



'Rapid response in emergencies'
Page 3



COOPERATIVES CONSOLIDATE STOCK DATA TO PREP FOR EMERGENCIES

Kuwait contains damage after drone assaults on energy sites



KUNA photos

Left: Kuwait's Minister of Finance conducts an inspection tour at the Ministries Complex, following the Iranian attack on Saturday evening. Center: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) headquarters. Right: Official spokesperson of KPC Hisham Al-Refaei during a media briefing on Sunday.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Wherever the Mullahs' regime goes, devastation follows

HISTORICALLY, destruction and ruin have been synonymous with the Persians, a perception that remains firmly established in the conscience of the region.

In the Gulf states, we have been witnessing the systematic devastation perpetrated by the mullahs' regime for 47 years.

Numerous proverbs depict the ruin left by the Persian Army wherever it goes. Victor Hugo pointed out that wherever they pass, "everything is ruined." A Serbian proverb asserts that while people build, "the Persians destroy and demolish." In Russia, it is said that "a chicken is not a bird, and the Persians are not humans."

Consequently, the Iranian attacks on Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, hitting civilian and vital infrastructure, are not just reactions to the Israeli-American operations. Rather, they are premeditated acts, reflecting the barbarity ingrained in the Persian subconscious that seeks to devastate the surrounding region.

Through these acts, Tehran attempts to force the international community into stopping the United States of America and Israel from completing the destruction of the Persian regime's military assets.

The remaining leaders in Tehran intend to inflate costs for the Gulf and global economies, attempting to buy time for a face-saving settlement – not before the world, but before their own oppressed people, who suffer the crippling economic hardship and total paralysis of life throughout Iran.

In this regard, the regime's disinformation campaigns, utilizing artificial intelligence, are swiftly exposed by the grim realities on the ground, as the Iranian people witness the scale of ruin throughout the country and the daily toll of human casualties.

Operating based on the principle of "me and

my enemies," the pillars of the regime view themselves as the only state, with no regard for the 97 million people of Iran. If they fall, they believe the state falls with them.

On the other hand, the Iranian propaganda machine attempts to portray their adversaries as fractured or defeated, highlighting supposed divisions within America and Israel or disagreements among allies – between Washington and other capitals or its Gulf partners. They believe such portrayals provide a source of strength in these confrontations, but they are just revolutionary delusions.

Yesterday was the regime's major test that resulted in a resounding failure, following the announcement of the American president about the successful recovery of the second American pilot whose plane was shot down in Iran.

Based on this, we understand that the deadlines set by President Trump are not a sign of weakness, but an act of mercy towards the Iranian people.

The great hell he threatened, should Tehran fail to adopt a rational approach and fulfill the necessary conditions, will indeed return it to the Stone Age.

It is said that the wise learn from the lessons of others, a sentiment we have repeated more than once.

Continued on Page 4

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By Fares Ghaleb and Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Ministry of Defense revealed on Sunday that the Kuwait Armed Forces detected nine ballistic missiles, four cruise missiles and 31 hostile drones within the airspace of the country over the past 24 hours, all of which were dealt with as per the established procedures.

In a media briefing about the latest developments and operational events related to the ongoing Iranian attacks on the State of Kuwait, official spokesperson of the ministry Colonel Staff Saud Al-Atwan said the hostile drone attacks targeted two power generation and water desalination plants, the oil sector complex, several operational facilities of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and a building within the Ministries Complex. He confirmed that these attacks resulted in enormous material damage and scattered fires. He added that the competent authorities contained the fires and no human casualties were reported.

He urged the citizens and residents to refrain from circulating photos or videos of the targeted sites, and to avoid rumors or fake social media accounts due to their negative impact on public safety and security. He then underscored the importance of obtaining information only from official sources.

He stressed that the Armed Forces remain on high alert, continuing to carry out their duties with efficiency and vigilance, putting the security of the nation and the safety of citizens and residents as a top priority.

He added that public awareness and responsible handling of information, by refraining from sharing content that may harm defensive efforts, are integral to information security and an important national role in safeguarding the country.

He concluded by praying to Almighty Allah to preserve the nation's security and stability under its wise leadership.

In a similar media briefing, spokesman of the Ministry of Interior and Director General of the Public Relations and Se-

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef receives families of martyred navy officers

Ministries Complex hit; Finance Minister inspects damage

Residents urged to avoid debris, report via 112

curity Media General Department Brigadier Nasser Bouslaib urged the public to refrain from spreading rumors or unverified videos and images, indicating that the authorities are monitoring such practices and will take legal action against violators. He pointed out that obtaining information from official media channels contributes to raising public awareness and supporting national efforts.

He disclosed that sirens were activated four times since dawn Sunday, increasing the total number of activations since the start of the aggression to 171.

He also stated that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams responded to nine reports about debris falling from defensive interception operations, raising the total number of such reports since the beginning of the aggression to 678.

Continued on Page 5

Cybercrime unit monitoring social media accounts

Kuwait sounds alarm on sharing crisis content

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Cybercrime Department in the Criminal Investigation Sector at the Interior Ministry warned that publishing and sharing certain videos and photos under the current situation falls into two dangerous categories, both of which expose the perpetrator to legal accountability.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, spokesman of the department Lieutenant Colonel Saud Al-Wazzan revealed that the first category includes filming events and publishing videos or images on social media, even if they are real. He clarified that such acts are considered a threat to national security due to the possibility of exposing field information deemed beneficial for the enemy.

He said the second category includes republishing or sharing video clips or news received from others without verifying their authenticity – an act considered spreading rumors.



Saud Al-Wazzan

He warned that acts under the two categories are criminal offenses punishable by law, indicating that if such videos and images are uncovered,

they should be sent only to the relevant authorities in the ministry. He pointed out that the Cybercrime Law criminalizes the spread of rumors, especially during crises, due to the fear

and panic they instill.

He emphasized that maintaining security is everyone's responsibility. "Upon receiving any news, whether through WhatsApp or other means, the source must be verified and its circulation should be avoided to prevent the psychological harm it might cause to individuals and families," he elaborated.

He also called for reassuring and comforting the public, instead of spreading anxiety and rumors, urging the people to follow news only from official sources.

He reiterated that the ministry has instructed the public to follow news from official sources, primarily Kuwait TV, which broadcasts information quickly and in a transparent manner, thus, eliminating the need to rely on social media.

Continued on Page 5

War fuels rising chorus of 'recession' warnings

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: As the fifth week of tension between the United States of America and Iran draws to a close, Economics Professor at Kuwait University Dr. Riyadh Al-Fares warned about the likelihood of a global economic recession triggered by the rapidly escalating geopolitical climate.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Al-Fares underscored the sensitivity of international markets to political rhetoric, indicating that administrative decisions and presidential statements can induce immediate shocks to energy and stock markets in what he described as a "global economic shock."

Al-Fares explained that current indicators point toward the possibility of "stagflation," where stagnant growth coincides with rising inflation, presenting central banks with significant challenges in managing this unconventional economic scenario.

He pointed out that the continuous increase in oil prices will inevitably drive up commodity costs, while the likelihood of a recession in major economies continues to grow. He said global development could plummet from an estimated four percent to 1.5 percent in 2026.

Continued on Page 5



8 **Bursa Kuwait approves 2025 results & authorizes cash dividends of over KD 25.5 mln**

9 **Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait continues achievements, wins global awards & innovates more digital solutions with record-breaking digital services**

9 **Valmore Holding General Assembly approves distribution of \$53 million in cash dividends**

Compensation calls mount

Gulf oil damage could exceed \$100 billion if war continues

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Iranian attacks on Kuwait's oil sector have been recurring, targeting fuel tanks at Kuwait International Airport on multiple occasions, followed by attacks on the Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi refineries.

The latest attack was reported by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) early Tuesday morning, stating that the Kuwaiti crude oil tanker "Al-Salmi" was directly targeted by Iran while anchored at Dubai's port. The fire was later brought under control, according to the Dubai Media Office on its official website.

The daily consulted several oil and legal experts regarding who bears the cost of the successive

losses to Kuwait's oil sector.

In this regard, economic and legal expert Athbi Al-Tahnoon confirmed in a press statement that international law obligates Iran to pay compensation for the damage inflicted on Kuwaiti oil facilities, as well as for the damage caused to the Al-Salmi tanker in Dubai waters.

He explained that compensation is not limited to countries but also extends to companies, private property, and all damages incurred by citizens and residents, including compensation for deaths resulting from these attacks.

Kuwait has the right to hold Iran accountable for the tangible damage caused to its oil sector and other affected parties, in accordance with international agreements. International courts

Continued on Page 4

Meat costs surge

Conflict's ripple hits Kuwait dinner tables

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: As the war waged by the United States of America and Israel against Iran enters its fifth week, the repercussions have extended beyond the military arena, impacting the global economy, particularly food security.

Continued on Page 4



Photo by Samer Shiqer

Walid Abu Mohammad outlines supply flow updates in conversation with reporter Najeh Bilal.



Kuwait: Strategic partnership with NATO to enhance regional security, stability

BRUSSELS, April 5, (KUNA): NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Southern Neighbourhood Javier Colomina, said Wednesday that Kuwait has become a strategic partner of the organization in the Gulf, stressing cooperation supports regional stability and Euro-Atlantic security.

In an exclusive statement to KUNA, Colomina said Kuwait was the first Gulf country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in 2004 and the first within it to adopt an Individual Partnership Programme for 2024-2027.

He added that the programme includes shared objectives in counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and capacity building, reflecting mutual interests between Kuwait and NATO and contributing effectively to enhancing regional stability and strengthening broader security cooperation frameworks.

He noted Kuwait hosts the NATO Regional Centre, which since its inauguration in 2017 has developed into a key platform for political dialogue, training, and capacity building, supporting cooperation between NATO and Gulf partners.

The centre has organized hundreds of events and training programmes addressing security topics such as counterterrorism, maritime security, protection of critical infrastructure, and crisis and disaster response, enhancing expertise and coordination among participating countries.

Colomina said 2025 witnessed the highest level of activity at the centre since its establishment, with participation from trainees in Kuwait and GCC countries across cybersecurity, crisis management, and counterterrorism fields.

He emphasized that the centre reflects Kuwait's leading and proactive role in strengthening partnerships with NATO and Gulf countries, particularly in advancing cooperation frameworks aimed at enhancing security, stability, and coordinated responses to emerging regional challenges.

He added that recent meetings with Kuwait and Gulf partners focused on intensifying dialogue and enhancing practical cooperation, including maritime security, countering drones, protecting infrastructure, and combating terrorism threats across the region.

He stressed that the primary objective of the long-term partnership between NATO and Gulf countries is to support regional stability, which in turn contributes directly to strengthening and safeguarding Euro-Atlantic security interests.

Colomina said the current regional crisis underscores the importance of multilateral cooperation, adding that strengthening coordination mechanisms and utilizing platforms like the NATO Regional Centre in Kuwait can help reduce escalation and enhance regional stability.

He added that Kuwait and NATO continue regular political consultations to exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual concern, par-

ticularly those related to the security and stability of the Gulf region and the wider Middle East.

He praised the visit of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to NATO headquarters in Brussels in January 2026, where he participated in the first Kuwait-NATO political and security dialogue.

Colomina affirmed that cooperation between the two sides also includes practical civilian and military fields, with Kuwaiti personnel participating in NATO training programmes covering emergency planning, disaster preparedness, defence sector reform, and non-proliferation efforts.

He added that cooperation is based on an agreed partnership programme for 2024-2027, encompassing political dialogue and practical collaboration in several areas of common interest, reflecting a structured and forward-looking framework for bilateral engagement.

He stressed that both sides can build on this positive partnership and develop new cooperation initiatives in the future to enhance regional security and stability while addressing evolving and increasingly complex security challenges in the region.

Colomina underlined that Kuwait represents a prominent model of an effective strategic partner with NATO, noting that this partnership has strengthened dialogue and security coordination with Gulf countries, making Kuwait a key pillar in supporting regional stability.



Javier Colomina



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah chairs meeting of governors of all Kuwait governorates.

Meeting focuses on enhancing cooperation & unifying efforts

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah held a coordination meeting on Sunday morning with the rest of the governors, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and the Director-General of the General Department of Governorate Affairs.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the meeting focused on enhancing joint cooperation and unifying efforts among the governorates, in line with the directives of the wise leadership and to improve the efficiency of the government work system.

The meeting was attended by the following:

- Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah
- Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor and Acting Hawally Governor Sheikh Sabah Bader Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah
- Jahra Governor Hamad Jassim Al-Habashi
- Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Hamoud Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah
- Director General of the General Department of Governorate Affairs Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah
- Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Eng. Ahmed Al-Janahi
- Assistant Director General Nadia Al-Hamlan

■ Assistant Director General Eng. Bashayer Al-Mahdi

■ Assistant Director General of the General Department of Governorate Affairs Colonel Yousef Musaed Al-Kharif

■ Director of the Liaison and Support Department Lieutenant Colonel Khalifa Duaij Al-Yatami

■ Assistant Director of the Liaison and Support Department Major Bader Jassim Al-Farah.

The meeting discussed developing mechanisms for coordination and integration among the governorates during the current circumstances, improving the level of services provided, and enhancing the efficiency of institutional performance in various service and development sectors.

Governor Sheikh Athbi Al-Nasser emphasized that the current phase requires greater integration of roles and more effective coordination among the governorates.

He stressed the importance of enhancing institutional work based on partnership and the exchange of expertise as a fundamental pillar for achieving development goals and improving the quality of life.

The governors highlighted the importance of continuing regular coordination meetings to monitor all developments in cooperation, strengthen the principle of governmental integration, and support the comprehensive development process.



Russian ambassador



Bahraini ambassador

Algerian embassy witnesses big turnout expressing condolences

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Algerian Embassy in Kuwait opened a two-day condolences book, following the death of former Algerian President Liamine Zeroual.

The embassy witnessed a large turnout of heads of diplomatic missions who expressed their condolences to Algerian Ambassador Omar Belhadj, while expressing their solidarity with Algeria, its leadership and people in this time of grief.

Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Falah Al-Mutairi wrote a message in the book of condolences, expressing his sincere condolences and sympathy.

A representative of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs also signed an official message of condolence addressed to Belhadj and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, expressing sincere sympathy for this painful loss and praying to Almighty Allah to grant the deceased His abundant mercy and admit him to Paradise and to grant his family and loved ones patience and solace.

In a press statement, Belhadj revealed that Zeroual was one of Algeria's great men and righteous leaders, who dedicated his life to serving the country and defending its freedom and independence. He was a distinguished freedom fighter during the struggle against colonialism. After independence, he devoted himself to serving his nation through the numerous positions he held.

He added that during his presidency, Zeroual established the foundations of peace and stability. He was a capable politician and a wise leader. With his passing, Algeria lost one of its most loyal and dedicated sons.

Belhadj expressed his deepest condolences on this painful loss, asking Almighty Allah to grant the deceased His abundant mercy and forgiveness, to admit him to Paradise, and to reward him most generously for his noble deeds.

He expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the heads of diplomatic missions for joining the Algerian Embassy in offering condolences, considering this gesture a reflection of the depth of diplomatic relations and solidarity between countries.

Kuwait backs Islamic, GCC unity

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Wasmi reaffirmed Saturday the country's firm support for Islamic and GCC unity, stressing that any threat to regional security and stability affects the wider Islamic world.

His remarks came after participating via video-conference in a meeting of the Executive Council of the Conference of Ministers of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, chaired by Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs Abdullatif Al-Sheikh.

Al-Wasmi said the council addressed cur-

rent challenges, condemning Iran's hostile actions toward GCC countries and Jordan, and warning such actions risk escalating tensions and undermining stability.

He also highlighted discussions on developing the Awqaf sector, including the use of artificial intelligence and modern technologies, as well as efforts to enhance its contribution to economic development.

The meeting further reviewed cooperation on mosque standards, imam training, and promoting moderation while rejecting extremism.

Crucial for Ukraine, Kuwait to ink defense pact: envoy

Help offered in cybersecurity, air defense capabilities

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Maksym Subkh revealed that the recent visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to the Gulf region aimed to strengthen security cooperation and unify response to the current challenges, affirming that his country is ready to support those who stand with it.

Subkh told the newspaper that "it is crucial for Ukraine and Kuwait to conclude a defense agreement, which formalizes coordination in this field and helps build a modern security infrastructure guaranteeing peace, stability and security for many years to come."

He emphasized that his country's expertise could benefit Kuwait in several fields like cybersecurity and the development of air defense capabilities. He proposed signing a defense agreement with Kuwait to establish an institutional framework for cooperation, paving the way for a mutually beneficial partnership between the two sides.

