene Hackman, died from hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, according to an autopsy report released Tuesday that said that her lungs were heavy and congested.

Arakawa, 65, had fluid accumulation in her chest and mild hardening of the vessels that supplied blood to the heart and body, according to the autopsy reports.

Hantavirus is a rare but potentially fatal disease spread by infected rodent droppings.

Arakawa tested negative for COVID-19 and the flu and showed no signs of trauma, the autopsy report said. Her carbon monoxide levels were within normal range, and she tested positive for caffeine and negative for alcohol and intoxicating drugs.

Arakawa’s autopsy and toxicology reports were released two days after similar documents on Hackman’s death were made public, confirming his main cause of death was heart disease. (AP)

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PARIS: A trial began Monday in Paris over the 2016 heist in which armed robbers tied up Kim Kardashian in her bedroom and stole millions of dollars’ worth of jewelry during Fashion Week.

The robbery was considered the biggest heist targeting an individual that Paris had seen in decades. The jury of six citizens will conduct the trial along with three magistrates - a procedure in France reserved for the most serious crimes.

Ten people, nine men and a woman, face charges of robbery and kidnapping of the media personality and the concierge of the residence where she was staying on the night of Oct. 2, 2016. Two have acknowledged their participation. The others have denied it.

Kardashian has described being terrified, thinking she would be raped and killed when criminals broke into her bedroom and pointed a gun at her.

Her lawyers said she will testify in person. She is expected to speak on May 13. The trial is scheduled to run through May 23.

“Ms. Kardashian is reserving her testimony for the court and jury and does not wish to elaborate further at this time,” they said. (AP)



This album cover image released by Partisan Records shows 'If You Asked For A Picture' by Blondshell. (AP)

Teitelbaum returns with powerful new album

Blondshell alt-rock finds new nuance on 'If You Asked'

LOS ANGELES, April 30, (AP): Sabrina Teitelbaum, who records under the band name Blondshell, is a longtime student of alt-rock. She knows a thing or two about all the ways in which a cutting lyric and thunderous guitar can rejuvenate the soul and sound-track rage. On her sophomore album, "If You Asked for a Picture," named after Mary Oliver's 1986 poem "Dogfish," she builds from the success of her earlier work - 2023's self-titled debut and its haunting single "Salad."

Over the course of 12 tracks, much like on her first album, Blondshell reckons with a woman's role in her various relationships, personally and societally. Those messages - gritty, real, existential and fluid as they are - arrive atop visceral instrumentation, hearty guitars and punchy percussion.

"Oh well you're not gonna save him," she reminds listeners in "Arms."

Much of "If You Asked for a Picture" sits at the in-

tersection of modern indie, '90s grunge and '80s college radio rock, like that of "Event of a Fire." On the acoustic fake-out "Thumbtack," instrumentation builds slow and remains restrained. "Man" is muscular, with its soaring distortion and layered production.

On "If You Asked for a Picture," relationships are nuanced, awkward and honest - her flawed and frustrated characters show how easy it is to succumb to the whims of someone who doesn't have your best interest in mind, to become someone else when you don't know who you are.

That's clear on "Change," where she sings, "It's not my fault it's who I am / When I feel bad I bring it back and leave it all at your door." And the anxious complications compound: "A parting gift / ... me back / I'm sorry for changing."

If there is a main weakness in "If You asked for a Picture," it is that a number of the tracks bleed together sonically near the record's end, making it hard

to distinguish a three-song run: "Toy" to "Man." Fans will likely label it stylistic consistency rather than tiresome repetition.

That said, there's a lot to love here. "T&A," "Model Rockets" and the palm-muted power chords of "What's Fair" warrant repeat listens.

"Why don't the good ones love me?" Blondshell asks on "T&A," with its dreamy guitar tone "Watching him fall / Watching him go right in front of me."

The swaying mellotron of "Model Rockets" ends the album.

"I'm a bad bad girl / Bad bad girl," she adds to the closer. "Life may have been happening elsewhere / And I don't know what I want anymore."

It might serve as a mission statement for the album - where identity and desire are malleable, influenced by relationships and the evolving nature of the world, made more complicated by simply being a woman in it.

Television

Roles get bigger, and go deeper

'Andor' women shine brighter in Season 2

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif., April 30, (AP): Mon Mothma was first introduced to "Star Wars" fans as the rebel leader who appears only long enough to move the plot forward by delivering battle plans in hushed tones.

But in the last moments of the most recent "Andor" episodes on Disney+ (spoilers for already released episodes ahead) she is a patrician senator who, soaked in high-end space booze and potent emotions, tears up the dance floor to a bass-and-drums rave-up at her daughter's wedding. The scene would play as comic if it weren't tragic. None of her fellow revelers know that she has just taken a major step in her rise - or descent - into radicalism by washing her hands of an old friend who may be a threat to the burgeoning Rebel Alliance.

The size of the scene - and its subtleties - shows off the new levels of depth and breadth given to actors Genevieve O'Reilly, Adria Arjona and other central women in the second season of "Andor"; three new episodes drop on Tuesday.

"It's a techno-galactic dance moment, but it's also this moment of internal chaos for this woman," O'Reilly said in an interview with The Associated Press. "She's tacitly agreed to have her friend murdered. She's dancing to stop herself from screaming. It's deeply painful. It is that one moment where we can actually see Mon Mothma wrestle out of this straitjacket and dance with terrified abandon."

Mothma's conflict is in some ways even more central to the show's premise - what does it take to make a revolution? - than that of the title character, played by Diego Luna. Like many real-life figures past and present, she is trying to maintain a facade of respectful, and respectable, opposition to tyranny while feeling the pull of open rebellion.

Effective

"If she drops that mask of diplomacy, she's useless," O'Reilly said. "She's only effective if she maintains composure."

"Andor" creator Tony Gilroy told the AP that Mothma's "journey is the hardest, I think. Because she has to do everything, and has to be observed. She can't move."

The character originated as a brief-but-memorable role for Caroline Blakiston in 1983's "Return of the Jedi." The 48-year-old Ireland-born O'Reilly, who has lived much of her adult life in Australia, was first cast in the role of the young senator when the 2005 prequel "Revenge of the Sith" was shooting there, because, she says with a laugh, she was the "palest person in Sydney."

All of her "Sith" scenes were relegated to DVD extras. But she would reprise the role in 2016's "Rogue One," to which "Andor" is a prequel, and has played the part in the Lucas-film properties "Star Wars: Rebels" and "Ahsoka."

But it's in "Andor," especially Season 2, where the origin story of the leader from the planet Chandrila is truly told.

"You really feel that she's of value to this world that is created," O'Reilly said. "That's the gift that every actor wants."

Gilroy wrote the first three episodes of Season 2, and says he insisted on including the elaborate and difficult-to-produce three-day wedding ceremony that ends with the scene set to a chaotic dance-club remix of composer Nicholas Britell's "Niamos!" from Season 1.

Gilroy says the expanded roles for his show's women came in part from him learning the talents of the performers.



This image released by Disney+ shows Genevieve O'Reilly, as Mon Mothma, (left), and Ben Miles, as Tay Kolma, in a scene from 'Andor.' (AP)



This image released by Disney+ shows Adria Arjona, as Bix Caleen, in a scene from 'Andor.' (AP)



This image shows Allistair Mackenzie, as Perrin Fertha, from left, Genevieve O'Reilly, as Mon Mothma, and Stellan Skarsgård, as Luthen Rael, in a scene from 'Andor.' (AP)

"You get a big show like this where time is really your friend in a way," he said, "and you watch who rises."

Gilroy knew O'Reilly from "Rogue One," which he also wrote, but said she's basically "a piece of furniture" in that movie.

He brought her to "Andor" as a leg-

acy character without giving it much thought. But then he got to see her work.

"It was like, 'My God, look what she can do, she can do anything,'" Gilroy said. "She's a freaking Steinway. Let's go for it."

He had a similar experience of discovery with Elizabeth Dulau, whose

character Kleya had an intriguing but small part in Season 1 as the lieutenant of violent revolutionary Luthen Rael (Stellan Skarsgård).

Gilroy remembers thinking, "She could be the sorcerer's apprentice, or she could be one of the greatest actresses I've ever worked with in my life."

won, is a rare and precious thing," the judges' citation reads in part. "They're intimate with pain, yes, with betrayal, racism, and cruelty, and they also show us how to recognize and protect the glimmers of hope that survive." (AP)

WASHINGTON: A federal judge on Tuesday ordered the Trump administration to restore \$12 million that Congress appropriated for Radio Free Europe, a pro-democracy media outlet at risk of going dark for the first time in 75 years.

US District Judge Royce Lamberth also tucked a lesson on the three branches of government inside Tuesday's ruling, cautioning that the system of checks and balances established by the US Constitution must remain intact if the nation is going to continue to thrive.

Lamberth granted the temporary restraining order for the US Agency for Global Media to disburse money for April 2025 for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty pending the outcome of a lawsuit seeking to keep the station on the air. He said the Trump administration could not unilaterally revoke funding approved by Congress.

"In interviews, podcasts, and op-eds, people from both inside and outside government have variously

accused the courts - myself included - of fomenting a constitutional crisis, usurping the Article II powers of the Presidency, undercutting the popular will, or dictating how Executive agencies can and should be run," wrote Lamberth, who was appointed by President Ronald Reagan. (AP)

LONDON: There is a hole in the heart of the rolling hills of northern England. A majestic sycamore tree that once sat symmetrically between two hills along Hadrian's Wall was mysteriously felled more than a year and a half ago, causing disbelief and distress for those who considered it an almost sacred site.

"We're still devastated by it," said Catherine Cape, who runs a guest cabin nearby. "I can't drive past it. ... I just don't like looking at the space there."

Cape was among those paying attention Monday as two men went on trial in Newcastle Crown Court, accused of toppling the famous Sycamore Gap tree and damaging the ancient wall.

Daniel Graham, 39, and Adam Carruthers, 32, have pleaded not guilty to two counts each of criminal damage. Prosecutors said the value of the tree exceeded 620,000 pounds (\$827,000) and damage to the wall was assessed at 1,100 pounds (\$1,468). (AP)

Books

1,400 exhibitors, 96 countries

'World cultures' meet at Abu Dhabi book fair

ABU DHABI, UAE, April 30, (AP): The 34th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF), organized by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre, part of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, has launched its activities, offering a platform for cultures and innovations of the world to converge, interact, and explore new horizons of knowledge.

Continuing until May 5, 2025 under the theme 'Knowledge Illuminates Our Community', the fair brings 1,400 exhibitors from 96 countries, offering a comprehensive programme of 2,000 activities that cater to all community members, while spotlighting Caribbean culture as Guest of Honour, in recognition of its intellectual distinction and impact on global culture.

Moreover, ADIBF 2025 celebrates Ibn Sina as its Focus Personality, marking the 1,000-year anniversary of his book The Canon of Medicine, and highlighting his legacy as one of the scientists that contributed most to humanity's advancement. It also features One Thousand and One Nights as Book of the World, underlining its timeless, cross-cultural, and enduring influence.

Initiatives

The fair welcomes 20 countries participating for the first time. It also introduces the 'On the Path of Knowledge' initiative, honours pioneers of Arab publishing, and welcomes prominent writers, thinkers, publishers, and content creators from the Arab region and the world to present various activities under five themes: Society, Fantasy, Sustainability, Arab Sciences, and Artificial Intelligence & Innovation. The exhibition also hosts the Poetry Majlis, which celebrates diverse poetic experiences with prominent poets, authors, and experts for 10 days.

Additionally, ADIBF 2025 hosts the third season of Podcast from Abu Dhabi, presenting high-quality content that discusses the evolving literary scene, while launching its inaugural 'Digitising Creativity' conference, which explores where AI and art intersect and how emerging technologies affect content creation.

Visitors can enjoy arts, entertainment, photography, and the World's Cuisine experience, while children and youth can join workshops that blend learning and fun, with scientific and creative activities that develop their skills and

strengthen their connection to their cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, the Under the Ghaf's Shade experience offers readings from selected books, followed by book signings with guest authors, whereas the Business Lounge connects publishers and content creators to encourage collaboration in the industry.

Furthermore, the ADIBF Professional Programme offers a platform for supporting the publishing and creative industries, embracing the latest trends including AI and digital technologies. Meanwhile, the Digital Square offers activities and initiatives aimed at developing the publishing sector.

The ADIBF will launch initiatives to promote reading and creativity, and support the Arabic language, in line with the UAE and Abu Dhabi's vision to nurture emerging literary talent, enrich the Arabic library, and build a community of avid readers, capable of producing Arabic content for the digital era.

His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, visited the 29th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair, held under the theme "Cultural Diversity: A Treasure of Civilisations", at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

During his visit, last Thursday, His Highness signed his most recent historical publication, The Portuguese in the Sea of Oman: Annals of History 1497 CE - 1757 CE, published by Al Qasimi Publications.

The Ruler of Sharjah was accompanied by a distinguished delegation including: Sheikhha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, Chairperson of the Sharjah Book Authority, His Excellency Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, His Excellency Mohammed bin Nekhaira Al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Owais, Chairman of the Department of Culture, Ahmed bin Rakkad Al Ameri, CEO of the Sharjah Book Authority, Mohammed Obaid Al Zaabi, Head of the Department of Protocol and Hospitality, Mohamed Hassan Khalaf, Director General of Sharjah Broadcasting Authority, and Tariq Saeed Allay, Director General of the Sharjah Government Media Bureau, along with several senior officials.



Juliette Binoche appears at the premiere of the film 'The Second Act' during the 77th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, on May 14, 2024. (AP)

Cannes 2025 jury members unveiled

Halle Berry, Jeremy Strong and Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia will be among the jury members at this year's Cannes Film Festival deciding the Palme d'Or winner.

Festival organizers on Monday unveiled the eight jury members who will join president Juliette Binoche at the 78th edition of the French film festival next month. The other jurors are Italian actor Alba Rohrwacher, Korean filmmaker Hong Sang-soo, Congolese director Diedo Hamadi, Mexican filmmaker Carlos Reygadas and French-Moroccan writer Leila Slimani.

Many of the jurors have previous experience at Cannes. Last

year, Kapadia became the first Indian filmmaker in the festival's prestigious competition lineup in 30 years with "All We Imagine As Light." Last year's festival also featured "The Apprentice," which starred Strong, though he didn't attend because he was performing on Broadway.

The Cannes Film Festival runs May 13-24. Among the films vying for the Palme d'Or are Wes Anderson's "The Phoenician Scheme," Ari Aster's "Eddington," Joachim Trierer's "Sentimental Value," Kelly Reichardt's "The Mastermind," Richard Linklater's "Nouvelle Vague" and Lynne Ramsay's "Die, My Love." (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: An admired and longtime poet whose subjects range from school integration to the memories of Holocaust survivors has won a \$100,000 prize given for "exceptional talent."

Poets & Writers announced Monday that **Cyrus Cassells** is this year's winner of the Jackson Poetry Prize, which was established in 2007 and has been previously awarded to Joy Harjo, Sonia Sanchez and Carl Phillips among others. A former Texas poet laureate, Cassells has published 11 books, including "More Than Peace and Cypresses," "Soul Make a Path Through Shouting" and the compilation "Everything in Life is Resurrection."