Following are the details of the interview: **Question:** How do you assess the results of the recent visit of President Zelenskyy to the Gulf region, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar?

Answer: The main objectives of the visit are to strengthen security cooperation and coordinate our response to the current challenges. President Zelenskyy stressed that this move is about protecting lives and achieving stability.

At the same time, the economic aspect - attracting investment and developing the defense industry - is a very important element. Our shared goal with our partners is to enhance security. Ukraine is fully prepared to help those who support it. It is clear to everyone that based on experience and expertise, no one can provide assistance in the way that Ukraine can.

We already have historic agreements with Saudi Arabia and Qatar. We are working closely with Jordan and Kuwait. We export our defense systems, the skills of our soldiers, and the knowledge our country possesses. We expect our partner



Ukraine Ambassador Dr. Maksym Subkh

countries to take huge steps that will contribute to our shared security.

We have confirmed opportunities and potential for strengthening air defense, jointly developing defense production, and cooperating in the energy sector, including importing diesel and other energy supplies that we currently need.

Q: What are the strategic objectives of such visits in light of the current regional and international developments?

A: Our goal is the integration of Ukraine into the global security system through partnerships aimed to maintain stability in the Gulf region, Europe and the whole world.

I would like to emphasize that Ukraine always remembers and appreciates the assistance it received from Kuwait and other Gulf states when the aggression against our country began.

The Ukrainian authorities and people are fully prepared to extend a helping hand to Kuwait and other friendly Arab states, especially during this unprecedented crisis that threatens their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Therefore, it is crucial to restore stability in the region, so that no one suffers from Iranian terrorist attacks. We support an approach that contributes to making the entire world safer through cooperation.

Given that the situation in the Middle East affects the international geopolitical stage, Ukraine offers proven solutions based on its unique experience. We have extensive experience in countering daily missile and drone attacks. This experience has been applied through the development of highly effective defense systems.

The Black Sea Grain Corridor experience con-

firmed Ukraine's ability to ensure the stability of strategic supply chains and channels, even under the most challenging circumstances.

Ukraine acts as a provider of highly effective and practical security solutions, focusing on cooperation that delivers results. In the current situation, such approaches are considered the only way to achieve long-term regional stability.

Q: How can countries benefit from Ukraine's experience in countering drone and missile threats?

A: Since we are currently experiencing war and our adversary uses Iranian-made Shahed drone technology, we have developed our own system to counter them with high efficiency and low cost. Today, we are sharing this development with countries in the Middle East.

We offer combining experienced military personnel with the private and public sectors in a single system as a long-term model for partnership, benefiting the private sector, the State and the military.

We have started implementing these steps with three countries in the region. I am confident that Ukraine and Kuwait will fully capitalize on this potential for cooperation.

Q: Is there a trend toward expanding these agreements to include other countries in the region?

A: Ukraine is keen on improving its relations with the Gulf states. This trend now takes a special security dimension, as Ukraine has become an active global player in the security field.

We are open to new partnerships with all peace-loving countries in the Middle East. We aspire to develop our political and security dialogue with all countries in the region to ensure their security and territorial integrity by effectively countering aggression or attack we are witnessing now or in the future.

Q: How does Ukraine view Kuwait as a partner in strengthening cooperation, including the possibility of reaching joint agreements in areas such as cybersecurity and developing air defense capabilities?

A: We maintain a regular and constructive dialogue with the Kuwaiti side. Ukraine values Kuwait's role as an important and reliable partner in the region.

In March, President Zelenskyy had a telephone conversation with HH the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, during which he expressed Ukraine's solidarity with Kuwait in facing the Iranian aggression.

Kuwait slams attacks and rioting at UAE's embassy

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the acts of rioting and attacks targeting the UAE's Embassy, and the residence of the head of the mission in Damascus.

In a statement, the ministry also deplored the violation of the diplomatic missions, affirming that the targeting of the diplomatic premises is a breach of international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

It called for holding the perpetrators of these acts accountable and ensuring that such acts will not be repeated.

The ministry renewed the country's full solidarity with, and support for, the sisterly country of the UAE to protect its security and stability, the statement pointed out.

War, weather cause of fish scarcity in market

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The local fish market witnessed remarkable changes in the first quarter of 2026 due to seasonal factors and regional developments that affected local and imported fish supplies.

In a statement to the newspaper, Hamoud Al-Hamdi, shift A supervisor at Sharq Fish Market, revealed that the total quantity of local and imported fish in the first three months of the year (January to March) reached 1,683,230 tons and 532,200 tons of which are local fish or 46 percent of the total. He said the fish supplies have been affected by the American-Iranian War that started on Feb 28.

Al-Hamdi pointed out that due to the escalation of military tensions in the region and the precautionary measures being taken, such as banning small boats from going to the sea and restricting fishing operations to larger vessels in certain areas, the local supply declined.

He explained that natural factors also played a role, as the rise in water temperatures with the onset of summer contributes to the gradual decrease in fish quantities, which are expected to rise again in winter.

Regarding imported fish, he disclosed that the total fish imports in the first quarter of the year reached 868,830 tons and 623,630 tons of which were imported before the war, compared to 246,200 tons after the war -- a decrease of 60.5 percent.

Other Voices

O Kuwait, you are beloved, and our souls defend you

By Ahmad alsarraf

In these troubling days, speaking of war weighs heavily on my heart, as does the turmoil within our collective consciousness.

I fear this unrest could spiral out of control, transforming into cruelty and the rejection of anyone who disagrees. When panic takes hold, it strips people of fairness, causing them to see difference as a threat to be crushed rather than understood.

The language of insult in a wounded nation contradicts the very principles of patriotism. How many of us have felt the weight of this war in its silence, a silence filled with reflection, deliberation, caution, and the effort to comprehend the complexities of what is happening?

However, this silence, despite its depth, can sometimes become a burden heavier than the clamor of words, especially when it fails to equip us with the tools needed to confront an external crisis that continues to grow and whose repercussions intensify within.

Words accumulate, voices rise, yet meaning remains elusive. People talk endlessly, analyze extensively, and issue many pronouncements. However, it becomes clear that what is being discussed is not true understanding, but rather hasty impressions upon which rigid stances are built and defended with blind obstinacy.

It is a painful paradox - abundant fear but scarce understanding. We witness harshness in positions and superficiality

in perception. Some speak with unwavering confidence, yet it rests on shaky ground.

Here, the pain is compounded because we face not only an external threat but also this internal turmoil. This situation reflects an inability to read between the lines and to grasp the full context.

It is painful to watch panic and fear strip a person of their wisdom. This fear feeds on information taken out of context and fragmented from the bigger picture. Opinions are circulated as if they were established facts, lacking depth or scrutiny, which leads to confusion and, ultimately, anxiety.

The paradox is striking - intense fear and shallow understanding, rigidity in positions, and the exclusion of opposing viewpoints. All of this only deepens the pain.

We must humble ourselves before the truth, so we can draw upon all the tools of understanding and knowledge, recognizing that what we perceive is not necessarily absolute truth.

In the absence of humility, rigid certainty takes hold, seeing only itself and hearing only its own voice. The problem may not be a lack of words, but a lack of meaning.

Despite all this, amid the clamor, a constant whisper remains in my heart - O Kuwait, lofty, proud, and beloved, you who have loved and honored all your children, in all their diversity and from every background, so that they have cherished your soil and your sea. May you always remain dear, and may our souls be sacrificed for you.

(The above statement was written by a Kuwaiti woman who wished to remain anonymous)

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New, multi-dimensional strategy vital for survival

THE Kuwaiti proverb "The wolf's offspring is worse than its father" carries many implications that must be heeded, especially at this stage the region is going through and in light of ongoing threats, whether from Iran or Iraq," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"In both cases, there are lessons from the past that must be learned and used to develop an effective foreign strategy. In reality, the constraints of geography are inescapable. Having two troublesome neighbors does not mean closing your doors or isolating yourself from your surroundings, particularly when your strategic depth extends across an entire region - the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.



Adel Al-Kharafi

"On the other hand, one cannot escape geographical reality. The current Iranian regime and Iraqi sectarian militias will not last forever. If the past five decades have made Iran a threat, and if it has exerted influence over Iraq since 2003, then we must look beyond this narrow frame to ensure we are not vulnerable to either the wolf or its offspring. We always have many winning cards, and Kuwait has a long record of successful diplomacy on which we can build.

"Our dealing with others should be based on clear interests, so that we are not placed in a position of weakness when we need support. We face a difficult neighbor in Iran, which has engaged in hostile actions against us for decades and continues to do so. We also have an ambitious neighbor in Iraq. Regardless of changes in its ruling political forces, the underlying dynamic will remain as long as there are discordant, short-sighted voices that unsettle Kuwait.

"In the past, we attempted to change our approach with both Iran and Iraq, but those efforts yielded little. Today, we continue to face pressure and uncertainty from both neighbors, despite Kuwait's small geographic size. However, Kuwait's strength lies elsewhere. It is not merely a matter of vast oil reserves as there are countries with greater resources, and we cannot compete on that basis alone.

"This does not call for surrender, but for steadfastness. We must hold firmly to our positions, at times even with resolve and persistence, because we have the right. Kuwaitis thrived for four centuries before the discovery of oil, sustained by a strong maritime trading force. This legacy should remain at the forefront of every decision-maker's mind.

"Since 1961, Kuwait has provided substantial aid to numerous countries around the world. Although Kuwait's geographic location presents challenges, as it is situated alongside two troublesome neighbors, it also offers a strategic advantage. The country sits at a crossroads of important land and sea routes, allowing it to play an influential role in trade between Europe and East Asia.

"Nations pursue not only their immediate interests but also their long-term ones. Kuwait and the Gulf states are not merely oil exporters like the way as many Arabs, Europeans, and Westerners perceive us. We are capable nations with significant potential through which we are able to become a major player in the shifting equations shaped by the war.

"In the past, Iran targeted oil tankers, particularly Kuwaiti ones, during its war with Iraq. Kuwait later sought to open a new chapter in relations. Yet both Iran and Iraq continued their efforts that destabilized the region, including Kuwait. Despite this, we tried once again to turn over a new leaf, but the current war revealed Iran's ugly face. A wise person does not make the same mistake twice. Therefore, a completely different and entirely new strategy is necessary, not just a Kuwaiti strategy, but a Gulf strategy that begins with the Arab League and extends to alliances near and far.

"I emphasize that even if the regime in Iran changes, or the situation in Iraq shifts, the Gulf's compass must also change. In the period ahead, until a regional settlement is reached, we will continue to hear reports about timelines set by the United States and Israel regarding Iran and the region. These plans do not bode well, as their negative repercussions will affect Kuwait and the Gulf states. Therefore, it is important to pay close attention to this matter and adopt a policy of rationalization at this stage, while working to develop economic and social plans that take into account these sensitive circumstances.

"It is true that the government is performing excellently, such that citizens feel minimal negative impact. However, just as we benefited from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also learn from this current crisis and draw lessons from it."

Also:

"What we are experiencing today in the region is not merely a passing crisis, but a revealing moment that has exposed a truth we have long ignored - the extent of our dependence on external entities to secure our basic needs," Kuwaiti writer Hamoud Al-Hamdi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"With the closure of airspace and the disruption of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, both air and maritime transport

routes have been affected, disrupting the flow of essential goods, particularly food imports to Kuwait.

"What has happened is a clear lesson that relying on a single route or mode of transport is no longer a safe option in an increasingly volatile world. This underscores the need for practical, not theoretical, solutions. One of the most important among these solutions is accelerating the completion of the railway project linking the Gulf states, not merely as a transport option, but as a fundamental pillar of economic security.

"If the Gulf railway network were operational today, freight shipments could have been easily rerouted. Ships could have been diverted from their direct routes to Kuwait ports, which were affected by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, to alternative ports farther from areas of tension, such as Saudi ports on the Red Sea or Omani ports on the Arabian Sea. The cargo could then be unloaded and transported by rail to Kuwait and other Gulf countries quickly and efficiently.

"This model would not only ensure the continuity of supplies, but also reduce risks and provide greater flexibility in responding to crises. The next phase requires moving to a higher level of Gulf integration by enhancing self-sufficiency in food, medicine, and energy, as well as developing storage and logistics capabilities. This crisis has not only revealed weaknesses, but also presents a real opportunity to reorder priorities and build a more integrated and resilient system capable of withstanding crises."

"The modern family and society today are undergoing significant transformations due to digital openness and the widespread use of social media. They no longer exist in a closed environment as in the past but are now part of a vast virtual world that permeates daily life and reshapes patterns of thought and behavior," Kuwaiti writer Sheikhha Al-Asfour wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"This new reality presents fundamental challenges to educational and social values and raises questions about the family's ability to maintain its principles and cohesion amid these rapidly accelerating influences.

"Social media has contributed to the erosion of fundamental educational symbols and even plays a potentially harmful role. Fathers, mothers, and teachers are often subjected to ridicule and mockery under the guise of humor and distorted justifications, which undermines their authority and weakens their influence in the eyes of their children. These platforms have also reshaped traditional social goals, including standards for marriage and child-rearing, potentially introducing models far removed from inherited Islamic values. This, in turn, weakens the moral and social foundations of both the family and society.

"The effects do not remain limited to fleeting humor, as they have spilled into real-life behaviors that are imitated and practiced daily. Values of unjustified behavior and disrespect for others have spread, while respect within families and schools has declined.

"These changes have created a range of challenges, most notably the weakening of family bonds as individuals become absorbed in their virtual worlds. They have also contributed to a decline in core educational values such as obedience, respect, social responsibility, discipline, and commitment. Also, negative role models have proliferated through digital content at the expense of real-life models.

"As a result, we see rising divorce rates, family breakdowns, the spread of psychological disorders, and a widening generation gap, with parents increasingly feeling powerless in the face of their children's immersion in the virtual world.

"To confront these challenges, conscious oversight is needed, one that does not rely on absolute prohibition but instead guides individuals toward meaningful content.

"It is also essential to revitalize family dialogue by setting aside daily time for discussion and communication away from screens.

"Equally important is strengthening school education through awareness programs that highlight the dangers of mocking educational figures. The media also plays a critical role in providing educational and entertainment platforms that reinforce values while aligning with the interests of young people.

"In addition, it is essential to cultivate genuine role models through the behavior of parents and teachers, demonstrating respect and responsibility. This must occur within the framework of a societal partnership that unites the family, schools, institutions, and the media to ensure a collective response to these major challenges.

"In conclusion, the family today stands at a critical crossroads. When the family loses its authority in the face of phone screens, the protective wall of values that upholds society begins to crumble. The choice, then, is either to rebuild it through awareness or to allow it to weaken until it collapses."

- Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photo
Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Culture Omar Al-Omar chairs the meeting.

'Rapid response in emergencies'

Digital field officials meet

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister Omar Al-Omar stressed Saturday that the current phase requires achieving the highest levels of readiness and proactiveness in telecommunications services.

This came in a statement by Minister Al-Omar to KUNA following his chairing of a coordination meeting with the heads of telecommunications companies, the Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority, Dr. Khaled Al-Zamel, the Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Communications, Mishal Al-Zaid, and the Acting Director General of the Central Agency for Information Technology, Najat Ibrahim.

The minister noted that this is done through the continued updating of emergency plans

and raising efficiency of operation centres as well as boosting rapid response to any emergency in a manner that ensures the stability and quality of services.

Al-Omar said the meeting was held a continuation of previous meetings and in line with ongoing efforts aiming to activate emergency plans and raise the level of coordination among relevant parties to ensure network stability and handle any potential increase in service demand.

He added that the meeting also was an extension of what has been agreed upon in the previous meetings regarding the full activation of operational sectors and raising readiness to the highest levels to ensure uninterrupted telecommunications and internet services at full capacity, within an integrated system operating around the clock to serve citizens and residents.

The minister extolled the close cooperation of telecommunications companies and their key role in supporting the stability of the digital system, noting that this integration reflects an advanced national model in crisis management and ensuring the continuity of vital services.

PADA decision overruled

Court: Issue man disability docus

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Court of First Instance overturned the decision of the Public Authority for Disability Affairs (PADA) not to register a citizen as a person with disability.

The court ordered the authority to issue a certificate of 'permanent moderate visual impairment' to the citizen, along with all the legal and financial implications of the decision.

It emphasized that loss of vision in one eye is not just a visual impairment, but a disability affecting balance, depth perception and daily activities.

The plaintiff filed an appeal when the

Technical Committee at PADA refused to grant him a disability certificate, arguing that his other eye is healthy. The committee used this as justification for negating the disability classification.

During the court proceedings, the plaintiff submitted medical reports from a government hospital detailing several surgical procedures, along with visual field tests that confirmed peripheral vision impairment and damage to the optic nerve and retina.

In response, the defendant asserted that the decisions of the Technical Committee are based on established standards and not subject to intervention. It claimed that the examination conducted on the plaintiff is enough to assess his condition.

4 defendants acquitted of money-wash, fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Ninth Criminal Circuit at the Court of First Instance, presided over by Judge Hamad Ahmad Al-Wazzan, acquitted four individuals of money laundering, forgery and electronic fraud, and ordered confiscation of the forged documents.

The Public Prosecution charged the defendants with conspiring with other unknown individuals to fraudulently obtain KD3,800 from the victim's bank account. They allegedly used the bank details of the victim to transfer money and make online purchases, as well as forged bank statements and related documents.

Attorney Ali Al-Wawan, lawyer for the defendants, argued that the elements of the crimes attributed to his clients were not met, that the evidence was insufficient, and that the investigations were invalid because they are based on hearsay and there was no conclusive proof.

In its reasoning, the court affirmed that the case file lacked conclusive evidence proving the defendants' involvement in the alleged crimes. It pointed out that the statement of the victim did not include specific accusation and that the investigation failed to identify the caller or the alleged members of the criminal gang. It stated that some defendants acted in good faith, while the roles of others were not defined. It emphasized that criminal judgments must be based on certainty and conviction, not on conjecture and speculation, asserting that investigations are insufficient evidence for conviction, thus, necessitating an acquittal in accordance with Article 172/1 of the Criminal Procedure and Trials Law.

The court called for raising public awareness on the dangers of electronic fraud and fictitious investments, as well as the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of banking information.

It also urged the legislature to issue a law criminalizing the misuse of bank accounts in suspicious transactions.

40 shops issued citations in Municipality campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Inspection tours covering 95 shops conducted by the Audit and Services Monitoring Department of the Capital Municipality resulted in the issuance of 40 citations, reports Al-Rai daily.

Faisal Al-Otaibi, the acting Director of the department, explained that the violations included failure to maintain signage and operating shops after the expiration of their licenses. Inspectors will continue field tours to monitor compliance with regulations and bylaws and to warn shop owners to adhere to municipal laws to avoid penalties.

Sacrifices of officer hurt on duty hailed

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: As part of its ongoing field monitoring and commitment to the well-being of its personnel, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib visited Colonel Mohammad Rashid Al-Hajri, who was injured during an Iranian attack while performing his duties at a site of responsibility, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the ministry revealed that the visit was aimed to check on Colonel Al-Hajri's health and assess the medical care being provided.

The ministry explained that Major General Al-Wuhaib conveyed the greetings and appreciation of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef. He wished Colonel Al-Hajri a speedy recovery and praised his sacrifices and dedicated national service.

Major General Al-Wuhaib praised the injured Colonel Al-Hajri's courage and dedication, highlighting that his actions reflect the core values of Kuwait's security personnel.

He emphasized that Colonel Al-Hajri's conduct during his duties reflects responsibility and national loyalty, and serves as a model for all members of the security forces.

Major General Al-Wuhaib affirmed that such exemplary figures embody the mission of protecting the homeland and maintaining its stability, and he prayed for Colonel Al-Hajri's speedy recovery and for the safety of Kuwait, its Amir, and its people.



Al-Wuhaib

Protecting kids from fire

Egyptian gets 7 years jail for 'cheating' compatriot

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which sentenced an Egyptian to seven years in prison for defrauding an Egyptian merchant of KD20,000 by using a fake website impersonating a consumer protection agency.

Case files revealed that the defendant, in collusion with another individual (the first defendant currently on trial in Oman for financial crimes), lured the victim through the fraudulent website, claiming to offer official services. This prompted the victim to transfer the money.

Investigations revealed that the defendant converted a huge portion of the funds into cryptocurrency, purchasing more than KD16,000 worth of it to conceal the source of the money and prevent tracing its origin.

The Court of Appeals ordered the defendant to return the embezzled amount and fined him KD20,000.

The Court of Cassation upheld this ruling, confirming that the elements of fraud and deception are present and proven beyond reasonable doubt against the defendant.

Protect kids from fire: Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) issued an awareness brochure in Arabic and English containing important guidelines to reduce the risks of children playing with fire at home and to ensure a safe environment for them, reports Al-Anba daily.

KFF emphasized the importance of adhering to the following preventive measures:

- A responsible adult must constantly supervise children.
- Never leave children unattended, especially in dangerous areas such as swimming pools.
- Keep all materials and tools that could cause fires out of children's reach.
- Ensure children do not approach electrical or heat sources.
- Accompany children when using elevators and never leave them alone.
- Educate children about the dangers of electricity and the importance of handling it safely.

KFF stressed that prevention begins with awareness and that following these guidelines plays a huge role in protecting children and reducing household accidents.

It urged everyone to take responsibility and promote a culture of safety within the family.



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Other Voices

How courts are shifting from intent to impact in regulating digital speech

Four years in prison over two posts: The legal cost of online reaction

By Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb

A reaction posted in seconds has now led to years behind bars. On April 2, 2026, a court ruling transformed what many still consider just a tweet into a matter of criminal liability drawing a clear line between expression and consequence.

The case involved an individual convicted over two posts published on the platform X. The content was deemed to incite hatred and fuel sectarian division. While such cases are not new, what makes this judgment particularly significant is not merely the outcome but the reasoning behind it.

The Court did not center its analysis on what the defendant intended to say. Instead, it focused on what the posts caused.

This distinction is critical. In its reasoning, the Court confirmed that for such offenses, the presence of general

intent the awareness of what is being said and the decision to publish it, is sufficient. There is no requirement to prove a specific intent to harm. In other words, once a person knowingly publishes content in a public digital space, responsibility attaches not only to the words themselves, but to their foreseeable impact and that impact, as the Court emphasized, can be profound.

Public posts on open platforms do not remain confined to a single recipient. They reach an unlimited audience, often beyond the control of the original author. In such an environment, language that may be perceived as a reaction or a moment of anger can quickly escalate into something far more dangerous fueling tension, deepening divisions, and fostering hostility within society.

The Court went further to underline that such conduct is not a matter of private exchange. Social media



Dr. Fawaz Khaled Alkhateeb

platforms are, in legal terms, public spaces. What is said there carries the same, if not greater, weight as statements made in traditional public forums. This leads to an important legal and societal conclusion:

Freedom of expression is not absolute.

It is protected but within boundaries. Those boundaries are crossed

when expression transforms into incitement, hatred, or an attack on the social fabric. Responding to offense with further offense does not provide legal justification. On the contrary, it may expose the responder to liability.

This is where many individuals miscalculate.

In moments of frustration or provocation, the instinct to respond immediately is understandable. But the law does not assess emotions, it assesses consequences. A reactive post, even if triggered by an initial insult, can carry independent legal weight. In some cases, it may be considered more harmful than the original act.

The judgment therefore delivers a clear message:

In the digital age, responsibility is measured not only by what you say but by what your words set in motion.

From a practical standpoint, the correct course of action when faced

with offensive or harmful content is not retaliation, but recourse. Legal systems provide structured mechanisms to address grievances mechanisms designed to protect both individual rights and societal stability.

Choosing confrontation over process does not resolve the issue. It escalates it.

At a broader level, this ruling sends a clear message: digital speech is no longer casual, it is consequential.

Courts are increasingly recognizing that what appears to be instantaneous and informal online expression can, in reality, produce lasting and far-reaching harm. In this case, that recognition translated into decisive action. The Court imposed a four-year term of imprisonment, barred the accused from using his social media account for one year, and ordered the confiscation of his phone treating it as an instrument of the crime. This is not merely a judgment. It is

a signal. Online speech is now being measured, regulated, and sanctioned with the full weight of the law. Ultimately, this is not about restricting speech. It is about safeguarding society. A community cannot function if public discourse is allowed to devolve into hostility and division. The law intervenes not to silence voices, but to ensure that expression does not become a tool for harm.

As individuals, professionals, and members of a connected society, the responsibility is clear:

Pause before posting. Reflect before reacting.

And remember what feels like a moment may carry consequences that last far longer. In the end, the law does not protect anger. It protects order, stability, and the collective interest of society.



Fawaz@tahrgrp.org

Council urges stricter Alucobond rules

Review seeks to restrict hazardous aluminum panels

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Municipal Council member Farah Al-Roumi has submitted a proposal to review the regulations on the use of Alucobond (aluminum composite) in building facades in order to develop safety standards and mitigate fire risks.

The proposal stipulates that the Kuwait Municipality, in coordination with Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) and the relevant technical authorities, should identify buildings using non-fire-resistant aluminum panels and assess their risk levels.

Al-Roumi also suggested thorough review of the technical specifications to restrict the use of these materials in new buildings to fire-resistant types as per the international standards.

She proposed developing a guide outlining technical solutions for addressing the conditions of existing buildings without compromising their structural integrity.

The proposal included a phased plan for addressing the conditions of current buildings based on their risk levels, prioritizing high-rise buildings, commercial complexes and densely populated facilities.

Al-Roumi explained that the proposal stems from the increasing use of aluminum composite panels in facades and international studies highlighting the risks associated with certain non-fire-resistant types, which can contribute to the rapid spread of fire.

She added that reviewing the regulations is an important precautionary measure to enhance preventive preparedness and protect lives and properties, in line with the best international practices in building safety.



Al-Roumi

Kuwait's ambassador presents credentials to Monaco's Prince

PARIS, April 5, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador to France, Abdullah Sulaiman Al-Shaheen, presented his credentials as non-resident Ambassador to Prince Albert II of Monaco on Thursday, April 2, at the Prince's Palace.

During the meeting, Ambassador Al-Shaheen conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Prince Albert, wishing him good health and continued prosperity for Monaco and its friendly people.

Ambassador Al-Shaheen emphasized Kuwait's keenness to strengthen cooperation with Monaco across all fields and on all levels, particularly in the economic, investment, trade, and environmental sectors, in a manner that serves the interests of both countries and their peoples.



KUNA photo Kuwait Ambassador to France, Abdullah Sulaiman Al-Shaheen with Prince Albert II of Monaco.

Continued from Page 1

Wherever the

Gaza serves as a potent example of what could befall Iran, given that the American and Israeli forces have total air superiority over the entire country.

A word to the wise is sufficient. If any wisdom remains in the regime, they should consider the outcome of the operation to rescue the American pilot.

Despite the mobilization of the Revolutionary Guard, Basij and police forces, they were all powerless to act. The operation was a success and the pilot was recovered.

The coming days will be decisive in terms of ridding the world of this regime, which brings destruction wherever it goes.

Nothing will remain to threaten the Gulf region, or the world, from Persian revolutionary delusions.

Conflict's ripple

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for oil flow and trade, has disrupted supply chains, leading to a surge in the prices of basic commodities, especially meat.

In Kuwait, despite the stable supplies compared to other countries, meat prices have started to rise remarkably -- ranging between 20 percent and 30 percent, according to the field survey conducted by the newspaper at a famous meat market in Shuwaikh.

Several merchants attributed the above-mentioned price increase to rising import costs, shipment shortage and global rise in feed prices.

Citizen Bu Hamad stated that meat prices have gradually increased since the outbreak of war, clarifying that the increase is still "acceptable." He stressed the need to expand local livestock farms and establish feed mills to reduce reliance on foreign markets, considering the global crises.

Citizen Saud Al-Mutairi affirmed that the crisis proved the strength of relations between Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, explaining that the country experienced no shortage in food supplies because shipments continue to flow through the Saudi territory. He added that consumers understand the market conditions and called for increased local production to reduce reliance on imports in the future.

Abdullah Hussein asserted that Kuwait remains "a land of security and safety." He said the rate of local price hikes remains less than other countries affected by the Strait of Hormuz closure.

Khaled Abu Omar, an official at a meat distribution center, disclosed that meat prices have increased since the beginning of the crisis. He stated that the price of a kilogram of imported beef rose from KD3 to KD4.5, the price of a kilogram of local lamb increased from KD3.5 to KD5, the price of Australian lamb increased from KD3.5 to KD4.5, and the wholesale price of Kuwaiti veal rose from KD2.5 to the price range of KD4 to KD4.5.

Saad Jamal, a meat sales manager, said the price of a slaughtered Somali lamb rose from KD57 to KD65 for weight ranging between 14 and 15 kilograms, confirming the increased demand for it due to its lower price compared to other types.

He added that the price of Sudanese lamb reached KD115, while the price of

the Kuwaiti Naemi lamb rose by about 20 percent -- between KD140 and KD160 depending on quality. He also confirmed that some traders are limiting sales to avoid shortage due to high demand.

Butcher Hamada Al-Sayed said supplies continue to arrive through Saudi Arabian airports, in addition to imports from Pakistan and other countries. He revealed that prices increased by 20 to 30 percent despite the availability of meat in the local market, as consumers have opted for cheaper alternatives.

Walid Abu Mohammad indicated that refrigerated trucks carrying meat, including live cattle, arrive daily from Saudi Arabia, which contributed to maintaining stability in the local market.

Gulf oil

recognize the principles of compensation for states responsible for destruction and loss of life and are authorized to impose additional measures, including international sanctions, as part of the compensation process.

Meanwhile, oil expert Haitham Al-Azmi believes that repairing the oil and gas infrastructure in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, damaged by Iranian drone and missile attacks during the current war, will exceed Rystad Energy's estimate of \$25 billion.

Al-Azmi explained that the costs of repair and restoring previous production levels could surpass \$100 billion if the war continues for two months. If it extends to three months, the costs could exceed \$150 billion, due to rising global oil prices from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This would increase expenses for repair equipment, spare parts, and travel for companies carrying out the repairs.

He emphasized the importance of factoring these considerations into future compensation estimates.

In addition, Dr. Madous Al-Rashidi, Professor of International Law at Kuwait University, affirmed that the cost of repairing the damage caused by Iran to the Kuwaiti and Gulf oil sectors continues to rise.

He highlighted Kuwait's right to seek compensation from Iran through international courts once the war ends, stressing that Iran defied and violated international law by targeting oil refineries and airport fuel storage tanks, as well as the Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi refineries with drones.

Dr. Al-Rashidi indicated that all Gulf states are expected to seek compensation for the damages they have suffered, particularly in light of Iran's violations of international laws and norms and its disregard for good neighborly relations.

He explained that UN charters, international agreements, and international law criminalize aggression against neighbors unless justified. Iran will be required to pay compensation for all damages, including the halt of Gulf oil exports, damage to public and private property, and the recent damage to the electricity grid, which resulted in the death of an Indian employee of the Ministry of Electricity and Water. The scenario of compensation paid by Iraq to Kuwait following Saddam Hussein's brutal invasion in the early 1990s is likely to be repeated with Iran, which has targeted Gulf states that did not attack Iran but merely intercepted missiles and drones.

Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)		Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast		BHD 53.361 / Net
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Continued from Page 1

Kuwait contains

He presented a visual briefing on how the Special Forces dealt with reports about falling debris or objects inside and outside the threat zones.

He added that the ministry affirms the resilience and vigilance of the Armed Forces in confronting all threats, and their continuous performance of national duties with efficiency and competence in order to maintain national security and sovereignty.

He praised the steadfastness of citizens and residents, particularly their cohesion and trust in the capabilities of the Armed Forces and security agencies, thereby, proving the deeply rooted values of Kuwaiti society in facing challenges.

He concluded that the situation remains under close monitoring, with all sectors operating at full readiness round the clock as per the well-studied plans to ensure security, stability and public tranquility.

Kuwait's National Guard announced that its Task Force successfully shot down two drones and one unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) over sites under its responsibility in the past 24 hours.

Brigadier Dr. Jadaan Fadhel, official spokesperson for the National Guard, said in a press statement that the measure comes as part of ongoing efforts to enhance security, protect vital facilities, and respond to any potential threats.

He called on everyone to adhere to safety and security instructions issued by the competent authorities.

He affirmed that the National Guard, in coordination with the army, police, and Kuwait Fire Force, remains on high alert and fully prepared to deal with any threats, firmly confronting anything that aims to undermine the country's security, sovereignty, and stability, while protecting national interests and resources.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) announced that fires at the Ministries Complex and the Oil Sector Complex, caused by hostile drone attacks, have been brought under control and fully extinguished, indicating that damages were limited to material losses and no human casualties were reported.

In an official statement, Director for Public Relations and Media and official spokesperson of KFF Brigadier Al-Ghareeb disclosed that the firefighting teams, in cooperation with the oil sector teams, dealt with the fires that broke out at several operational facilities of KPC, following the hostile drone strikes.