"In a world that is increasingly unstable, the brave compassion of these poems, both profound and hard



Cassells

Pregnant women face growing risks amid Israel’s blockade

Pregnancy complications and malnutrition worsen in Gaza

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip, April 30, (AP): In the ruins of Gaza, decimated by Israel’s 18-month-old military campaign, thousands of pregnant women are malnourished. Miscarriages are rising. More babies are born prematurely, some dying because wrecked and overwhelmed hospitals can’t care for them.

The risks for Palestinian women and their babies have worsened since March 2, when Israel cut off all food, medicine and supplies for Gaza’s more than 2 million people.

Meat, fruits and vegetables are practically nonexistent. Aid groups are running out of food to distribute. Clean water is difficult to find. Pregnant women are among the hundreds of thousands who trudge for miles to find new shelters after repeated Israeli evacuation orders. Many live in tents or overcrowded schools amid sewage and garbage.

Up to 20% of Gaza’s estimated 55,000 pregnant women are malnourished, and half face high-risk pregnancies, according to the United Nations Population Fund, or UNFPA.

In February and March, at least 20% of newborns were born prematurely or suffering from complications or malnutrition.

With the population displaced and under bombardment, comprehensive miscarriage and stillbirth figures are



Huda Kabaja, 26, holds her 3-week-old daughter while receiving medication for malnutrition at the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) clinic in Muwasi, near Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, April 9. (AP)

impossible to obtain. But records at Khan Younis’ Nasser Hospital show miscarriages in January and February were double the same period in 2023.

Dr. Yasmine Shnina, a Doctors Without Borders supervisor of midwives at Nasser Hospital, documented 40 miscarriages a week in recent weeks. She has recorded five women a month dying in childbirth, compared with around two a year before the war.

A U.N. report in March said the blockade and violence were causing harm on an “unprecedented scale” to pregnant women and new mothers. It warned of “irreversible long-term effects” on Palestinians’ mental and reproductive health.

It’s not just about quantity of food, said Rosalie Bollen, of UNICEF, “it’s also about nutritional diversity, the fact that they have been living in very dire,

unsanitary conditions, sleeping on the ground, sleeping in the cold and just being stuck in this permanent state of very toxic stress.”

Only nine of the 14 hospitals providing maternal health services before the war still partially function, according to UNFPA.

Some clinics have shut down or moved because of Israeli military operations. With supplies limited, medical facilities have to prioritize critical cases.

So women often can’t get screenings that catch problems early in pregnancy, said Katy Brown, of Doctors Without Borders-Spain.

That leads to complications. A quarter of the nearly 130 births a day in February and March required surgical deliveries, UNFPA says.

Nasser Hospital has the biggest and best equipped maternity ward in Gaza. Its facilities aren’t enough.

Over half the medicines for maternal and newborn care have run out, including ones that control bleeding during birth, the Health Ministry says.

Up to 15 premature babies at a time need respirators, but Nasser Hospital has only two CPAP machines to keep preemies breathing. Some are put on adult respirators, often leading to death, said Dr. Ahmed al-Farra, the head of the maternity and pediatrics department.

Twenty CPAP machines languish outside Gaza, barred from entry, along with 54 ultrasounds, nine incubators and midwifery kits, according to the U.N.

Dangerous infections are rampant in mothers after giving birth and in their newborns, al-Farra said. Their immunity is weakened by hunger; hygiene is impossible for lack of cleaning supplies; antibiotics are running low.

Infection

Yasmine Zakout was rushed to Nasser Hospital in early April after giving birth prematurely to twin girls. One girl died within days, and her sister died last week, both from sepsis.

Al-Farra said the past 18 months he has treated 50 children with necrotizing pneumonia, a severe infection that kills lung tissue. In half of them, he had to remove part of their lungs. Four died. Before the war, he used to see maybe one case a year.

Israel has leveled much of Gaza with its bombardment and ground offensives, vowing to destroy Hamas after its Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel. It has killed over 51,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, whose count does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

In the Oct. 7 attack, militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians,

and abducted 251. They still hold 59 hostages after most were released in ceasefire deals.

Israel imposed the blockade on March 2, then shattered a two-month ceasefire by resuming military operations March 18. It said both steps aim to pressure Hamas into releasing hostages. Rights groups call the blockade a “starvation tactic” endangering the entire population and a potential war crime.

From the start of her pregnancy last fall, 24-year-old Yasmine Siam struggled to get proper nutrition. She ate mostly canned food. The last time she had meat was on Feb. 28.

With food even scarcer under the blockade, she turned to charity kitchens distributing meals of plain rice or pasta. She was losing weight.

She told The Associated Press of the many stresses wearing at her. Living in a tent camp along with hundreds of thousands of others outside Khan Younis was dirty and uncomfortable. She couldn’t sleep because of Israeli bombardment. She constantly feared being killed.

She always felt weak. The doctors told her to eat more.

One night in early April, pain shot through her. She walked to the nearest mobile clinic, then had to take a donkey cart for miles to Nasser Hospital, shaken by the bumpy, bombed-out roads.

Health experts raise concerns

Florida to ban fluoride in public water

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., April 30, (AP): Florida is poised to become the second state to ban fluoride in public drinking water, over the concerns of dentists and public health advocates who say the mineral is a safe, effective way to protect people of all ages from developing cavities.

Florida lawmakers gave final approval to the bill Tuesday after Utah became the first state to pass a ban last month. The Republican-led states are following a push led by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is setting the gears of government in motion to stop fluoridating water.

The Florida measure now goes to the desk of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, whose administration has advocated against the fluoridation of community water systems, arguing high levels could pose a risk to children’s intellectual development.

Fluoride strengthens teeth by replacing minerals lost during normal wear and tear, according to the US Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention. The addition of low levels of fluoride to drinking water is considered among the greatest public health achievements of the last century.

“As dentists, we see the direct consequences fluoride removal has on our patients and it’s a real tragedy when policymakers’ decisions hurt vulnerable kids and adults in the long term,” Brett Kessler, president of the American Dental Association, said in a statement earlier this month. “Blindly calling for a ban on fluoridated water hurts people, costs money, and will ultimately harm our economy.”

While Florida’s bill doesn’t specifically reference fluoride, it will require the mineral and some other additives be removed from water sources across the state, said bill sponsor Republican state Rep. Kaylee Tuck.

“Anything that relates to water quality, removing contaminants, things like that, we’re not touching that,” Tuck said. “It’s anything that has to do with health.

So fluoride, vitamins, whatever else it is.”

Some local officials in Florida have already voted to remove the mineral from their community water systems, ahead of state lawmakers’ push to ban fluoride.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said Tuesday she is “deeply disappointed” by the passage of the bill, adding that it disregards “the overwhelming consensus of dentists, doctors and medical experts and will end a practice that has been in place for decades to protect our health.”

Levine Cava said that ending fluoridation, which is a safe and cost-effective way to prevent tooth decay, will have “long-lasting health consequences, especially for our most vulnerable families.”

The mayor said the decision should be left to local communities.

About one-third of community water systems, serving more than 60% of the U.S. population, fluoridated their water, according to a 2022 analysis by the CDC.

US mulls first-ever PFAS drinking water limits

PFAS in drinking water linked to kidney cancer and other diseases

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): In pain so bad he couldn’t stand, Chris Meek was rushed to the hospital with a life-threatening ruptured gallbladder. When he emerged from surgery, he learned he had kidney cancer that thankfully hadn’t yet spread.