He pointed out that since the beginning of the aggression, KFF has handled 98 non-routine reports, including fires caused by falling debris or direct attacks, in addition to carrying out preparedness and site security operations throughout the country.

He appealed to the citizens and residents to exercise caution and avoid approaching or attempting to handle fires or unfamiliar objects resulting from falling

debris due to their potential danger, particularly since they may contain highly flammable materials.

He stressed the importance of immediately reporting such incidents through the emergency number 112, leaving the response to specialized firefighting teams to ensure public safety.

He affirmed that all KFF personnel continue to perform their national duty with vigilance and dedication, prioritizing the protection of lives and properties and ensuring public safety.

In a related development, KPC reported significant material damage to the Oil Sector Complex and a number of its operational facilities following an Iranian drone attack.

Official spokesperson of KPC Hisham Al-Refaei confirmed in a media briefing on Sunday the attack on multiple sites at dawn, including the Oil Sector Complex in Shuwaikh, which houses KPC and the Ministry of Oil, causing fire and extensive damage. He said the emergency and firefighting teams responded promptly and efficiently and no human injuries reported.

He added that several operational facilities of Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) were hit as well, resulting in fires and substantial material losses.

He affirmed that no casualties were recorded, while precautionary measures were taken to ensure personnel safety and to secure the facilities.

He said the firefighting teams, supported by KFF, are working hard to contain the fires and prevent further spread.

He indicated that KPC is coordinating with the relevant authorities to assess the damage, and reaffirmed its commitment to the highest safety and security standards.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy announced that two power and water distillation plants were targeted by malicious Iranian drone attacks early morning Sunday.

In a press statement, official spokesperson of the ministry Fatima Jawhar Hayat disclosed that the attacks resulted in significant material damage and the shutdown of two power generating units, but there were no reported casualties.

She said the technical teams quickly implemented the emergency plans, in coordination with the relevant authorities, to ensure the safety and stability of the electricity and water supplies. She affirmed that all technical teams are working round the clock to ensure service continuity.

Moreover, the Ministry of Finance said late Saturday that the Ministries Complex in Kuwait City was attacked by brutal Iranian drones, resulting in huge damage to the building and no human injuries were reported.

The ministry confirmed in a press statement that the emergency teams and the relevant authorities started their work in line with the approved measures short-

ly after the attack.

Employees assigned at the Ministries Complex worked remotely on Sunday and visitors were not accommodated on the same day as per the approved precautionary measures.

Also, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Rifai conducted an inspection tour at the Ministries Complex, following the Iranian attack on Saturday evening.

During the tour, the minister assessed the extent of the damage in the building, emphasizing the importance of immediate repair and renovation of the site.

He also commended the rapid response of the emergency teams and efficient coordination among the concerned entities in dealing with the incident, affirming that work is underway to restore normalcy as soon as possible and praying that Almighty Allah protect Kuwait and its people from all forms of harm.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Aseel Suleiman Al-Munaiifi accompanied the minister during the tour. She said the ministry leadership fully supports and closely follows up efforts aimed at mitigating the impact of the attack and ensuring the continuity of operations.

Furthermore, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies instructed its members to consolidate and review their stocks data, emphasizing the need to ensure the availability of essential food and consumer goods for six months in preparation for any emergency.

Sources told the newspaper that these items include canned goods, tuna, rice, cooking oil, sugar, flour, tea, water, lentils, chicken, candles and flashlights.

Sources explained that the precautionary measures being taken by the union are aimed at guaranteeing the availability of these products in cooperative societies, in line with its directive to maintain strategic reserves.

Sources confirmed that most cooperatives have strategic reserves, which are enough for six months or more, while stressing the importance of considering the monthly withdrawal rates for these products as they were under normal circumstances -- before the current events, and the necessity of restocking any item for which increased demand is observed to make sure that the needs of the people are met.

In other news, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah received on Sunday the families of a pair of navy officers who were martyred last month while shouldering their national duties.

Meeting with the families of late sergeants Waleed Majeed Sualiaman and Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Nasser, respectively, the Kuwaiti interior minister said that the gesture comes as part of efforts to acknowledge remarkable sacrifices for the homeland.

Expressing his deepest condolences to the families of the slain Kuwaiti navy officers, he said that their sacrifices are

appreciated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, while their heroics are deeply entrenched in the nation's history, according to an interior ministry statement.

The families of the martyred officers said that they were grateful for the gracious gesture, saying that it was a testament to the unity shared by Kuwaitis and their political leaders.

War fuels

Asked about the economic significance of the Gulf, he asserted that the crisis has proven the world's reliance on the region, which holds more than 50 percent of global oil reserves and 30 percent of gas reserves, making it a cornerstone of the global energy equation.

He added that shortages in energy supplies, particularly in Asian markets, have contributed to sharp price hikes, reinforcing the Gulf's position as a primary source for securing the energy requirements of the whole world.

He described the current landscape as a shift from military conflict to an "energy war," as the surge in prices -- ranging between 50 percent and 66 percent -- reflects the severe pressure on international supply chains.

He concluded that the energy file has emerged as a crucial element in the international political landscape. He stressed that presidential statements about easing restrictions on Russian exports or the sale of seized Iranian oil reflect the sector's extreme sensitivity. He added that rising fuel costs could influence midterm election outcomes and reshape the balance of power.

Kuwait sounds

He said the security agencies monitor, track and apprehend anyone proven to be involved, and they are referred to the appropriate authorities.

He explained that photographing and publishing images of incidents or debris is a violation, even if the intention is to raise awareness. He asserted that the correct procedure when documenting any incident is to send it only to the relevant authorities without publishing it due to the harm it could cause to national security.

He confirmed that all members of the Cybercrime Department monitor real and fake accounts. "Any publication containing rumors or that threatens national security is seized and referred to the Public Prosecution for legal action," he added.

He stated that the ministry published warnings and alerts on various social media platforms and in different languages to raise awareness on the dangers of photographing and publishing during crises, urging everyone to adhere to the instructions in order to maintain national security and stability.



MoFA photo
The Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani with the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meetings reaffirm fraternal ties

Qatar Amir and Kuwait FM hold talks on regional developments

DOHA, April 5, (KUNA): Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed with Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the latest regional developments and ongoing efforts in this regard.

In a statement Sunday by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the talks came during a meeting held on the occasion of Sheikh Jarrah's official visit to Doha.

The meeting touched on the strong and longstanding fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples, as well as ways to further support and enhance cooperation across various fields.

During the meeting, Sheikh Jarrah conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, along with their wishes of continued health and well-being to the Qatari Amir, and further progress and prosperity for the brotherly people of Qatar.

Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed on Sunday with Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani the repercussions of the ongoing Iranian aggression on countries of the region.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the meeting was held on Sheikh Jarrah's official visit to Doha.

The talks touched on the deep-rooted historical ties and strong fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples.

Both sides stressed the importance of continuing efforts to enhance frameworks of cooperation and coordination across various fields and at all levels, in line with the visions and aspirations of the two countries' wise leaderships.

They also affirmed the continuation of Kuwaiti-Qatari coordination on all fronts amid the sensitive circumstances facing the region, based on the unity of destiny and shared history, and in support of efforts to address current challenges.

MoSA inspects shelter center to ensure safety, service continuity

KUWAIT CITY, April 5, (KUNA): The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs, Amthal Al-Huwailah conducted an inspection visit to a shelter center affiliated with the Supreme Council for Family Affairs to review operations, assess residents conditions, and ensure their safety amid the exceptional circumstances witnessed in the region.

During the visit, the Minister checked on the overall well-being of the residents and the level of care provided, reaffirming the Ministry's and the Council's commitment to main-

taining a safe and stable environment that guarantees residents' safety and comfort under all conditions.

Al-Huwailah noted that specialized teams are closely monitoring the situation on an ongoing basis and are implementing all necessary precautionary measures. She added that operations are proceeding smoothly without obstacles.

The Minister emphasized the continuation of efforts to uphold the highest standards of safety and care, in coordination with relevant authorities, to ensure the security and well-being of all residents and staff.



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'Politicians should be elected to be their people's voice'

Excitement and dread grow over Dems' redistricting referendum in Virginia

LOUISA, Va., April 5, (AP): Michael Shull never imagined that a Democrat from the wealthy suburbs of Washington would represent his community in Congress. His corner of Virginia, with its sprawling farms and winding country roads, has been electing Republicans for more than three decades.

Then came an unusual nationwide redistricting battle, with Democrats and Republicans redrawing congressional lines to boost their chances in November's midterm elections. Virginia could be next as voters consider a new map that would pair conservative rural areas with liberal suburbs, diluting Republicans' electoral clout.

"Politicians should be elected to be their people's voice," said Shull, a Republican member of Augusta County's board of supervisors. "Not their party's voice."

The vote on the constitutional amendment is on April 21, and early balloting has begun. If voters pass the referendum and it survives a court challenge, Shull's area within the county would be split between the 7th and 9th Congressional Districts. While the 9th District would be the state's lone Republican stronghold, the 7th District would resemble a lobster with the long tail beginning in Democrat-

dominated Arlington and two claws reaching south into rural communities.

Congressional districts are usually redrawn once a decade, but President Donald Trump started a chain reaction last year by encouraging Texas Republicans to devise a new map to help the party in November. After a cascade of redistricting efforts, Republicans believe they can win a combined nine more U.S. House seats in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio, while Democrats think they can win a total of six more seats in California and Utah. Virginia could give Democrats an extra four seats - enough to overturn the GOP's slim majority, at least as things stand now.

"It's about making sure that we fight back to what Trump's done," said U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va. He said the party needs to persuade voters that the referendum is "not about embracing gerrymandering."

"I feel optimistic, but it's close," he said.

The referendum comes at a moment when Virginia Democrats have tried to make up ground in rural areas. Last year, Democrat Abigail Spanberger campaigned for governor in oyster towns and agrarian hamlets to engage with more conservative voters. Before



Signs in support of the Virginia redistricting referendum are seen as Jen Strozier and Doug Mock, members of the Goochland Democratic Committee, order lunch at GG's Pizza on April 2, in Maiden, Va. (AP)

that winning campaign, she had represented a congressional district that mixed city suburbs, exurbs and adjacent rural communities.

"Anyone who's doing their job will be responsive to the communities that they seek to represent," Spanberger said.

But her results were mixed. In counties where fewer people lived in rural areas, she outperformed Democrat Kamala Harris' Virginia showing in the 2024 presidential race by an average of 6 percentage points or 7 percentage points. In more rural counties,

Spanberger gained about 2 percentage points to 4 percentage points.

Democrat Anthony Flaccavento, former congressional candidate and co-founder of the nonprofit Rural Urban Bridge Initiative, is torn over the referendum.

"At some level, it feels like kicking the can down the road -- which is something that my party has done for a long time -- when it comes to winning back rural and working-class voters," Flaccavento said.

Democrats in rural areas who are tired of being outnumbered by their Republican neighbors are embracing the redistricting plan.

"Fight Back, Vote Yes," said a sign at a No Kings protest in Louisa County. A second sign, "Vote Yes. Stop ICE. No Kings."

State Del. Dan Helmer, who helped spearhead the redistricting effort, greeted protesters and spoke to the cheering crowd. Helmer is now one of at least four Democrats running in the 7th District.

Helmer said Republicans "think that in red areas like Louisa and in rural areas, that people don't know what's going on. But I'm looking around right now, I see strong, proud patriots who know exactly what is going on, who know that we have

an aspiring dictator who is trying to take away our democracy."

Jennifer Lee, who has lived in Louisa for 33 years, said she was eager to support the new district lines. Lee said she felt Republicans were perpetuating a double standard, falsely claiming the 2020 presidential election won by Democrat Joe Biden was stolen from Trump but accepting his push to eliminate Democratic seats through gerrymandering.

"That's their slogan, right? 'Stop the steal,'" Lee said. "But they started 'the steal.' They're stealing the seats now in all these districts."

At a town hall hosted by Democrats at a rural Goochland County recreation center, voters nibbled on finger foods and passed around bottled water as they debated whether redistricting violated some kind of moral code.

"I'm sorry, morality just goes out the door right now. We have to do what it takes for us to survive," said Bruce Silverman, a local nephrologist. He was voting "yes."

At one point, Roberta Thacker-Oliver stood up to talk. She votes in the rural 9th District, which would become even more Republican with the new map.

Bondi struggles to prosecute Trump foes, but will new AG make a difference?

WASHINGTON, April 5, (AP): Pam Bondi is out of her job after failing to deliver criminal cases against President Donald Trump's political enemies.

But there's no guarantee her successor will have any better success at placating the president.

Over the last year, Bondi's Justice Department has encountered resistance from judges, grand jurors and its own workforce in trying to establish criminal conduct by one Trump foe after another. A new attorney general will confront not only Trump's demand for political prosecutions - a constant dating back to his first term in the White House - but also the same skeptical court system, and factual and legal hurdles, that have impeded efforts to deliver the sought-after results.

"At the end of the day, it's not like there were some magic steps that Pam Bondi could have taken to make bad cases look good to grand juries or judges," Peter Keisler, a former acting attorney general in President George W. Bush's administration, said in an email. "The problem is that the president is demanding that prosecutions be brought when there's no evidence and no valid legal theory. A new Attorney General won't change that."

Bondi was just the latest Trump attorney general pressed to meet the president's demands of loyalty and de-



Attorney General Pam Bondi testifies before a House Judiciary Committee oversight hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on Feb 11. (AP)

sire for retribution. Trump in his first term called for Jeff Sessions to investigate Democrat Hillary Clinton and ultimately pushed him out over his refusal from the Russia election interference investigation. He berated another attorney general, William Barr, over Barr's refusal to back his false claims of election fraud in the 2020 contest. Barr resigned soon after.

Bondi arrived at the Justice Department 14 months ago seemingly determined to remain in Trump's good graces unlike her predecessors, heaping praise on him, offering unflinching support and embarking on investigations into Democrats and the president's adversaries - even amid concerns from career prosecutors about the sufficiency of evidence.

Prolonged Middle East war could take away from support for Kiev: Zelensky

ISTANBUL, April 5, (AP): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed concern that a prolonged US-Israeli war on Iran could further erode America's support for Ukraine as Washington's global priorities shift and Kyiv braces for reduced deliveries of critically needed Patriot air defense missiles.

Ukraine desperately needs more US-made Patriot air defense systems to help it counter Russia's daily barrages, Zelensky said, speaking to The Associated Press in an exclusive interview late Saturday in Istanbul.

Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than four years ago has killed thousands of civilians. It has also targeted Ukraine's energy supply to disrupt industrial production of Ukraine's newly developed drones and missiles, while also denying civilians heat and running water in winter.

"We have to recognize that we are not the priority for today," Zelensky said. "That's why I am afraid a long (Iran) war will give us less support."

The latest US-brokered talks between envoys from Moscow and Kyiv ended in



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, (right), speaks during an interview with The Associated Press, in Istanbul, Turkey on April 4. (AP)

February with no sign of a breakthrough. Zelensky, who has accused Russia of "trying to drag out negotiations" while it presses on with its invasion, said Ukraine remains in contact with US negotiators

about a potential deal to end the war and has continued to press for stronger security guarantees.

But, he said, even those discussions reflect a broader loss of focus from Ukraine. His most immediate concern, Zelensky said, are the Patriots - essential for intercepting Russian ballistic missiles - as Ukraine still lacks an effective alternative.

These US systems were never delivered in sufficient quantities to begin with, Zelensky said, and if the Iran war doesn't end soon, "the package - which is not very big for us - I think will be smaller and smaller day by day."

"That's why, of course, we are afraid," he said.

Zelensky had been counting on European partners to help make the Patriot purchases despite tight supply and limited U.S. production capacity.

But the Iran war, now in its sixth week, has sent shock waves through the global economy and pulled in much of the wider Middle East region, further straining these already limited resources, diverting stockpiles and leaving Ukrainian cities more exposed to ballistic strikes.

Pope Leo marks first Easter as pontiff with call for hope amid global conflicts

VATICAN CITY, April 5, (AP): Pope Leo celebrated his first Easter Mass as pontiff with a call Sunday to exercise hope against "the violence of war that kills and destroys," saying "we need this song of hope today" as conflicts spread around the world.

With the US-Israeli war on Iran in its second month and Russia's ongoing campaign in Ukraine, Leo has repeatedly called for a halt in hostilities. In his Easter homily, the pope singled out those who wage war, abuse the weak and prioritize profits.

Leo, the first US-born pope, addressed the faithful from an open-air altar in St Peter's Square flanked with white roses, while the steps leading down to the piazza where the faithful gathered were filled with spring perennials, symbolically resonating with the pope's message of hope.