Meek, a social studies teacher in Wilmington, North Carolina, was 47 at the time. But he remained confused for years about why, as someone seemingly not at risk, he had gotten cancer until Emily Donovan, a parent of students at his school, gave a guest talk about high levels of harmful forever chemicals known as PFAS in North Carolina’s environment. When Donovan mentioned kidney cancer, the possible cause of Meek’s diagnosis finally clicked.

Until then, Meek said, he “had no idea what PFAS was.”

Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency set the first federal drinking water limits for PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, finding they increased the risk of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and babies being born with low birth weight.

In a decision with consequences for tens of millions of Americans, the Trump administration is expected to soon say whether it intends to stand by those strict standards and defend the



Chris Meek, who survived cancer he suspects was caused by forever chemicals known as PFAS in drinking water, stands in front of the Cape Fear River in Wilmington, N.C., Monday, April 28. (AP)

limits against a water utility industry challenge in federal court.

In North Carolina, runoff from a Chemours plant contaminated the Cape Fear River, creating a crisis for cities like Wilmington that use it for drinking water. Amid public outcry, Wilmington effectively eliminated it from tap water.

Other U.S. communities - often

near military bases or industrial sites - did the same when test results were frightening and public pressure, local leadership or state law forced PFAS-laden wells offline or prompted installation of expensive filtering systems, according to Mark White, drinking water global practice leader at the engineering firm CDM Smith.

10 states have active outbreaks

Measles cases in the US soar to nearly 900

NEW YORK, April 30, (AP): With one-fifth of states seeing active measles outbreaks, the US is nearing 900 cases, according to figures posted Friday by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC’s confirmed measles cases count is 884, triple the amount seen in all of 2024. The now three-month-long outbreak in Texas accounts for the vast majority of cases, with 663 confirmed as of Tuesday. The outbreak has also spread to New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Two unvaccinated elementary school-aged children died from measles-related illnesses in the epicenter in West Texas, and an adult in New Mexico who was not vaccinated died of a measles-related illness.

Other states with active outbreaks - defined as three or more cases - include Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

North America has two other ongoing outbreaks. One in Ontario, Canada, has resulted in 1,020 cases from mid-October through Wednesday. And as of Tuesday, the Mexican state of Chihuahua state had 761 measles cases and one death, according to data from the state health ministry. The World Health Organization has said cases in Mexico are linked to the Texas outbreak.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus that’s airborne and spreads easily when an infected person breathes,



A no-contact thermometer, stethoscope and a calendar are seen at the Andrews County Health Department measles clinic, Tuesday, April 8, in Andrews, Texas. (AP)

sneezes or coughs. It is preventable through vaccines, and has been considered eliminated from the US since 2000.

As the virus takes hold in other US communities with low vaccination rates, health experts fear the virus that the spread could stretch on for a year.

Building with zinc cuts carbon emissions

DURHAM, N.C., April 30, (AP): Using zinc to build a single home prevents more than 50 tonnes in carbon emissions, and if just ten percent of new homes in North America were built using zinc, more than 40 million tonnes in carbon emissions would be prevented. These impressive numbers demonstrating zinc’s success story as an agent of decarbonization are the first results of the International Zinc Association’s new Zinc Enables Decarbonization (ZED) initiative, a partnership between the International Zinc Associ-

ation and Environmental Economist Benjamin Cox, Program Director of the Bradshaw Research Institute for Minerals and Mining at the University of British Columbia.

The ZED program quantifies zinc’s impact with steel on decreasing lifetime costs, decreasing carbon emissions, and increasing safety in housing, infrastructure, energy and transportation. The first phase has assessed the value in residential construction, where zinc is used to coat and protect the rebar used in the reinforced concrete of a home’s foundation and in

the sheeting of a metal roof. A zinc coating prevents corrosion and ensures longevity.

“Zinc plays a transformative role in building stronger, more sustainable communities, particularly in the decarbonization of residential buildings,” said Andrew Green, Executive Director of the International Zinc Association. “From the foundation to the rooftop, zinc enables long-lasting, low-maintenance solutions that enhance a home’s durability and environmental performance.”

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ICU director testifies in court

Maradona allowed to order hamburgers in days after surgery

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, April 30, (AP): Diego Maradona was allowed to order unhealthy food including hamburgers during recovery from surgery, the director of the clinic’s intensive care unit testified Tuesday at the trial of seven health professionals charged with negligence in the soccer star’s death.

Fernando Villarejo, who worked at the Olivos Clinic on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, told the court he felt like a pawn between the “king and the queen,” referring to neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque and psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov, as they determined Maradona’s post-surgery care in November 2020.

“Anything was allowed inside the room,” Villarejo testified. “It was embarrassing what happened there. I take responsibility.”

Maradona had surgery for a hematoma that formed between his skull and brain and stayed in intensive care at the Olivos Clinic between Nov. 4-11.

Luque and Cosachov proposed that Maradona’s care continue in a private home in the town of Tigre, almost 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the capital.

Maradona, who led Argentina to the World Cup title

in 1986, died on Nov. 25, 2020 while in home care. He was 60.

Villarejo said that Maradona underwent surgery without any preoperative examinations and that a few days after the surgery, Luque ordered him to sedate Maradona to “try to detoxify” him from his drinking habits and because he was an unmanageable patient.

“I didn’t agree - it wasn’t the right place. I told Luque all this,” said the director of the clinic’s intensive care unit, who said that he recorded all of it in the medical records.

He added that Maradona’s family agreed to the sedation “out of ignorance or because they trusted (his father’s people).”

Villarejo said that he agreed with the cardiologist who testified last week that the former national team captain should have recovered in a rehabilitation clinic rather than in a private home.

Luque was Maradona’s personal physician for the last four years of his life, while Cosachov prescribed medication that Maradona took until the time of his death.



Kolkata Knight Riders' Sunil Narine plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi, India.(AP)

All-rounder Narine leads Kolkata to 14-run victory over Capitals

Defending champion stays alive in IPL

NEW DELHI, April 30, (AP): Sunil Narine’s all-round performance kept defending champion Kolkata Knight Riders alive in the Indian Premier League with a 14-run victory over Delhi Capitals.

Narine made a brisk 27 up front to set up a platform for Kolkata’s total of 204-9 after Delhi captain Axar Patel won the toss and elected to field.

Narine, an experienced West Indies all-rounder, then grabbed 3-29 and ran out Lokesh Rahul to restrict Delhi to 190-9 - its third defeat in four home games this season.

Delhi stayed at No. 4 with 12 points while Kolkata remained in contention for playoffs with nine points after 10 league games.

Faf du Plessis top-scored with 62 off 45 and had pushed Delhi to 136-3 when he combined in a 76-run partnership with Patel, who made a quickfire 43 off 23 balls.

Patel batted with lot of aggression despite sustaining a hand injury during Kolkata’s innings as he smashed Narine for three sixes and kept Delhi in the



Kolkata Knight Riders' Vaibhav Arora throws the ball after fielding during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders at Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi, India.(AP)

driving seat.

But Narine first had the wickets of Patel and Tristan Stubbs in the 14th over and then du Plessis lofted the spinner to deep mid-wicket in the 16th over which brought Kolkata back into the game.

Impact player Ashutosh Sharma

Vipraj Nigam’s late countercharge gave Delhi a glimmer of hope before Andre Russell clean bowled him in the final over for 38 off 19 balls as Kolkata squeezed the home team in the final five overs.

Narine and Gurbaz featured in Kolkata’s highest opening partnership of the season when they smacked 48 runs of the first three overs with Sri Lankan fast bowler Dushmanta Chameera conceding 25 runs in one over.