The pontiff implored the faithful to keep their hope in the face of death, which lurks "in injustices, in partisan selfishness, in the oppression of the poor, in the lack of attention given to the most vulnerable."

"We see it in violence, in the wounds



Pope Leo XIV arrives to preside over Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on April 5. (AP)

of every world, in the cry of pain that rises from every corner because of the abuses that crush the weakest among us, because of the idolatry of profit that plunders the earth's resources, because of the violence of war that kills and destroys," he said.

He quoted his predecessor Pope

Francis in warning against falling into indifference in the face of "persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty," because "it is also true that in the midst of darkness, something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit."

America

S. California wildfire mostly contained: A smoky wildfire in southern California that broke out a day earlier and prompted evacuation orders was mostly under control Saturday afternoon, fire officials said.

Encompassing roughly 6.3 square miles (about 16 square kilometers) in Riverside County, about 64 miles (103 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, the Springs Fire was no longer growing and at least 75% percent contained Saturday, said Terra Fernandez, public safety information specialist for the Riverside County Fire Department. It was 25% contained on Friday.

Fire officials also lifted evacuation orders for a large swath of neighborhoods Saturday morning. Fernandez said she expected the rest will be lifted by the end of the day.

"It's pretty much under control," Fernandez said.

The fire was fueled by strong Santa Ana winds with gusts predicted to get up to 45 mph (72 kph) on Saturday. But winds had "dissipated a bit" since Friday, helping the efforts of fire crews, Fernandez said. Natural equestrian trails around the area also helped firefighters make access to the fire and build effective containment lines around its perimeter, she said. So far, no structures have been damaged or destroyed. (AP)

Vehicle hits revelers in Louisiana: Several people were injured when a vehicle struck revelers at a parade celebrating the Lao New Year on Saturday in rural Louisiana, authorities said.

The driver was quickly arrested and charged with impaired driving, police said.

Video shared on social media showed multiple people on the ground at the annual event in Broussard and New Iberia. The videos showed firefighters tending to one person trapped beneath the car, which wound up in a ditch along the parade route.

Around 15 people were hurt, some seriously, according to the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office.



Police work the scene after several people were injured when a vehicle struck revelers at a parade celebrating the Lao New Year on April 4, in Broussard, La.

"Based on the preliminary investigation, this does not appear to be an intentional act," said a spokesperson for the sheriff's office, Rebecca Melancon. (AP)

Second suspect held in drive-by shooting: A second suspect in the stray-bullet killing of a 7-month-old baby on a Brooklyn street was arrested Friday, police said, two days after a shooting the police commissioner called "a tragedy that truly shocks the conscience."

Mathew Rodriguez, 18, was apprehended in Pennsylvania by New York Police Department detectives working with U.S. Marshals, the NYPD said.

The suspected shooter, 21-year-old Amuri Greene, was arrested shortly after the drive-by gunfire that killed Kaori Patterson-Moore. Greene pleaded not guilty to murder and other charges at an arraignment Friday night and was held without bail.

Kaori was in her stroller when a two men sped down a street on a moped Wednesday afternoon. Greene, riding on the back of the vehicle, fired into a group of people on a street corner, according to a court complaint. (AP)



Serbian journalists block the traffic outside the offices of Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic in Belgrade, Serbia on April 1 in protest of mounting attacks and pressure on the media. (AP)

International groups warn of 'spiral of violence' against journalists in Serbia

BELGRADE, Serbia, April 5, (AP): International media organizations have joined Serbian journalists in raising the alarm about worsening press freedoms in the Balkan country, including "record levels" of physical violence, online smear campaigns and death threats against reporters.

The partner organizations of the Council of Europe's Platform for the Safety of Journalists and the Media Freedom Rapid Response groups said in a statement released this week that "the past year had seen a continued deterioration, leaving

the country in a prolonged and worsening press freedom crisis."

The statement warned that "chances of further escalation in the severity of attacks against journalists remain dangerously high."

A delegation visited Serbia on March 26-27, holding meetings with both the media and government representatives.

"The mission came at a time of unprecedented physical attacks on journalists and rampant online smear campaigns, led or amplified by influ-

ential members of the ruling party," the statement said. "The delegation is fearful that journalists are caught in a spiral of violence with few protections in place."

In response to The Associated Press, the Serbian government's Ministry of Information and Telecommunication said it "condemns any form of violence and attacks on journalists and urges state institutions to react as urgently as possible to identify all the perpetrators who took part in the attacks on journalists."

Europe

Meloni hails arrest of 'crime boss': Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni congratulated the police late Saturday for the arrest of an alleged crime boss and one of Italy's most wanted fugitives.

Authorities announced the arrest of Roberto Mazzarella, 48, following a raid Friday on a villa on the Amalfi Coast in southern Italy after allegedly using false documents to rent the luxury coastal property.

Meloni, who is on a tour of Gulf states, described Mazzarella's arrest as an "important blow against the Camorra," referring to the notorious



Meloni

criminal organization that originated in Naples.

"This sends a clear message that the state will not back down," Meloni said in an online post.

Mazzarella is wanted in connection with a 2000 fatal shooting at a delicatessen in central Naples. (AP)

UK police investigate officers: London police are urgently investigating how armed protection officers guarding Mayor Sadiq Khan left a bag of guns outside his home.

The Metropolitan Police said in a statement late Friday that five officers had been removed from front-line duties while inquiries were being carried out.

The weapons cache, which according to The Sun newspaper included an MP5 semiautomatic Heckler & Koch carbine, a Glock pistol, Taser and ammunition, were found in south London Tuesday by a couple, who then informed the Metropolitan Police. (AP)

INTERNATIONAL

Asia

5.9 earthquake strikes southern Philippines: A magnitude 5.9 earthquake hit off Davao Occidental province in the southern Philippines on Saturday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

The institute said the earthquake occurred at 6:34 p.m. local time at a depth of 10 kilometers, with the epicenter about 59 km southeast of Sarangani Island in the municipality of Sarangani.

Tremors were felt across the island.

However, the institute said the earthquake will generate aftershocks but is expected not to cause damage.

The Philippines experiences frequent seismic activity due to its location along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a zone of major tectonic plate boundaries known for earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. (Xinhua)

2 pilots killed in Philippines air cargo plane crash: Two pilots were killed when their air cargo plane crashed outside the perimeter of an airport in Barangay Decalacho in Coron, Palawan, in the Philippines, according to the Philippine National Police Aviation Security Group (PNP-ASG).

The PNP-ASG said the accident occurred at around 11 a.m. local time outside the perimeter of the Busuanga Airport. Initial investigation revealed that the aircraft had suddenly crashed and exploded upon takeoff after picking up live fish products. The bodies of the pilot and co-pilot were recovered at around 3 p.m. during a search and retrieval operation. The airport's runway operations were temporarily suspended following the crash, but resumed later. (Xinhua)

Cambodia senate gives final nod to law on combating scams: The Senate



Equipment confiscated in a raid by Cambodian police are laid out on a table at a scam center in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on March 11. (AP)

of Cambodia on Friday gave final approval to a new law on combating online scams, which will carry up to 30 years' imprisonment or life imprisonment for scam bosses. The approval was made during an extraordinary session under the chairmanship of the Senate's acting President Ouch Borith, said Lay Samkol, secretary-general of the Senate.

The new bill will be submitted to Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni for promulgation.

Under the new law, leaders of online scam operations will face 15 to 30 years in prison or life imprisonment if their operations lead to one or many deaths. (Xinhua)

Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese authorities arrest 41: The narcotic control authorities from China, Thailand and Vietnam jointly cracked a transnational drug manufacturing case, arresting 41 suspects, China's Ministry of Public Security said Friday. (Xinhua)

3 teens killed in Indonesia traffic accident: Three teenagers were killed in a traffic accident involving two motorcycles and a car in Bantul regency, Indonesia's Yogyakarta Special Region, early Friday, local police said.

The accident occurred on the Yogyakarta-Wates Road in Sedayu district when two motorcycles, reportedly riding against traffic, collided with a minibus traveling from the opposite direction, according to Rita Hidayanto, a public relations officer of the Bantul Police.

The first motorcycle struck the front of the car, causing the vehicle to lose control, while the second motorcycle then hit the car's left side, resulting in a chain collision. (Xinhua)

Man charged with murder over Sydney stabbing: A 30-year-old man has been charged with murder over a fatal stabbing in western Sydney on Thursday night.

The police force in the state of New South Wales said in a statement on Friday that emergency services were called to reports of a stabbing in Emu Plains, 53 km west of central Sydney, around 6:45 p.m. on Thursday.

Officers arrived at the scene and found a 58-year-old man with multiple stab wounds to his upper body. (Xinhua)

Rising costs impacting people's ability to seek help within countries

Aid groups warn Iran war hindering food and medicine from reaching millions

ISTANBUL, April 5, (AP) — Aid groups are warning that the war in the Middle East has upended their ability to get food and medicine to millions of people around the world in need, and that the suffering will deepen if the violence continues.

Not only has the conflict cut off vital shipping routes, creating a global energy crisis, it's also disrupting supply chains for aid groups, forcing them to use costlier, more time-consuming routes.

Key pathways such as the Strait of Hormuz have been effectively shuttered and routes from strategic hubs such as Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi have also been impacted. Transport costs have spiked with higher fuel and insurance rates, meaning less supplies can be delivered with the same amount of money.

The World Food Program says it has tens of thousands of metric tons of food heavily delayed in transit. The International Rescue Committee has \$130,000 worth of pharmaceuticals intended for war-torn Sudan stranded in Dubai and nearly 670 boxes of therapeutic food meant for severely malnourished children in Somalia stuck in India. The UN Population Fund says it's delayed sending equipment to 16 countries.

Steep US cuts to foreign aid already had hobbled many aid groups, who say the war is exacerbating the problem.

The United Nations says this is the most significant supply chain disruption since COVID, with up to a 20% cost increase on shipments and delays as goods are rerouted. And the war is creating new emergencies, such as in Iran, and also in Lebanon where at least one million people have been displaced.

"The war on Iran and disruption to the Strait of Hormuz risk pushing humanitarian operations beyond their limits," said Madiha Raza, associate director for public affairs and communications for Africa for the International Rescue Committee.

Even when the fighting stops, the shock to global supply chains could continue to delay lifesaving aid for months, she said.

The war has forced organizations to find new ways to transport goods, with some bypassing the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal and rerouting vessels around Africa, adding weeks to the delivery.

Others are using a hybrid of methods, including land, sea and air, increasing costs.

Jean-Cedric Meeus, chief of global transport and logistics for UNICEF, said his agency is using a mix of land and air routes to send vaccines to Nigeria and Iran in order to get them there in time for the vaccination campaigns, but the costs have soared.

Before the war, UNICEF sent vac-



A woman stands beside her food ration after distribution of aid, in Nalemkais Village, Turkana County, Kenya on Feb 8. (AP)

cines to Iran by plane directly from vendors around the world. Now it's flying the vaccines to Turkey and driving them into Iran, which has increased costs by 20% and has added 10 days to the delivery time, he said.

Save the Children International, which would normally send supplies by ocean freight from Dubai to Port Sudan, will now have to truck the goods from Dubai through Saudi Arabia and then by barge across the Red Sea, it said. The route adds 10 days

and increases costs by about 25%, at a time when over 19 million Sudanese face acute food insecurity. The delay puts more than 90 primary health care facilities across Sudan at risk of running out of essential medicines, it said.

The spike in prices also means organizations have to choose what to prioritize.

"In the end, you sacrifice either the number of children that you serve ... or you sacrifice the number of items that you can afford to buy," said Janti So-

cripto, president of Save the Children for the United States. The group said it has stockpiles in countries where it works but some of those could run out within weeks.

Rising costs are also impacting people's ability to seek help within their countries.

Doctors Without Borders said rising fuel prices across Somalia - where some 6.5 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity - have driven up transport and food costs, making it harder for people to get care. In Nigeria, the IRC says fuel prices have surged by 50% and clinics are struggling to power equipment, such as generators and mobile health teams have scaled back operations.

One of the biggest concerns is the impact the war will have on global hunger.

WFP warns that if the conflict continues through June, 45 million more people will be acutely hungry, adding to nearly 320 million people facing hunger around the world.

Some 30% of the world's fertilizer comes through the Strait of Hormuz and with planting season ahead in areas like East Africa and South Asia, small farmers in poor countries will be hard hit. Sudan imports more than half its fertilizer from the Gulf and Kenya approximately 40% from there, aid groups say.

The U.N. secretary-general has es-

tablished a task force to facilitate fertilizer trade - modeled on the Black Sea Grain Initiative. But aid groups say that won't be enough. If there's no ceasefire, governments need to provide more funding for organizations to respond to the rising costs, they say.

Humanitarian experts say there's been a slower international response to fund aid during this war compared to previous conflicts like Ukraine, which could reflect growing pressure to invest in security over aid at a time when the world is in turmoil.

"They're making hard choices between defense security and humanitarian aid," said Sam Vigersky, an international affairs fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations who has written about the war's impact on aid.

He said when the US goes to war, it normally has provisions for aid, but hasn't been "activating" those provisions. "It's not a capacity issue, it's a policy decision," he said.

Tommy Pigott, principal deputy spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, said that the US has been the "most generous country in the world" when it comes to humanitarian aid.

The department said it's releasing an additional \$50 million in emergency assistance to Lebanon, including to the World Food Program and working closely with the United Nations and others to address the humanitarian needs.

Factory fire kills 5 in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh, April 5, (AP) — A fire broke out at a factory manufacturing gas lighters near Bangladesh's capital on Saturday afternoon, leaving at least five people dead, authorities said.

The blaze broke out in the Kadamtali area of Keraniganj near Dhaka, according to the fire service and civil defense.

Seven firefighting units were deployed to extinguish the blaze, which started in the afternoon, the fire department said. It took several hours to bring it under control.

Firefighters recovered five bodies by the evening and they couldn't immediately be identified.



People look at the charred remains of a gas-lighter manufacturing factory in Keraniganj on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh on April 4. (AP)

Senegal limits foreign trips for officials

Cameroon lawmakers revive VP position

YAOUNDE, Cameroon, April 5, (AP) — Cameroon's parliament overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment to reintroduce the vice president position, a move the opposition says will further strengthen President Paul Biya's grip on power.

Biya, 93, is the world's oldest leader and has led the central African nation since 1982. He won a widely disputed election last year, his eighth term in office.

The widely criticized bill, which Biya is expected to sign into law, was approved Saturday in a joint session of the National Assembly and Senate and boycotted by the main opposition party; 200 voted in favor, 18 against and 4 abstained.

The newest amendment gives the aging president absolute authority over the office of the vice president, as he can appoint and dismiss them at will and the deputy can only exercise powers delegated by Biya. If the president dies, resigns, or becomes incapacitated, the vice president will serve as interim president for the remainder of the seven-year tenure.

Members of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) hailed the legislation as a measure to ensure institutional stability. Critics, however, said the new law undermines democratic principles by replacing electoral legitimacy with presidential appointment.

The opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) said in a statement that the amendment "fails to guarantee democratic legitimacy, inclusiveness, and proper institutional balance."

Fusi Namukong, an SDF member of parliament, told The Associated Press that the law paves the way for a monarchy. "It's not democratic. This is a republic, and in a republic, those who wield power at the highest level of the state should be elected and not appointed," Namukong said.

The Cameroon Bar Association also warned the amendment "erodes the



Cameroon's President Paul Biya, of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement party, waits to cast his vote during the presidential elections on Oct 7, 2018, in Yaounde, Cameroon. (AP)

democratic legitimacy (of) the presidential office" and undermines the country's constitution.

The office of the vice president was scrapped in 1972 following a constitutional referendum.

Biya's health has been a topic of speculation as he spends most of his time in Europe, leaving governance to key party officials and family members. His reelection in 2025 sparked widespread protests that left at least four people dead, signaling growing tensions between the mostly young population and its aging leader.

Also:

DAKAR: The Senegalese government has banned all but essential foreign trips for government ministers as part of cost-saving measures triggered by the energy crisis linked to the Iran war.

Senegal, like many African countries, imports most of the petroleum products it consumes, leaving its economy vulnerable to supply disruptions such as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which has sent the price of

crude soaring.

Prime Minister **Ousmane Sonko** said Friday that his office was taking steps to limit public expenditure, pointing out that the country's initial budget forecasts were based on an oil price of \$62 per barrel, which is now almost double as a result of the Iran war.

"I have taken a number of drastic measures to restrict everything related to government spending, including the cancellation of all nonessential missions abroad," the government-owned Le Soleil newspaper quoted Sonko as saying.

He added that he canceled several trips, including to **Niger, Spain and France.**

"No minister in my government will leave the country except for an essential mission," Sonko said.

For millions in Africa, soaring fuel prices have worsened the hardships they already face in some of the world's poorest households. That means not being able to commute to work or afford a meal for many in the region.

FBI team arrives in Cuba to investigate fatal shooting of US-flagged speedboat

HAVANA, April 5, (AP) — FBI agents have arrived in Cuba to investigate the fatal shooting of five men aboard a US-flagged speedboat in February that the Cuban government said was carrying suspects who were trying to infiltrate the island.

Five other men on the boat were wounded in an exchange of fire with the Cuban Border Patrol on Feb 25 in what the Cuban government has called a terrorist attack by Cuban expatriates who had been living in the United States. The US government has disavowed any connection to the group, and said it wants to fully investigate Cuba's claims.

The FBI technical team arrived Tuesday to conduct a thorough and independent investigation, a US diplomatic official who is close to the matter told The Associated Press on Thursday. The official, who spoke on condition they not be named because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter, did not provide details on how many FBI agents arrived or how long they would remain on the island.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel had said in March that he expected FBI agents to visit the island to help with the investigation.

Cuban officials have said the speedboat was detected with 10 men and military equipment aboard in waters north of the island. They said the men in the boat fired first and that soldiers returned fire, killing four suspects. A



Weapons that Cuban authorities say were recovered from a speedboat in Cuban waters following a confrontation that left four people dead are displayed during a media presentation in Havana on Feb 27. (AP)

fifth later died from his injuries. Six other men were wounded, including a crew member in the Cuban military vessel.

The survivors face criminal terrorism charges that could carry a life sentence.

The clash occurred amid heightened tensions between Cuba and the United States.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said at the time that the group was not a U.S. government operation, and said U.S. officials would seek to verify the

information provided by Cuban authorities.

Days after the shooting, high-ranking officials from Cuba's Interior Ministry and the Revolutionary Armed Forces displayed military equipment seized from the speedboat and confirmed they had been in contact with the U.S. Coast Guard.

The equipment included high-caliber rifles, pistols, uniforms, boots, helmets, special rations, an electric generator, a satellite communications unit and at least 12,000 rounds of ammunition.

Lat/Am

3 dead in Brazil plane crash: At least three people have been confirmed killed after a small aircraft crashed Friday into a building in Brazil's seaside city of Capao da Canoa, in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, local authorities said.

According to the local fire department, the aircraft was carrying four people -- two pilots and two passengers. A pilot and two passengers were confirmed dead, while the fourth victim has not yet been located.

Preliminary reports cited by local media outlet Radio Gaucha said the aircraft, a single-engine plane, was flying at low altitude when it began losing height and crashed. The building it struck was reportedly unoccupied at the time.

Footage recorded by the city's security cameras captured the moment the plane crashed, when an explosion occurred. Images shared by residents on RBS TV showed a mushroom cloud of fire shooting up.

City officials confirmed that the aircraft departed from São Paulo. (Xinhua)

Gang-suppression force lands in Haiti: The first foreign troop tied to a new gang-suppression force backed by the United Nations has arrived in Haiti to help quell ongoing violence, according to a statement issued Wednesday.

A team from the central African country of Chad are in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, as is Jack Christofides, the force's special representative, who was deployed at the request of the Haitian government, according to an official statement posted on the new force's X account.

No other details were provided, and a spokesperson for the force did not return a message seeking additional information.



Members of the National Palace General Security Unit (USGPN) set up a security perimeter as Transitional Council President Laurent Saint-Cyr visits the headquarters of the armed forces in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Jan 26. (AP)

The Chadian team arrived after UN officials met with Haitian Prime Minister Alix Didier Fils-Aimé to talk about the partnership with the UN Support Office in Haiti, which is providing the new force with living and office space, medical care, rations, water, power, fuel, ground mobility, aviation and other critical assistance.

The UN Security Council in late September approved a plan to authorize a 5,550-member force expected to transform a Kenya-led multinational force in Haiti that remained understaffed and underfunded while it was in operation, with some 1,000 personnel out of the 2,500 envisioned.

The gang-suppression force will have the power to arrest suspected gang members, which the previous force did not have. (AP)

Cash dividends of 127 fils per share reflect financial strength and the sustainability of returns

Bursa Kuwait approves 2025 results & authorizes cash dividends of over KD 25.5 mln

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Boursa Kuwait held its ordinary general assembly meeting for the year 2025 on Sunday, 5th April 2026, chaired by Chairman Mr. Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, with an attendance rate of 70.31% of shareholders.

During the meeting, the assembly approved all items on its agenda, foremost among them the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute cash dividends of 127 fils per share, totaling 25,498,520 Kuwaiti dinars (twenty-five million, four hundred ninety-eight thousand, five hundred and twenty Kuwaiti dinars only).

These dividends are payable to shareholders registered in the company's records at the end of the entitlement date, set for 20 April 2026, and will be distributed to shareholders on 23 April 2026.

The assembly also approved the Board of Directors' report, the auditor's report, and the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2025, in addition to the corporate governance report, the audit committee report, and the remuneration of the Board of Directors members. The appointment of Ms. Shaikha Adnan AlFulajj from Ernst & Young – AlAiban, AlOsaimi & Partners – as auditor for the fiscal year ending 31 December 2026 was also approved.

Chairman **Mr. Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi** opened his speech during the general assembly stating: "We acknowledge the exceptional circumstances and accelerating challenges facing the region and affirm our pride and absolute confidence in the wise policies and sound approach of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah – may God protect and preserve him, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah – may God protect and preserve them – and the political leadership, which serves as a safety valve for our economic and national stability in the face of changes."

"At Boursa Kuwait, we draw from this vision our determination to continue the journey, praying to Almighty God to protect Kuwait, its leadership and people, and to bless it with the grace of security and stability," he added.

Al-Kharafi also commended the exceptional efforts of frontline personnel safeguarding the nation during this challenging period, extending his sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to the families of the martyrs.

The Boursa Kuwait Chairman reviewed the company's performance during 2025, emphasizing that it achieved numerous accomplishments throughout the year, despite the challenges, trade tensions, and geopolitical turmoil witnessed in the global economic environment.

He said: "The year 2025 marked a milestone in the institutional maturity of Boursa Kuwait, as the company continued to implement an integrated strategy that balances sustainable growth with institutional discipline, combining the development of operational infrastructure with the reinforcement of governance practices, thereby supporting performance sustainability and providing a clear long-term vision."

"In an environment of increasing levels of global economic uncertainty and evolving geopolitical challenges, the Kuwaiti capital market has proven its resilience and ability to adapt to challenges, thanks to the reform-oriented economic policies and a financial system operating within well-established regulatory and operational frameworks," stated Al-Kharafi.

Boursa Kuwait continues to adapt to regional geopolitical changes by adopting a proactive approach focused on risk management and enhancing operational readiness. This has maintained market stability and the continuity of its performance, while efficiently moving forward with the implementation of strategic priorities, reflecting the robustness of the bourse's operational model and its ability to respond to various challenges.

Al-Kharafi highlighted Boursa Kuwait's exceptional performance during 2025, as the company's net profit increased by 55.01% to reach 28.18 million Kuwaiti dinars, while operating revenue grew by 38.60% to KD 50.33 million. Operating net profit amounted to KD 34.54 million, achieving growth of approximately 54.21%.

Boursa Kuwait also continued to strengthen its financial robustness, as total assets increased to KD 142.90 million, achieving a growth of 13.28, while shareholder equity rose by 17.35% to KD 79.27 million. Earnings per share increased by 55.01% to 140.36 fils for the year ended 31 December 2025, reaffirming the sustainability of returns and the improvement in earnings.

"Boursa Kuwait continued its role as a key driver of market development through qualitative initiatives that enhanced liquidity, expanded the investor base and facilitated the entry of foreign capital, in line with 'Kuwait Vision 2035' and the state's development plan to diversify the economy and double its size over the next decade," stated Al-Kharafi.

The year 2025 witnessed a landmark milestone in the market development journey with the launch of the second part of the third phase of the Market Development Program (MD 3.2), a pivotal step that enhanced market efficiency, increased liquidity, and strengthened its competitiveness.

MD 3.2 included an integrated package of operational and regulatory infrastructure development initiatives, as well as the expansion of invest-



Bader Al-Kharafi



Mohammed Al-Osaimi



Boursa Kuwait AGM in progress.

ment products in the Kuwaiti capital market, including the launch of the Central Counterparty (CCP) system, which contributes to reducing risks and enhancing the efficiency of clearing and settlement operations in line with the best international standards.

It also included the completion of cash settlement through settlement banks and via the Central Bank of Kuwait's "KASSIP" system, alongside the upgrade of brokerage firms' business model to "Qualified Broker," a step representing a qualitative shift in market structuring. MD 3.2 also included the creation of sub-account numbers within omnibus accounts, enhancing transparency levels and improving the accuracy of monitoring and supervision.

Additionally, technical infrastructure was upgraded, and necessary technical tests were completed in cooperation with relevant authorities, in preparation for the listing and trading of new financial instruments, including exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and fixed-income instruments such as bonds and sukuk. This contributed to the diversification of investment products and the deepening of the market.

MD 3.2 was the result of integrated efforts and high-level institutional coordination between Boursa Kuwait, the Capital Markets Authority, the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Kuwait Clearing Company, with advanced alignment between regulatory, technical and operational frameworks, enhancing the market's readiness to transition to more advanced and mature stages.

The Boursa Kuwait Chairman concluded his speech by extending his thanks to the shareholders of Boursa Kuwait Securities Company for their trust and continuous support, which contributed to solidifying the company's position as a leading financial market in the region, supporting its role in diversifying the national economy and advancing the transformation to an advanced financial, cultural and investment hub in the region.

He also expressed his gratitude to the members of the Board of Directors and Executive Management for their contributions in guiding the company's strategic direction and developing the Kuwaiti capital market and extended his appreciation to all Boursa Kuwait employees for their dedicated efforts and vital role in achieving the company's strategic objectives.

Boursa Kuwait continued its efforts to deepen the Kuwaiti capital market and expand its base during 2025, as the year witnessed the listing of

Action Energy Company in the energy sector of the "Premier" Market, bringing the total number of listed companies to 140, of which 34 are listed on the "Premier" Market. The company's listing process included a primary and secondary offering of approximately 260 million shares, representing about 45.9% of the company's capital.

The bourse also launched the "Emerging Companies" Market, supporting entrepreneurship and enabling promising ventures to access more flexible financing channels within a balanced regulatory environment that enhances investor confidence and aligns with global best practices. part of a collaborative effort between the capital market apparatus, the launch comes in line with a strategic vision aimed at building a diversified and sustainable economy led by the private sector.

In addition, requirements for the "Main" Market were developed to facilitate the listing of companies, particularly family-owned businesses, to enhance sectoral diversity and enrich available investment opportunities.

Record Numbers and a Qualitative Leap

In remarks highlighting Boursa Kuwait's exceptional achievements, Chief Executive Officer **Mr. Mohammed Saud Al-Osaimi** affirmed that the development of the Kuwaiti capital market, which is in line with global best practices, contributed to enhancing investor confidence and was directly reflected in market performance, which achieved a qualitative leap during 2025, recording record figures across various indicators.

"Trading value increased by 79.26% to reach KD 26.58 billion, while trading volume reached 117.43 billion shares, a growth of 71.48%. The market also witnessed an expansion in trading activity, with the number of transactions rising by 54.57%, surpassing six million transactions and marking the highest annual growth rate since the establishment of Boursa Kuwait," he said.

Al-Osaimi also pointed to the bourse's efforts to enhance market efficiency and strengthen its competitiveness and attractiveness to investors, which was reflected in comprehensive growth across key indicators. Total market capitalization increased by 22.05%, while the "Premier" Market index rose by 21.17%, the "Main" Market index by 20.20%, with the All-Share Index rising by 20.99%, all reaching unprecedented levels.

The CEO also stated that the market witnessed a notable acceleration in capital movement, with the turnover ratio reaching 50%, reflecting the deepening of the market and the accelerated movement of capital.

Meanwhile, market makers continued their upward trajectory, with total trades reaching approximately KD5.38 billion in 2025, representing an increase of 88.63% and reflecting their growing role in market activity.

Active accounts also increased by 111.52% to reach approximately 477 thousand accounts, a notable expansion of the Kuwaiti capital market's investor base, while institutional investors rose by 63.84%, enhancing market stability and improving liquidity quality.

"The "Premier" Market maintained its share of the largest portion of market capitalization, which reached approximately KD 43.85 billion, recording a growth of 24.12%. It also saw the trading of 43.08 billion shares worth KD 14.97 billion across approximately 2.42 million transactions," said Al-Osaimi.

"Meanwhile, the "Main" Market emerged as an effective driver of trading volumes, with active trading exceeding 73.70 billion shares worth nearly KD 11.6 billion through over 3.61 million transactions. Its market capitalization reached KD 9.34 billion, rising by 13.21%, which is a clear indication of the growing interest of investors in mid-cap and growth companies for the purpose of diversifying their investment portfolios," he said.

Al-Osaimi concluded his remarks by extending his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Board of Directors for their confidence in Boursa Kuwait's Executive Management and their continuous support in achieving the company's strategy.

"I would also like to express my gratitude to the Capital Markets Authority, the Kuwait Clearing Company and the supporters of the Kuwaiti capital market apparatus for their constructive cooperation. I also value the efforts of all Boursa Kuwait employees, who contributed with their dedication and competence to the implementation of transformation plans and the achievement of these remarkable results," he added.

Al-Osaimi also reaffirmed Boursa Kuwait's commitment to the development of products and services, enhancing innovation and investing in technical infrastructure and national talent to support Kuwait's position as a regional financial hub that is attractive to capital and a key contributor to the state's aspirations for sustainable economic development.

The exceptional results and figures of 2025 represent a new chapter of success for Boursa Kuwait, affirming the strength of its foundations and its ability to transform accelerating challenges into genuine growth opportunities.

Driven by its commitment to diversifying products and services in line with global best practices, Boursa Kuwait leverages its advanced infrastructure and strong investor confidence to remain a cornerstone of the national economy and a premier investment destination supporting Kuwait's vision for sustainable development.

Oil prices surge to \$156.5

Kuwait's economy showed resilience amid March crisis

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Kuwaiti economy presented a different model for managing shocks in the month of March.

According to a report broadcast by Kuwait TV titled "The Resilience of the Kuwaiti Economy in the Face of Crises," the success of the Kuwaiti economy was not limited to maintaining stability. Its indicators also showed a clear ability to function efficiently under direct pressure, supported by a strong financial and institutional foundation.

The report explained that economic and financial indicators followed a balanced trajectory throughout the 30 days of the crisis. This balance reflected modest gains from the sharp rise in oil prices, the stability of vital sectors, uninterrupted business operations, and the continued flow of liquidity in the financial markets.

The report also highlighted the stabilization of Kuwait's sovereign credit rating during a highly sensitive period.

It affirmed that management of the Kuwaiti economy does not rely on immediate reactions but on an integrated system built on strong financial buffers, conservative policies, and high operational readiness.

The report explained that the sharp rise in oil prices was one of the most significant developments during the crisis, with the price per barrel reaching approximately \$156.5 on March 21. This historic level supports the country's projected revenues and strengthens its ability to confront economic challenges.

The report also emphasized Standard & Poor's affirmation of Kuwait's long-term sovereign rat-

ing at AA-, which reflects the resilience of the Kuwaiti economy with a stable outlook, even amid heightened geopolitical tensions in the region.

Despite security incidents, including drone attacks targeting the Al-Ahmadi and Mina Abdullah refineries, the oil sector continued to operate efficiently with minimal disruption.

The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries successfully activated their emergency and business continuity plans, ensuring an uninterrupted fuel supply to power and desalination plants.

The report confirmed that Boursa Kuwait successfully completed the first review of the FTSE Russell and Standard & Poor's indices, thus attracting foreign liquidity of approximately 37 million dinars at a time when global markets were in a state of anticipation.

Market capitalization also remained stable at around 50 billion dinars, reflecting the market's ability to absorb short-term pressures.

The report highlighted the response of national airlines to operational challenges, as they adopted alternative measures to ensure the continuity of flights. Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways operated through airports in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including King Fahd International Airport in Dammam and Qaisumah Airport, while also providing ground transportation services for passengers.