Starc had Gurbaz (26 off 12 balls) caught behind off a fullish delivery outside the off stump and Narine was out plumb leg before wicket when he tried to slog sweep leg-spinner Nigam’s quickish leg-break soon after the power play.

Patel then dried up the runs and got the wickets of captain Ajinkya Rahane (26) and Venkatesh Iyer (7) as Kolkata slipped to 113-4 in the 10th over.

Top-scorer Angkrish Raghuvanshi (44) and Rinku Singh (36) then rebuilt the innings with a 61-run partnership before both fell in the death overs.

Kolkata lost three wickets in Starc’s final over of the innings when the Australian (3-43) claimed two wickets and Russell was run out after he tried to regain the strike.

Royals batting coach Vikram Rathore knew what Suryavanshi was capable of doing at top level cricket after watching him practice a few months ago, and quickly figured it was important to nurture him.

“To do it in front of this kind of crowd and in a situation like this against a really, really good bowling attack, I think it was really special and a lot of credit to him,” Rathore said. “He has a solid head on his shoulders. Today was an extraordinary innings.”

Rathore was careful, though, not to pile too much pressure on his young star by comparing him with the great Sachin Tendulkar.

“It’s too early to say that and it’s unfair I think on the kid to compare him to Sachin Tendulkar,” he told the post-game news conference. “As I said he’s a new Vaibhav Suryavanshi. He’s a special kid and he’s a special talent. If he keeps working hard he’ll have a special



Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Suryavanshi celebrates after scoring a century during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans at Saiwam Singh Stadium in Jaipur, India. (AP)

place in Indian cricket I’m sure.”

Tendulkar, who transformed from teenage talent into an iconic figure and the leading international scorer in the sport, was impressed with Suryavanshi’s innings. The cricket fraternity, including stars from other IPL franchises, praised the talent of the youngest player to score a century in a professional T20 league, and the second-fastest in the history of the IPL.

“Witnessed this carnage of an innings by this youngster. Absolutely insane!” Suryakumar Yadav of Mumbai Indians posted on X.

Former India batter Yuvraj Singh was impressed with the fearless attitude of Suryavanshi.

“What were you doing at 14? This kid is taking on the best bowlers in the world without blinking an eyelid!” Yuvraj posted to his 6.4 million followers on X. “Vaibhav Suryavanshi -- remember the name! Playing with a fearless attitude Proud to see the next generation shine!”

With the likes of Rahul Dravid and Rathore around him at Rajasthan, Suryavanshi could easily be fast tracked into international cricket.

IPL commentator and ex-West Indies international cricket Ian Bishop said Suryavanshi needs to be surrounded by the right people so that he doesn’t fade out.

“It’s unprecedented, 14 years old. This is new territory,” Bishop said. “The scrutiny on him when he plays the next game, and if he doesn’t score any runs, you know, there are going to be detractors out there ... this kid is going to be tested.”

‘Usyk conned the referee in first bout’

LONDON, April 30, (AP): Daniel Dubois’ trainer has accused Oleksandr Usyk of conning the referee the first time the two heavyweights squared off.

Usyk and Dubois will fight for the undisputed heavyweight championship on July 19 at Wembley Stadium in a rematch of their August 2023 bout - won by Usyk in a ninth-round stoppage - that included a controversial low blow.

It was halted in the fifth round for what the referee ruled a low blow by Dubois that sent Usyk to the canvas, with replays showing the punch hitting around the Ukrainian’s belt. It was not given as a knockdown, no points were deducted from Dubois, and Usyk was given time to recover.

“You should be given an Oscar for the performance,” Don Charles,

Dubois’ trainer, said at a news conference Tuesday. “You conned the referee, you conned us, you conned the boxing world.”

The 38-year-old Usyk holds the WBA, WBC and WBO belts and is undefeated as a pro. Dubois, a 27-year-old London native, is the IBF champion.

The low blow remained the talking point Tuesday, when Usyk got up and asked Dubois to sign photos that allegedly showed punches below the belt from their first fight. Dubois smiled and complied.

“Why don’t you print one of those .. of the actual shot that had you trembling,” Charles said.

Usyk was unfazed by the criticism. “You must teach your fighter to punch clean. But I win this fight,” he said.

Rüdiger gets 6-game ban for conduct toward referee

MADRID, April 30, (AP): Real Madrid defender Antonio Rüdiger was handed a six-game ban Tuesday for his conduct toward a referee during the team’s loss to Barcelona in the Copa del Rey final.

Rüdiger shouted at the referee and seemed to throw a small bag of ice during extra time in Madrid’s 3-2 loss to Barcelona on Saturday.

The disciplinary committee of the Spanish football federation said Rüdiger’s ban was for “minor violence”

toward the officials.

Another Madrid player, Lucas Vazquez, was handed a two-match suspension because of his protest toward the match officials.

Rüdiger has since apologized for his behavior but the incident prompted former Germany player Dietmar Hamann to call Sunday for the defender to be left out of Germany’s squad for the Nations League final four in June.

The 32-year-old Rüdiger successfully underwent surgery on a meniscus

tear in his left knee on Tuesday and will begin “his recovery process shortly.” The club did not give a timeline for his return but the recovery is expected to take several weeks.

Rüdiger said surgery was “unavoidable” after playing through “severe pain.”

“Now I’m finally pain-free again, and the surgery was a success,” he said on Instagram in a post that included photos of him in the hospital after the surgery, one in bed and another in a

wheelchair while holding crutches.

“I want to be able to play again as soon as possible as two big tournaments with the Nations League and the Club World Cup are in front of me, but I have to look from week to week now and we will see. I will do everything I can to make it happen.”

Germany plays Portugal in the Nations League semifinals in Munich on June 4. Madrid’s first game at the Club World Cup in the United States is on June 18.

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Wrexham to keep the party going with end-of-season fan event

Bournemouth’s Evanilson has 3-match ban overturned after red card

LONDON, April 30, (AP): Bournemouth striker Evanilson had a three-match ban overturned on Wednesday following his red card against Manchester United in the Premier League.

The Brazilian was dismissed in the 70th minute of the 1-1 draw with United at the Vitality Stadium on Sunday following a challenge on Noussair Mazraoui.

The suspension was removed after a successful claim of wrongful dismissal by Bournemouth, with Evanilson appearing to slip before taking out Mazraoui.

Evanilson will now be available to face Arsenal on Saturday, as well as for games against Aston Villa and Manchester City.

“An independent regulatory commission has removed Evanilson’s three-match ban following a successful claim of wrongful dismissal,” read a statement from the Football Association.

“The AFC Bournemouth forward was sent off during the Premier League fixture against Manchester United on Sunday, 27 April, for serious foul play.”

Evanilson was originally shown a yellow card by referee Peter Banks for his foul on Mazraoui. Following an intervention from the video assistant referee, the punishment was upgraded to red after Banks watched replays of the incident on a pitch-side monitor.

United scored a stoppage-time equalizer to deny 10-man Bournemouth victory.

With four games to play, Bournemouth is in 10th place - a point adrift of both Fulham and Brighton as they chase European qualification.

“I’m frustrated, for us it’s two points that are massive, big consequences,” Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola said after the United match regarding Evanilson’s dismissal.

“Now the repercussions are bigger because you don’t have time to recover these points and it’s two points that for us are very costly.”

Wrexham is keeping the party going after sealing a third-straight promotion.

The club, owned by actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenney, will be playing in the second tier of English soccer next season - just one level below the Premier League. It is a remarkable rise for a team that was languishing in non-league before being bought by the Hollywood pair in 2021.

And such is the demand from fans to celebrate the latest success that Wrexham is staging a ticket-only end-of-year awards party at its Racecourse Ground stadium on Sunday.