At the local market level, the last days of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr witnessed remarkable consumer activity, with large crowds visiting shopping malls and traditional markets. This surge in purchasing reflects strong confidence in the stability of the situation and indicates the Kuwaiti economy's transition from being affected by crises to effectively managing them.

Kuwait-Nepal direct link restored via Dammam corridor

Jazeera Airways launches first flight to Kathmandu



Jazeera Airways 1st flight to Kathmandu.



KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, today announced the successful operation of its first flight to Kathmandu, Nepal, marking the first direct connectivity between Kuwait and Nepal since the closure of Kuwait International Airport.

The milestone flight was operated via the King Fahad International Airport in Dammam, one of the airline's dual-base network in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This integrated air-and-land corridor continues to provide a reliable alternative, enabling passengers to travel to and from Kuwait despite ongoing operational constraints.

The restoration of Kathmandu reconnects Kuwait with Nepal at a critical time, providing a vital link for the Nepali community, one

of the largest expatriate populations in Kuwait. The service supports passengers traveling to reunite with families, return home, or resume work, while also facilitating the movement of essential cargo.

Since the launch of its dual-base operations, Jazeera Airways has progressively rebuilt its network, now serving 36 cities across 10 countries, with over 1,500 flights and more than 450,000 seats scheduled through 15 May. The addition of Kathmandu further strengthens this expanding corridor, reinforcing the airline's role in maintaining essential connectivity.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said:

"The operation of our first flight to Kathmandu marks an important milestone in re-

storing connectivity between Kuwait and Nepal following the airport closure. While conditions remain complex, our focus is clear - ensuring safe, reliable travel for our passengers and supporting the communities that depend on these links. We are proud to reconnect Kuwait with Kathmandu and look forward to taking Nepalis even closer home to other destinations in the country."

Jazeera Airways continues to work closely with authorities and partners across Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to expand capacity and reopen critical routes, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity for both passengers and cargo.

Passengers can book seats through the Jazeera Airways website jazeeraairways.com or mobile application.

Market value falls 74.6% amid regional tensions

Real estate trading drops sharply in March

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: The Iranian-American war has affected the local real estate market, which witnessed a sharp decline in trading activity in March, falling to 305 transactions worth KD156 million, compared to 479 transactions worth KD616 million in February -- 74.61 percent decrease in value and 36.33 percent decrease in the number of transactions.

According to data from the Real Estate Registration and Documen-

tation Department at the Ministry of Justice, the number of private real estate transactions last month reached 233 worth KD91 million or 76.89 percent of the total transactions, followed by investment real estate, which recorded 62 transactions worth KD53 million or 26.6 percent.

The data showed remarkable decline in real estate performance with only one transaction worth KD2 million, compared to 32 transactions worth KD184 million in February. This shows the cautious anticipation surrounding the real estate market, especially with the escalation of the US-Iran war and the geopolitical events in the region.

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait continues achievements, wins global awards & innovates more digital solutions with record-breaking digital services



KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues to focus on its digital transformation strategy, aimed at delivering more digital banking solutions, products, and services that keep pace with developments in the banking industry, while strengthening its position in the banking sector, enhancing customer confidence, and attracting more customers to benefit from the advantages it provides.

The launch of the Bank's fully revamped mobile application represents the latest example of its ongoing commitment to placing the latest banking technologies in the hands of its customers, saving them time and effort by enabling them to complete their transactions easily around the clock according to the highest security standards.

On this occasion, Acting Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait, Ahmad AlDuwaisan, said, "We have achieved significant success on the digital front and recorded growth across multiple indicators, which enhanced customer experience and contributed to winning several global awards from specialised performance assessment institutions, including six awards from Global Finance and MEED. This reflects the strong capabilities of our team and the high level of innovation demonstrated through the digital solutions we bring to the market."

AlDuwaisan added that the Bank continues its digital transformation journey across various divisions, demonstrated through the launch of several advanced solutions in collaboration with technology partners. He noted the development of the Bank's ATM network to become among the most advanced in the banking sector, providing solutions that enhance productivity and accelerate self-service transactions.

He also revealed that the coming period will witness notable progress in empowering digital channels to become the optimal method for delivering a distinctive banking experience to all customers.

Sustainable Growth

Over recent months, the Bank processed more than 60 million digital transactions through its integrated digital ecosystem. It also continued enhancing point-of-sale capabilities, digital wallets, and digital channels including smartphones, tablets, cash deposit and withdrawal machines, and interactive voice response services, positioning them as essential pillars of the Bank's daily operations.

At the same time, the number of users of the ABK mobile application and digital services increased by 40% year-on-year, while active users grew by more than 30%, reflecting strong customer engagement and positive adoption trends.

200 Digital Features

The ABK mobile application was designed to be faster and more comprehensive in support of the Bank's expansion vision, enabling enhanced personalisation and significantly improving the speed of service delivery. More than 200 digital features were introduced through over 20 releases, with the app achieving its highest rating of 4.7, reflecting strong customer satisfaction. During the past year, updates were delivered approximately every two weeks, marking a milestone in the team's operational development to meet the Bank's ambitions.

Four Key Pillars

Digital development was built on four key pillars: simplicity, inclusivity, personalisation, and governance. Customers benefited from a wide range of services through continuous



Ahmad AlDuwaisan

enhancements, including instant issuance of virtual cards, comprehensive card controls, family banking features, ABK Wealth Management transfers, and the ability to easily open accounts, cards, and loans. The Bank also simplified beneficiary additions through QR codes or mobile numbers and introduced seasonal services such as Eidiya WAMD, reinforcing its commitment to innovation and simplifying banking transactions.

The Bank also successfully transformed its cash deposit and withdrawal machines into comprehensive digital service points, enabling customers to complete transactions independently without waiting. These machines now support

a broad range of services including credit card payments, local and international transfers, bill payments, prepaid mobile top-ups, instant cheque deposits, cardless withdrawals, PIN management, and transactions based on near-field communication (NFC) technology.

Personalised Experience

Self-service experiences were further enhanced through customer segmentation, with tailored interfaces such as dark and light modes designed for ABK Wealth Management, Elite, and the Bank's wider customer base. This approach enables ABK to deliver distinctive experiences reflecting added value, depth of service, and stronger engagement with each customer segment.

The Bank also strengthened its digital ecosystem by introducing a Digital Champions team across its branch network. This team acts as advisors supporting the digital transformation strategy by helping customers increase their awareness of digital services, answering inquiries, and ensuring the safe use of smart banking solutions.

Additionally, ABK launched Digital Islands as mobile digital branches extending its self-service ecosystem, allowing customers to complete transactions independently or with staff assistance in key locations. This initiative supports the Bank's flexibility in reaching customers and delivering comprehensive financial services across strategically important locations.

Corporate Banking Services and Operational Efficiency

On the corporate banking front, the Bank continued expanding its digital capabilities through instant cash deposit machines directly linked to corporate accounts, enabling automat-

ed cash transaction processing and supporting ABK's digital sustainability objectives. This also included digital onboarding for SMEs and the launch of new payment services such as Al Tajar Pay through the ABK mobile application.

Operational efficiency also improved significantly through robotic process automation across more than 23 processes using straight-through processing. These technologies executed more than 120,000 transactions automatically without employee intervention, resulting in faster completion times, improved accuracy, enhanced performance, and enabling employees to focus on higher-value activities.

In parallel, the Bank advanced its FinTech agenda by integrating artificial intelligence within a Proof-of-Concept framework focused on productivity and decision support. Key initiatives included developing a customer churn prediction model to identify risks early and enable proactive customer retention measures. The Bank also established core cloud capabilities through strategic partnerships, prioritising service enablement and information security.

These investments were reflected in customer experience results, with the ABK mobile app achieving its highest ever rating of 4.7 in digital stores during 2025, while average customer satisfaction reached approximately 90% by year-end.

AlDuwaisan concluded, "ABK remains one of the leading banks in the digital transformation journey, empowering customers to engage more continuously with smart solutions and delivering comprehensive and secure banking experiences in innovative ways that align with their daily needs and keep pace with ongoing developments in the banking industry."

National Investments Company Launches SHIFT Series 3 to Empower Kuwait's Next Generation of Women Leaders

شركة الاستثمارات الوطنية
National Investments Company

SHIFT Applications are now open for Kuwaiti female graduates through the NIC website.



Maryam Saif

National Investments Company (NIC) has announced the launch of SHIFT Series 3, the latest edition of its flagship development program designed to equip young Kuwaiti women with the skills, exposure, and confidence needed to take their first steps into the professional world and contribute meaningfully to Kuwait's future workforce.

Commenting on the launch, Maryam Saif, Managing Director, Human Capital, said: "SHIFT is a

clear example of how NIC translates its commitment to talent development into real, structured opportunity. We view the program not only as an investment in its participants, but also as an investment in the future of Kuwait's professional landscape, in line with NIC's broader strategic vision for sustainable national development."

She added: "As one of our flagship development programs, SHIFT supports the priorities of the Human Capital Division by nurturing emerging talent, strengthening leadership pathways, and contributing to a stronger, more future-ready workforce."

Developed as part of NIC's broader commitment to talent development and national progress, SHIFT is an opportunity tailored for Kuwaiti female fresh graduates. Through a carefully designed learning journey, the program reflects NIC's belief in the importance of investing in local talent and supporting the ambitions of Kuwait Vision 2035 by helping shape a capable, future-

ready generation of women leaders.

Following the success of its first two editions, SHIFT returns with 20 seats for Series 3, offering a highly focused and personalized experience that combines professional development, practical business exposure, and leadership-oriented learning. Across the first two editions of SHIFT, the program attracted more than 700 applications, with approximately 20 participants selected for each cohort, reflecting the strong level of interest in the program and its highly selective admissions process.

Reem Bin Yaqoub, Program Manager, People Science, Human Capital, added: "SHIFT was created to help young Kuwaiti women move from academic achievement to professional readiness with confidence, clarity, and capability. With each edition, we continue to strengthen the experience to ensure participants gain meaningful exposure, practical insight, and skills that support their long-term growth."

Across Series 1 and 2, SHIFT has trained 42 Kuwaiti women, with 10 participants going on to join NIC, reinforcing the program's role not only as a learning platform, but also as a strong pipeline for developing high-potential national talent.

The program is open to Kuwaiti women who are fresh graduates, and applications can be submitted through the NIC website at www.nic.com.kw/opportunities/shift-program. Candidates will be selected based on eligibility criteria and overall fit for the program.

Running from April 26 to June 4, SHIFT Series 3 will take place over 6 weeks and will cover a range of areas designed to prepare participants for career success. The curriculum includes immersive learning experiences covering the financial industry, leadership development, and practical business exposure, designed to deepen participants' understanding of NIC, the wider financial sector, and core investment concepts, while giving them

broader exposure to the organization and its functions. The program also includes behavioral development sessions delivered in partnership with Somou Academy.

Applications for SHIFT Series 3 are now open. Eligible candidates are invited to apply through the NIC website at:

www.nic.com.kw/opportunities/shift-program

SHIFT reflects NIC's ongoing commitment to developing national talent and supporting the next generation of Kuwaiti women as they begin their professional journey. Through initiatives such as this, NIC continues to contribute to a stronger, more dynamic, and future-ready private-sector workforce in Kuwait.

As one of the leading investment institutions locally and regionally, National Investments Company (NIC) remains committed to delivering integrated and innovative investment solutions built on a deep understanding of markets



Reem Bin Yaqoub

and client needs. Through this approach, NIC aims to drive sustainable growth and create long-term value. The Company is also committed to upholding the highest standards of governance and transparency, reinforcing its position as a trusted partner in supporting and advancing the investment sector.

General Assembly elects new Board of Directors for the next three years

Valmore Holding General Assembly approves distribution of \$53 million in cash dividends

CAIRO, April 5: Valmore Holding announced the convening of its Ordinary General Assembly on April 2, 2026.

Ordinary General Assembly approved the financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 2025, which reflected strong financial and operational performance, with the Company reporting net profits of approximately USD 161 million, driven by operational growth and strategic portfolio optimization.

The Assembly also approved the distribution of approximately USD 53 million in cash dividends to shareholders, amounting to USD 0.045 per share (4.5 US cents). This milestone brings the cumulative dividends distributed since inception to nearly USD 1 billion, underscoring the Company's sustained commitment to shareholder returns.

The Ordinary General Assembly elected a new Board of Directors for a term of three years, as follows:

- Mr. Loay Jassim Al-Kharafi.
- Mr. Adel Moataz Al-Alfi.
- Mr. Jon Rökk.
- Ms. Heba Nasser Al-Kharafi.
- Mr. Talal Jassim Al-Kharafi.
- Mr. Ahmed Moataz Al-Alfi.
- Sheikh Mubarak Abdullah Al-Sabah.
- Mr. Hussam El-Sayed Hussein.
- Mr. Hesham Saad Mekawi.



Loay Al-Kharafi

- Mr. Amin Ahmed Abaza.
- Ms. Nada Mohamed Massoud.
- Eng. Osama Mohamed Kamal.
- Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Sobhy.

The Company's board of directors, held after the conclusion of the ordinary general meeting, decided to nominate Mr. Loay Jassim Al Kharafi as Chairman of the company, Mr. Adel Moataz Al-Alfi as Vice Chairman of the company, Mr. Jon Rökk as the Chief Executive Officer of the company.

The Company's management affirmed that these decisions reflect the strength of Valmore Holding's operational and financial foundations, underpinned by the resilience of its investment portfolio, disciplined capital allocation, and strong conviction in its core investment sectors. Management also highlighted the Company's continued ability to balance stable shareholder returns with long-term strategic growth opportunities through a disciplined investment approach focused on building resilient businesses and creating sustainable value.

Valmore Holding is a leading investment platform, building on a legacy that began in 1997. Its diversified investment portfolio spans five strategic sectors across multiple geographies, including chemicals, building materials, utilities, oil and gas, and non-banking financial services. Valmore continues to drive scalable growth through disciplined investments, delivering long-term sustainable value. The Company's shares are dual-listed on the Egyptian Stock Exchange under the symbols VLMR.CA and VLMRA.CA, and on Boursa Kuwait under the symbol VALMORE.KW.

S&P GCC Composite Index declined by 2.3% in March 2026

Markaz: Kuwait market resilient despite global sell-off and escalating geopolitical tensions

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" stated in its Monthly Market Review report that Kuwait equities remained resilient in March 2026, despite sharp draw downs in global equity markets.

The Kuwait All Share Index declined mildly in March 2026 by 1.8%, with the banking sector index falling 0.7%.

The performance of Banking stocks was mixed, with National Bank of Kuwait declining 2.8% for the month, while Kuwait International Bank gained 1.4%.

According to S&P Global, despite uncertainties stemming from the ongoing geopolitical conflict, the banking sector remains resilient, supported by strong asset quality (NPLs at 1.5%) and high provisioning buffers (around 252%), positioning domestic banks well to absorb potential shocks.

Jazeera Airways registered a decline in share price of 22.3% during the month, due to disruptions in operations caused by the closure of Kuwait's Airport.

S&P Global Ratings reaffirmed Kuwait's AA-/A-1+ rating with a stable outlook, citing strong fiscal buffers with substantial sovereign wealth fund assets (490% of GDP).

The Central Bank of Kuwait introduced a targeted stimulus package to support banking sector resilience and sustain credit flow amid geopolitical uncertainty.

Key measures include easing liquidity and capital requirements, raising lending limits to 100%, and releasing part of the capital buffer to enhance banks' lending capacity and short-term liquidity flexibility while maintaining overall financial stability.

Kuwait's real estate sales made a strong recovery in February 2026, reaching KD 518 million (119% m/m), after a decline in January 2026.

This rise was across all segments, with commercial sales showing the largest increase, reaching KD 184 million, the highest since August 2025.

Overall demand was supported by an improvement in non-oil activity and the anticipated real estate financing law.

However, the rising geopolitical tensions in the region is expected to weigh on sentiment, leading to softer sales over the next few months.

All GCC equity indices, except Saudi Arabia and Oman, ended the month on a negative note, with Dubai's DFM index falling the most by 16.4%.

Overall, the S&P GCC Composite Index declined by 2.3% despite a 5.0% rise in the Tadawul Index.

The decline was due to escalating geopolitical tensions and regional security developments.

Saudi Arabia's largest oil producer, the Saudi Arabian Oil Company, recorded a monthly gain of 9.8%, amid rising oil prices.

UAE equity markets declined sharply during the month, primarily driven by concerns over potential foreign capital outflows from the real estate sector, which weighed heavily on investor sentiment.

Dubai markets witnessed a steep correction as real estate and aviation-linked stocks came under pressure amid fears of reduced external investments and softer demand, with Emaar Properties declining by 27.8% for the month.