Nearly 13,000 fans turned up for the 3-0 win against Charlton on Saturday that saw Wrexham win promotion as runner-up in League One.

The club has opted against an open-top bus parade through the city’s streets, given that it didn’t go up as champion. But fans can still celebrate with the players at the stadium for the season-ending awards.

The player of the year and young player of the will be named at the event.

Wrexham did not say if Reynolds or McElhenney - who regularly attend games - would be at the event.

Celtics close out Magic as Pistons stay alive



Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown (7) battles for a loose ball against Orlando Magic center Wendell Carter Jr. (34) during the first half in game 5 of a first-round NBA playoff basketball series in Boston. (AP)



Indiana Pacers guard Tyrese Haliburton (0) shoots the game winning basket over Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo, left, and guard Gary Trent Jr., right, during overtime in Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Indianapolis. (AP)

Pacers eliminate Bucks from playoffs, Nuggets take series lead

BOSTON, April 30, (AP): Jayson Tatum had 35 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds, and Boston pulled away after Magic star Paolo Banchero went to the bench with five fouls, beating Orlando 120-89 in Game 5 of their first-round playoff series to advance to the Eastern Conference semifinals.

The defending NBA champions Celtics will play either the New York Knicks or Detroit Pistons in the second round. The Knicks lead their series 3-2 despite falling 106-103 earlier Tuesday in New York. Franz Wagner scored 25 points, Banchero had 19 and Wendell Carter Jr. had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the Magic, who have not won a playoff series since Dwight Howard, Vince Carter and coach Stan Van Gundy led them to the Eastern Conference finals in 2010.

The NBA's most prolific 3-point shooting team ever, Boston went the entire first half without making a 3 - a first in almost four years - and trailed by nine. Orlando still led 51-47 early in the third quarter when Banchero picked up his fourth foul; just 79 seconds later, he picked up his fifth, a call that sent an apoplectic coach Jamahl Mosley to the officials, demanding a review.

The replay showed Banchero stepped into Jaylen Brown as he shot, and the Magic forward went to the bench, where he stayed for the rest of the quarter. In that time, Boston scored 31 of the next 40 points to open an 83-62 lead.

Pacers 119, Bucks 118

In Indianapolis, Tyrese Haliburton and the Indiana Pacers stole one from the Milwaukee Bucks. Indiana forced two turnovers in the final 29 seconds of overtime, and Haliburton blew past Giannis Antetokounmpo for the go-ahead layup with 1.3 seconds left to give the Pacers a 119-118 victory and a 4-1 series win. The Pacers closed the game with an 8-0 run over the final 40 seconds of OT to eliminate the Bucks in the first round for the second straight season. They will face top-seeded Cleveland in the Eastern Conference semifinals. Haliburton had 26 points and 10 assists as he improved to 9-0 in home playoff games. This chippy playoff series ended fittingly with a shoving match between the teams at midcourt. Two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo tried to will the short-handed Bucks to victory, finishing with 30 points, 20 rebounds and 13 assists, and Gary Trent Jr. made eight 3-pointers and scored 33 points for Milwaukee.

Pistons 106, Knicks 103

In New York, Cade Cunningham had 24 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and Detroit stayed alive in their first postseason appearance since 2019 by beating New York in Game 5 of their first-round series. Ausar Thompson added 22 points and Tobias Harris had 17 for the Pistons, who will have a chance to even things up Thursday night at home in Game 6. If they win that, the deciding game would be back at Madison Square Garden on Saturday.

Detroit, though, has lost an NBA record-tying nine straight home games since 2008. But the Pistons seem comfortable in New York, where they were 2-0 in the regular season and now 2-1 in this series, including their Game 2 victory that snapped their 15-game postseason losing streak, the longest in NBA history. OG Anunoby scored 19 points for the Knicks, who were trying to reach the Eastern Conference semifinals for the third straight season. Karl-Anthony Towns and Mikal Bridges each had 17, but Jalen Brunson had his worst game of the postseason with 16 points on 4-for-16 shooting.

Nuggets 131, Clippers 115

In Denver, Jamal Murray erupted for 43 points and Russell Westbrook chipped in 21 in his return from a foot injury, sparking the Nuggets' win over Los Angeles that gave Denver a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series. The Nuggets also got 23 from Game 4 hero Aaron Gordon and Nikola Jokic's 21st career playoff triple-double (18 points, 10 rebounds, 12 assists). Again, Denver took a 22-point lead early in the fourth quarter only to watch the Clippers go on a furious run, like they did in Game 4 when they erased their entire deficit only to lose 101-99 when Gordon's buzzer-beater for the first walk-off dunk in NBA playoff history. This time, the Clippers went on a 17-4 run to cut their deficit to single digits at 116-107, but the Nuggets fended off another frenetic finish by going on an 11-0 run with Murray scoring six and Gordon five to compel Clippers coach Tyronn Lue to empty his bench.

West Asian Laser-Run Cup kicks off in Kuwait

KUWAIT, April 30, (KUNA): The West Asian Laser-Run Cup will begin Thursday, May 1, under the patronage of Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and State Minister for Youth Affairs. This one-day tournament will be hosted at Al-Nasr Sports Club's Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in Kuwait. In a statement to KUNA, Nasser Al-Waleed, President of the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation (KMPPF) and Vice President of the West Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation (WAMPC), highlighted that the Laser-Run event, which combines running and laser shooting, is a major component of modern pentathlon. Al-Waleed shared that the upcoming West Asian Laser-Run Cup will feature 66 male and female athletes from seven WAMPC member nations, marking the first-ever tournament of the confederation, which



KUNA photo
Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation (KMPPF)'s President and West Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation (WAMPC)'s Vice President Nasser Al-Waleed. The confederation, he added, aims to support the ambitions of West Asian countries in reaching international platforms.

The closing ceremony of the tournament will take place at the Movenpick Hotel in the Free Zone, with WAMPC's Board of Directors, participating delegations, sponsors, and KMPPF members in attendance. Al-Waleed expressed gratitude to the Information Minister for his generous sponsorship, to the Public Authority for Sport's Chief for facilitating all hosting procedures, and to the President and members of the Kuwait Olympic Committee for their ongoing support of the Kuwaiti modern pentathlon team. It is important to note that Laser-Run is the fifth and final discipline of modern pentathlon, following fencing, swimming, steeplechase, and combined running and laser shooting. In Laser-Run, athletes use laser guns to target electronic sensors, hitting five accurate shots to allow them to complete a designated running course, which varies in distance for different age groups.

Qadsia takes early lead in series

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Qadsia Club's first basketball team triumphed over Al-Qurain with a 90-76 victory in their third- and fourth-place playoff match at the Basketball Association Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex. As per the tournament rules, Qadsia and Al-Qurain will compete in a series of three playoff matches, with the first team to win two matches emerging victorious. The second match is scheduled for tomorrow evening, Friday. The Yellows dominated the game, avenging their earlier defeat by Al-Qurain in the second half of the league. Qadsia's coach, Javier Munoz, effectively managed the game, capitalizing on his players' strong performances and Al-Qurain's declining form. Having secured the first match, Munoz is now focused on clinching second place with a win in tomorrow's match.



Al-Qadsia player dunks over an opponent.

Gauff advances to semifinals

Swiatek recovers from 0-6 loss in first set to beat Keys in 'weirdest' match in Madrid quarterfinals

MADRID, April 30, (AP): Iga Swiatek survived "one of the weirdest matches" after losing the first six games and recovering to defeat Madison Keys 0-6, 6-3, 6-2 and stay on track to defend her title at the Madrid Open on Wednesday. Coco Gauff also advanced to the semifinals, beating teenager Mirra Andreeva in straight sets. Swiatek was overpowered by Keys early in their quarterfinal but eventually found a way to rally past the fifth-ranked American on center court. "It was one of the weirdest matches I played," the second-ranked Swiatek said. "Maddie was playing just perfectly at the beginning and I wasn't really proactive with anything. I let Maddie do more mistakes by just putting the ball



United States' Coco Gauff returns the ball against Belinda Bencic of Switzerland during the Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

back and the momentum changed." Swiatek said it didn't feel good to go down 0-6 at the start of the game, adding that it was "weird." "At least it was fast, that's the only positive thing," she said. "I just stayed in there. Obviously it wasn't easy." It was the first meeting between the two since Swiatek squandered a match point in the semifinals of the Australian Open that was won by Keys. Swiatek is trying to reach her third straight Madrid final. Swiatek hasn't gone past the semifinals at any tournament since last year's French Open. Swiatek will next face fourth-ranked Gauff, who got past seventh-ranked Mirra Andreeva 7-5, 6-1. The 21-year-old Gauff needed

just 92 minutes to earn the win against Andreeva, who turned 18 on Tuesday. Both Gauff and Andreeva had been able to finish their matches in the previous round just before play was paused because of the major blackout that brought Spain and Portugal to a standstill on Monday. More than 20 matches had to be postponed at the Caja Magica tennis complex. Matteo Arnaldo backed up his victory over Novak Djokovic in the second round of the men's draw by defeating Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 7-5 to reach the quarterfinals of an ATP 1000 tournament for the second time. Arnaldi now has three consecutive wins against top 20 opponents for the first time in his career.

Sinner considered taking a break from tennis

ROME, April 30, (AP): Jannik Sinner considered taking an extended break from tennis earlier this year before he accepted a three-month ban in a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency. Asked during an interview with Italian state TV RAI if he ever thought about dropping everything, the top-ranked Sinner replied, "Yes. "I remember before the Australian Open this year, it wasn't a very happy time," Sinner added. "I didn't really feel comfortable in the locker room, where we were eating. Players were looking at me differently. I said to myself, 'Maybe I need to take some time off after Australia.' I didn't want (the ban) though." Sinner won his second straight Australian Open title in January. It wasn't until February that the settlement was made in the doping case, after WADA appealed a decision last year by the International Tennis Integrity Agency to fully exonerate Sinner for what it deemed to be an accidental contamination by a

banned anabolic steroid in March, 2024. "I had a tough time accepting these three months. Because I knew that I didn't do anything wrong. So why do I have to pay this price?" Sinner said. "But then we discussed it with my lawyer and about what could have happened in the worst-case scenario and so we decided to accept it." The handling of Sinner's case had raised questions about double standards. The positive tests weren't publicly revealed until August because Sinner successfully appealed against being provisionally banned from playing. He then won the U.S. Open in September. The settlement also raised questions, since it conveniently allows Sinner to return next week at the Italian Open - his home tournament - and not miss any Grand Slams. "The last year was definitely very stressful," Sinner said in the interview, which was broadcast late Tuesday. "But we were still able to obtain in-

credible results. We started this year really well, too. Then what happened happened. At the start it was a bit strange to find myself in that situation. Also, a lot of things happened off the court that I didn't expect." Several top players suggested that Sinner was treated too lightly. "I don't even want to respond. Everyone is free to say what they want. For me, the important thing is that I know what happened," Sinner said. "I don't wish it upon anyone who is innocent to go through what I went through." Despite having played just one tournament this year, Sinner held on to his top ranking during his ban because No. 2 Alexander Zverev and No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz didn't win enough when he was out to overtake him. "I miss the competition," Sinner said. "I'm very happy that this period is done and I'm ready to play again."

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NEWS



Al Ahli players celebrate after they defeated Al Hilal in a AFC Champions League Elite semifinal soccer match at Alinma Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Sports

Al-Ahli ends 12-yr wait to reach Asian Champions League final



Al Ahli's Wenderson Galeno, right, fights for the ball with Al Hilal's Hamad Al-Tuhayfan during a semifinal match in the AFC Champions League Elite soccer tournament at Alinma Stadium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

Al-Hilal beaten in all-Saudi Arabian semifinal

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, April 30, (AP): Roberto Firmino and Ivan Toney scored as Al-Ahli beat Al-Hilal 3-1 to reach the final of the Asian Champions League.

The all-Saudi Arabian semifinal was played before more than 50,000 fans at King Abdullah Sports City stadium in Al-Ahli's home city.

"Al-Ahli was the better team," Al-Hilal coach Jorge Jesus said. "This was a game between two good teams and while we had some good periods

in the game, they outperformed us."

It took just nine minutes for Al-Ahli to open the scoring as Firmino, who joined the club from Liverpool in 2023, shot home from inside the area.

Just before the half-hour, ex-Manchester City forward Riyad Mahrez set up Toney for the England striker to make it 2-0.

Al-Hilal hit back after 42 minutes as Saudi Arabian international Salem Al-Dawsari scored his 10th goal of the tournament so far.

On the hour, Al-Hilal was reduced to 10 men as former Chelsea defender Kalidou Koulibaly was

shown a second yellow card.

There was still time for former Barcelona and AC Milan star Franck Kessie to see his penalty saved by Hilal's Moroccan goalkeeper Yassine Bounou.

In stoppage time, however, Firas Al-Buraikan made it 3-1 to seal a famous win for Al-Ahli and a first final appearance since 2012.

"It was a great night for us and our fans," Al-Ahli coach Matthias Jaissle said. "We are now just one step away from the title and all our focus is on that. We don't mind who we play, Al-Nassr or Kawasaki. We will be ready."

Dembele sinks Arsenal at Emirates Stadium

PSG takes major step toward 2nd Champions League final

LONDON, April 30, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain is leaving England on a high again and within touching distance of a second Champions League final.

Ousmane Dembele's early goal gave PSG a 1-0 win over Arsenal in the first leg of their semifinal, and only a couple of late misses prevented the advantage from growing bigger.

"It was a great night," PSG midfielder Vitinha said. "We could have scored more, but we are glad for 1-0 and will do everything in our power to go to the final."

Having already eliminated Premier League champion Liverpool and Aston Villa in the knockout stages, PSG outplayed Arsenal in a stadium where it lost 2-0 in the league phase in October.

This youthful PSG side has come a long way since then, and once again showed that it's a better team without superstar Kylian Mbappe, whose Real Madrid lost 3-0 at the Emirates Stadium in the quarterfinals.

Despite that recent history, PSG showed no hesitation in taking the game to Arsenal from the start. And Dembele opened the scoring in the fourth minute after he was left all alone in the area and was picked out by Khvicha Kvaratskhelia for a first-time finish that snuck in via the far post.

The goal came after 26 consecutive passes in the buildup, which stats provider Opta said was the most for PSG in a Champions League game since at least 2003-04.

"We showed the kind of team we are," PSG coach Luis Enrique said. "We tried to play our way and scored the goal early playing the way we play."

It was the hosts who looked affected by the moment, and the absence of suspended midfielder Thomas Partey, in their first Champions League semifinal since 2009.

They couldn't cope with PSG's pace in transition, and the visitors' lead easily could have been bigger after a dominant first half.

"They started quick with a goal, a nd they dominated the first 15-20 minutes,"



PSG's Desire Doue vies for the ball with Arsenal's Mikel Merino and Jakub Kiwior, right, during the Champions League semifinal first leg soccer match between Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain at Arsenal Stadium in London, England. (AP)

Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya said. "It's only halftime, we take positives."

Kvaratskhelia caused Arsenal problems throughout and had a penalty appeal turned down in the 17th minute and a shot saved by David Raya in the 26th.

Raya made a better save in the 31st to deny Desire Doue as PSG continually was the more threatening team.

At the other end, Gianluigi Donnarumma denied Arsenal an equalizer on the stroke of halftime with a one-handed save to keep out a shot from Gabriel Martinelli.

With former Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger looking on in the stands, the Gunners improved in the second half.

Mikel Merino thought he had equalized shortly after the break when he headed in a free kick from Declan Rice, but it was disallowed for offside after a lengthy VAR check.

Donnarumma, who played a key part in the wins over Liverpool and Aston Villa, then had to make another low one-handed finger-tip save to steer Leandro

Trossard's shot wide after a quick counter in the 56th, but that was as close as Arsenal came to an equalizer.

"That's the work of a goalkeeper, no? Save the team," Luis Enrique said. "They work every day for that."

PSG substitutes Bradley Barcola and Goncalo Ramos both had chances to double the lead late on when clear through on goal. But Barcola shot narrowly wide and Ramos rattled the crossbar to keep Arsenal close going into the second leg in Paris next week.

"We have to go to Paris and win the game. We are more than capable of doing it," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "If you want to be in the Champions League final, you have to do something special. And we are going to need to do something special in Paris."

Both teams are looking for their first Champions League title and second final. PSG lost to Borussia Dortmund at this stage last year. The French side lost to Bayern Munich in its only Champions League final in 2020, while Arsenal was runner-up to Barcelona in 2006.

Kuwait ready to host Arab Handball Championship

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Mishaal Al-Qabandi, Member of the Board of Directors of the Handball Federation and Head of the Media Committee, has confirmed Kuwait's readiness to host the upcoming Arab Handball Championship, set to take place at the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Sports Complex from May 5 to 11. The tournament will coincide with the International Handball Federation Week.

A total of nine teams will compete in the Arab Championship, divided into three groups: Kuwait (host), Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE.

Al-Qabandi highlighted that the Handball Federation has conducted several meetings with the Public Authority for Sports, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Health to ensure smooth coordination and address any challenges. This collaborative effort aims to deliver a championship that reflects the high standards of Kuwaiti sports, particularly in handball.

"We have received full support from key figures in Kuwaiti sports, including the Minister of Information and Culture, the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, the acting Director of the Sports Authority, Bashar Abdullah, and officials from the Min-



Mishaal Al-Qabandi

istries of Interior and Health. They have assured their commitment to organizing the Arab Cup in an exemplary manner," Al-Qabandi said.

He further added that the tournament committees are working tirelessly to ensure everything runs smoothly, with a rehearsal planned for the tournament's opening just days before it begins.

Al-Qabandi also expressed his gratitude to the members of the Handball Federation's Board of Directors and its entire staff for their dedication since Kuwait was selected to host this prestigious event. His thanks extended to those involved in the preparation for Kuwait's next major event, the 22nd Asian Championship (2027 World Cup Qualifiers), which will take place in January 2026.

Best of the Rest

Li loses bribery sentence appeal: Former China national team coach Li Tie lost his appeal against a 20-year prison sentence handed down on corruption charges, a Chinese court announced Wednesday.

Li, who once played in the Premier League for Everton, was sentenced in December after being found guilty of giving and accepting bribes of around 120 million yuan (\$16.5 million) while coaching both Chinese Super League club Hebei China Fortune and the national team between 2015 and 2021.

He appealed the sentence, but the judge at the Hubei High People's Court upheld the original verdict.

Li can now choose to take his case to the Supreme People's Court, the highest judicial body in the country.

China has been seeking to stamp out corruption and match-fixing in soccer for decades. In 2024, Li was just one of a number of high-profile figures in the sport to be prosecuted in an anti-corruption sweep.

Former China Football Association (CFA) president Chen Xuyuan was jailed for life for accepting bribes while former CFA vice-president Yu Hongchen, ex-deputy secretary general Chen Yongliang, and former Super League general manager Dong Zheng were also sentenced to lengthy prison terms. (AP)

No significant injuries

Kuwait Club, Al-Arabi enter league crossroads

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 30: Kuwait Club and Al-Arabi have moved past the Crown Prince Cup, with Kuwait Club securing a 4-2 victory over Kazma and Al-Arabi edging Qadsia 1-0 in the semi-finals last Monday. This sets up an exciting final between the two teams on May 19.

Both teams have quickly shifted focus to their upcoming Zain Premier League matches, where Kuwait Club will face Al-Salmiya and Al-Arabi will take on Qadsia in the third round of the championship group tomorrow.

The league remains a tight two-way race, with Kuwait Club leading the standings with 51 points, closely followed by Al-Arabi in second place with 49 points. With only three rounds remaining, the competition for third place is heating up between Qadsia (38 points) and Al-Salmiya (32 points).

Despite the intensity of their Crown Prince Cup semifinal matches, both teams resumed their preparations just 24 hours later to ensure they are fully ready for tomorrow's crucial encounters. The next round is considered a "crossroads," and both teams are preparing for it with great focus and determination to secure a positive result.

Al-Arabi's progression to the final was a result of solid defensive organization and standout performances, particularly from team captain and goalkeeper Suleiman Abdul Ghafoor. Kuwait Club, on the other hand, showed resilience in its comeback against the "Orange," leveraging its experience to achieve a vital win.



Kuwait Club players celebrate their victory over Kazma.

Both teams come into the match without significant injuries, as most of their key players were available for the Crown Prince Cup semi-finals. This gives the technical staff of Kuwait Club, led by Montenegrin coach Nebojsa Jovicic, and Al-Arabi's national coach Nasser Al-Shatti, the flexibility to select their best possible lineups.

The upcoming round is crucial for both teams. A win for one and a loss for the other could provide a significant morale boost for the victor, while the loser may face a dip in confidence. This dynamic could have a major impact on the race for the title, with both teams aiming to finish at the top of the table with only two rounds remaining in the competition.

Mehidy leads Bangladesh to easy win

CHATTOGRAM, Bangladesh, April 30, (AP): Mehidy Hasan hit a century and claimed five wickets in a stellar all-around display as Bangladesh crushed Zimbabwe by an innings and 106 runs in the second and final cricket test on Wednesday.

Mehidy became the third Bangladeshi player after Shakib Al Hasan and Sohag Gazi, and 39th overall in world cricket, to score a century and a five-for in the same match.

He struck 104 for his second century as Bangladesh finished its first inning on 444 for a 217-run lead.

Mehidy then took 5-32, his third five-wicket haul in two tests, as Zimbabwe were limited to 111 in 46.2 overs in an extended last session on day three.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam ended 3-42, after taking 6-60 in the first innings.

The victory earned Bangladesh a series draw after losing the first test by three wickets.

On an increasingly deteriorating pitch, Bangladesh's two spinners tormented Zimbabwe batters,

turning the ball viciously right from the start.

Opener Ben Curran was the only one to offer some resistance, scoring 46 before being the eighth batter out.

Skipper Craig Ervine (25) and Wellington Masakadza (10) were the only others to reach double digits, while three Zimbabwe batters were out for a duck.

Earlier, Mehidy led the lower order astutely after Bangladesh resumed on 191-7 and a 64-run lead.

Taijul Islam and debutant Tanzim Hasan gave Mehidy support as the host gained a lead that appeared to be match-winning.

Taijul scored 20 and added a 63-run partnership with Mehidy before Vincent Masekesa got the better of him.

Mehidy then shared a 96-run partnership with Tanzim for the ninth wicket, taking the lead past 200.

Wesley Madhevere broke them up by dismissing Tanzim, who made 41 off 80 balls.