Similarly, Abu Dhabi's equity index



decreased by 8.9%, largely impacted by weakness in major blue-chip stocks.

Abu Dhabi-based Aldar Properties fell by 27.9% amid continued pressure on the real estate sector.

Oman equities continued to rally, with the broader index gaining 10.5% during the month.

As Oman is not directly affected by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, investors expect windfall benefits from higher oil prices and the rerouting of trade through Oman.

Oman's structural reforms and speculation regarding a possible MSCI emerging market upgrade also supported gains.

The Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates launched a resilience package easing liquidity and capital buffers while ensuring continued credit flow, including access to up to 30% of cash reserves.

The measures are supported by strong system liquidity of AED 920 billion and FX reserves exceeding AED1trillion, reinforcing stability amid uncertainty.

Reaffirmation of sovereign ratings by S&P across GCC indicates economic stability, with most countries maintaining investment-grade ratings and stable outlooks, supported by strong fiscal buffers and liquidity despite ongoing geopolitical risks.

The MSCI World Index and the S&P

500 declined by 6.6% and 5.1%, respectively, during March 2026.

The poor performance reflected oil price volatility and continued pressure on large-cap technology stocks amid inflation fears and uncertainty about monetary policy.

The Nasdaq Composite Index declined 4.9% during the month amid growing concerns about the Return on investment from increasing AI capex.

Emerging Markets, as measured by the MSCI EM Index, declined 13.3% during the month, primarily due to declines in heavily weighted blue-chip stocks.

Samsung Electronics and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing, which together account for roughly 19.5% (as of Feb 2026) of the index, declined by 22.8% and 11.8%, respectively.

The downturn was further exacerbated by a 11.5% decline in India's Sensex.

Meanwhile, China's Shanghai Composite Index fell by 6.5% for the month, driven by concerns over a rise in oil prices, as investors reassessed earnings expectations across transportation, industrial, consumer, and other energy-sensitive sectors.

The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury notes increased by 33 bps during the month to 4.30%, reflecting heightened concerns about near-term inflation.

This increase was primarily driven by a surge in energy prices, alongside growing expectations of a potential Federal Reserve rate hike, as escalating tensions in the Middle East and rising oil prices continue to amplify inflationary pressures.

Oil (Brent) prices closed at USD118.35/bbl. for the month, gaining 63.3%.

During the month, markets witnessed extreme volatility, with Brent surging to nearly USD 120/bbl. intraday, reflecting heightened fears of severe supply disruptions amid escalating geopolitical tensions and risks around the Strait of Hormuz.

The sharp move was driven by concerns over constrained supply flows, limited spare capacity among major producers, and the buildup of a significant geopolitical risk premium in oil prices.

Despite typically acting as a safe haven during geopolitical events, gold declined by 15% amid the ongoing conflict, primarily due to a stronger U.S. dollar and fading expectations of a Federal Reserve rate cut in June, which reduced its relative appeal.

The key driver of market movements in April 2026 is expected to remain ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, with markets increasingly focused on the conflict's duration and intensity.

The escalation has already led to significant disruptions in energy markets, pushing oil prices higher and reinforcing global inflation concerns.

In the GCC, elevated oil prices may provide some support for fiscal positions, though equity markets could remain under pressure from geopolitical overhang and capital-flow risks.

In developed and emerging markets, persistent inflation concerns and tighter financial conditions are likely to weigh on equities, with heightened sensitivity to energy prices and policy expectations.

Markets price in ECB rate hikes

Escalating geopolitical risks put oil spike, dollar recovery in focus

By National Bank of Kuwait

Global markets were driven by a sharp repricing of risk as oil surged and the U.S. dollar recovered amid escalating geopolitical tensions and mixed macro data. WTI crude rallied toward \$111 on fears of supply disruptions linked to the U.S. and Iran conflict and ongoing risks around the Strait of Hormuz, while safe haven demand supported the resurgence of a stronger USD after a two-day decline. At the same time, U.S. labor market data pointed to resilience amid mixed signals, with low layoffs, stronger hiring, and weaker job openings. In Europe, inflation picked up on higher energy prices, though underlying pressures remained softer, highlighting that the current macro backdrop is increasingly being shaped by geopolitics and energy driven inflation. On the other side, inflation in Tokyo slowed to a near two-year low largely due to government subsidies. However, yields on long term JGB bonds, particularly the 10-year bond, reached a 28-year high of 2.4%, reflecting market concerns on geopolitics and fiscal sustainability.

United States

Oil Prices Rise Amid Rising Tensions

WTI crude jumped to \$111.54 in the week ending April 3, gaining nearly 12% as markets rapidly repriced geopolitical risk amid heightened volatility. The rally was driven by escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, which raised concerns about potential disruptions to energy infrastructure and global supply. Sentiment weakened after President Trump warned that military operations could intensify in the coming weeks without a clear resolution, while Iran dismissed ceasefire prospects and reaffirmed their stance over the Strait of Hormuz, reinforcing fears of sustained risks to global oil flows.

ISM Manufacturing PMI Shows Underlying Inflationary Pressures

The U.S. ISM Manufacturing PMI rose to 52.7 in March 2026, surpassing expectations and marking the strongest factory growth since August 2022, primarily driven by increased production. However, underlying details were mixed, with new orders slowing and employment continuing to contract slightly. Inflation pressures intensified, with the prices index reaching its highest level since mid-2022, while supplier deliveries slowed further, pointing to ongoing supply chain constraints. Survey commentary reflected growing business concerns, as a majority

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.1511	1.1442	1.1627	1.1515	1.3100	1.1620	1.1561
GBP	1.3262	1.3156	1.3346	1.3189	1.3000	1.3300	1.3184
JPY	159.89	158.25	160.46	159.46	158.60	161.00	158.33
CHF	0.7945	0.7902	0.8042	0.8008	0.7900	0.8200	0.7929

of respondents reported negative sentiment driven by tariffs and the escalating Iran conflict, which is increasingly impacting operations alongside broader policy uncertainty.

JOLTS Job Openings Show Weak Demand for Workers

U.S. labor demand weakened in February, with job openings falling more than expected to 6.88 million, below forecasts and down from January levels. The job openings rate declined to 4.2%, while hiring dropped sharply by nearly 500,000 to 4.85 million, the lowest level since early 2020, pushing the hires rate down to 3.1%. Meanwhile, layoffs edged higher but remained relatively low, rising to 1.72 million. Overall, the data points to a cooling labor market, with slower hiring and reduced demand for workers.

Unemployment Claims Reinforces "Low Hire, Low Fire" Economy

U.S. jobless claims fell unexpectedly last week, with initial applications dropping to 202,000, signaling that layoffs remain low and the labor market stayed stable through March. This came in below expectations of 212,000. However, continuing claims rose to 1.841 million, suggesting it is taking longer for unemployed individuals to find new jobs. While continuing claims have eased from last year's highs, this may partly reflect workers exhausting their benefits rather than stronger hiring. Supporting this, recent data showed a sharper than expected decline in job openings and hiring slowing to its weakest pace in nearly six years. Economists also flagged that an extended Middle East conflict could pose downside risks to the labor market outlook.

NFP Exceeds Expectations

U.S. nonfarm payrolls rose by 178,000 in March, far exceeding expectations of 65,000, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate declined to 4.3%, while average hourly earnings increased 0.2% on the month and 3.5% YoY. The stronger than expected data comes despite a backdrop of falling job openings and heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 100.03.

Eurozone

Eurozone Inflation Surges in March

Eurozone inflation rose to 2.5% in March from 1.9% in February, slightly below expectations but showing a clear acceleration, with monthly prices increasing 1.2% at the fastest pace since late 2022. The increase was driven mainly by energy, which rebounded to 4.9% year on year after contracting the previous month, reflecting higher oil and gas prices linked to Middle East tensions and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. Despite the rise in headline inflation, underlying pressures remained softer as core inflation eased to 2.3%, while services inflation edged down to 3.2% and non-energy industrial goods slowed to 0.5%, indicating the move was largely energy driven. On the backdrop of the higher inflation reading, markets are pricing in three ECB rate hikes by year-end.

The EUR/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.1515.

Asia-Pacific

Tokyo Inflation Slows Amid Surging Yields and Potential Hikes

Tokyo's core inflation slowed to a near two-year low in March, coming in at 1.7% year on year and remaining below the Bank of Japan's target for a second consecutive month, largely due to falling energy costs driven by government subsidies. However, the slowdown is expected to be temporary, as rising oil prices linked to Middle East tensions and higher import costs from a weaker yen are likely to push inflation higher. Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda signaled that currency movements are a key driver of price pressures and could justify a near term rate hike, with markets currently pricing in about a 57% chance of tightening at the upcoming policy meeting in late April. Furthermore, market worries about the impact of a potential energy shock in Japan along with concerns about fiscal sustainability prompted yields on 10-year JGBs to reach a 28 year high of 2.4%.

The USD/JPY currency pair was last seen trading at 159.46.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30685.

The Conversation

'Markets brace for a less predictable Fed'

Kevin Warsh's Fed vision centers on messaging over interest rates

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

By Simon Bowmaker

New York University

Since President Donald Trump named Kevin Warsh as his choice for Federal Reserve chair on Jan. 30, 2026, financial markets have focused on one question: Is he still the inflation hawk he once was, or is he now more comfortable with the lower interest rates that the president has long demanded?

We have a different take. Drawing on decades of research on central banking and an extended interview with Warsh conducted by one of us (Bowmaker) in 2023 for a forthcoming book on the Fed, we think the real change would be not in interest rates but in how the Fed communicates.

It's no small matter. In modern central banking, policymakers' pronouncements often shape the economy as much as their actual decisions.

The 2023 interview supports that view. Two themes ran through Warsh's answers. The first was expected - a commitment to price stability. The second was more revealing: a desire to rethink how the Federal Reserve conducts its internal policy discussions and communicates them to the public.

In the interview, Warsh illustrated this with a story from 2006, when he was nominated to the Fed's Board of Governors and sought advice from former chair Paul Volcker. Volcker told him the first task was to get interest rates "about right" - a phrase that, as Warsh noted, reflects the reality that policymakers never know the precise optimal level.

But Volcker added a second lesson he considered even more important: Make sure you look like you know what you are doing.

As Warsh interpreted it, modern central banking is not only about setting policy but also about presenting outcomes as the result of fulsome deliberation.

Warsh said he favors what he calls a "family fight" model of policymaking: open disagreement behind closed doors followed by unity in public. Recalling the 2007-09 financial crisis when the Fed was led by Ben Bernanke, he described arguments running their course in the chair's office before members of the Fed's rate-setting committee, known as the Federal Open Market Committee, reached their final decision and spoke collectively.

According to Warsh, large institutions - especially in times of crisis - need to project a single voice.

In a 2014 review for the Bank of England, Warsh recommended that their policy meetings begin with an unrecorded discussion - essentially the same "family fight."

His concern was that transcripts, even when released years later, can shape how officials speak. If policymakers know their words will eventually be scrutinized, they tend to hedge and qualify their views rather than speaking plainly. In that sense, the effort to avoid appearing wrong can weaken decision-making.

That position puts him at odds with the Federal Reserve's path over the past three decades - all in the name of reducing uncertainty, stabilizing

expectations and improving policy effectiveness.

Beginning in 1994, under Alan Greenspan, the Fed started publicly announcing its interest rate decisions, a major break from earlier practice when markets had to infer policy changes.

Bernanke expanded that shift after the financial crisis, introducing quarterly press conferences and forward guidance on interest rates, as well as publishing FOMC participants' projections - the so-called "dot plot."

His successors, Janet Yellen and Jerome Powell, largely kept the framework in place, with current chair Powell holding a press conference after every meeting and trying to replace "Fed speak" with clearer language. The result is a central bank far more open than at any point in its history, explaining not only its decisions but also how it interprets the economy.

Warsh is skeptical about this approach. He worries that publishing policymakers' projections engenders "a troubling convergence of views," as he said in the 2023 interview, stifling genuine disagreement inside the committee.

In his view, short-term forecasting offers limited benefit while subtly shaping how officials think about policy.

Warsh's concern extends to communication more broadly. In his view, expansive messaging can make it harder to adjust policy as conditions change. As he said in the interview, extensive communication constrains a central banker's "ability to change his mind," yet "a central bank that can't change its mind isn't credible."

For Warsh, credibility comes from adaptability rather than consistency - a stance that could call into question practices such as the dot plot.

Why does this all matter?

Modern financial markets respond as much to signals as they do to actions. Investors do not wait for interest rates to change; they adjust their behavior based on expectations of the central bank's moves. Forward guidance and projections reduce uncertainty by helping markets anticipate policy.

A shift toward less explicit signaling would not necessarily make policy tighter or looser, but we believe it would make it less predictable - even though speaking with a single voice might partially offset this. Market reactions could become more sensitive to incoming data due to fewer clues about the Fed's intentions.

The implications extend beyond Wall Street. Mortgage rates, business investment and hiring decisions all depend on expectations about future borrowing costs. Clear communication stabilizes those expectations, while greater discretion gives policymakers flexibility to respond to surprises.

Warsh's approach, based on the 2023 interview, suggests he wants to trade some of that predictability for flexibility. In our assessment, the public may hear less about where policy is heading but see faster changes when economic conditions shift.

We cannot predict whether Warsh will push for lower interest rates or follow Volcker's advice to get policy "about right." But his own words suggest he will try to reshape how the Federal Reserve debates, signals and justifies its decisions - and in modern central banking, changing communication can change policy itself. (AP)

'Blades of the Guardians' delivers a fresh edge to the genre

Chinese film brings Wuxia's lasting appeal to global screens

LONDON, April 5, (Xinhua): On a lively Tuesday night in Leicester Square, one moviegoer stood out from the crowd. Dressed in flowing dark robes, he evoked the wandering swordsmen of Chinese Wuxia tales, an image that set the tone for the British premiere of "Blades of the Guardians."

The film debuted at the Vue West End cinema ahead of its release in the United Kingdom and Ireland on April 17, drawing around 160 guests, including martial arts enthusiasts, film industry professionals and curious newcomers. The event underscored the enduring global appeal of Wuxia, a genre of Chinese fiction or cinema featuring the adventures of martial artists in ancient China.

Among attendees was Londoner Azeem Mustafa, a longtime fan of Wuxia cinema who grew up watching classics such as "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." He praised director and action choreographer



Actor Jackie Chan poses at the boot ceremony of the film 'Bleeding Steel' in Sydney, Australia, July 28, 2016. The science-fiction thriller 'Bleeding Steel' is Jackie Chan's first movie in the sci-fi genre and will be filmed across various locations, including Beijing, Taipei and Sydney. (Xinhua)

Yuen Woo-ping as "a master of action choreography," noting that the new film brings a fresh edge to the

genre.

"It felt more hard-edged than the average wuxia picture, and at times

more animation-influenced," Mustafa said. "But it still stays true to the moral structure that gives Wuxia its emotional depth."

Mustafa also highlighted the cultural crossover appeal of wuxia. Mustafa said British audiences can readily connect with Wuxia through its themes of chivalry and honor. In his view, the genre mirrors the British tradition of chivalry, sharing a common emphasis on "a sense of honor" and "a higher moral balance in the world."

Cedric Behrel, co-founder and managing director of distributor Trinity CineAsia, noted that "Blades of the Guardians" gathered four generations of martial arts performers, offering multiple entry points for audiences.

"The film has also benefited from strong word of mouth and positive responses from both fans and critics," Behrel said, adding that Wuxia's ability to evolve while pre-

serving its essence is central to its longevity. "It's one of cinema's sacred genres. It will never die."

That sentiment carried through the evening, including at an after-party where martial artist Matthew Ahmet performed a live demonstration alongside his son and a student. Ahmet described martial arts as transformative, shaping him "not just physically, but also mentally."

The event also reflected a broader shift in how Wuxia is experienced. Once confined to niche screenings, martial arts films now reach wider audiences in major cinemas, supported by social media buzz and cross-cultural marketing efforts.

Mike Fury, founder of The Warrior publicity agency, said Britain has long embraced Wuxia, dating back to icons like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. However, visibility has expanded significantly in recent years.

Films like this are no longer hidden away in smaller venues, Fury

said. "They're opening in a major central theater, with longtime fans now bringing their children."

For performers like Samuel Mak of the Great Britain Wushu Team, the genre's evolution is evident on screen.

"Bigger budgets were visible in the costumes, cinematography, color grading and use of natural landscapes. And the storytelling had broadened too," he said.

Stuntwoman Ayesha Hussain, whose credits include Deadpool & Wolverine and Gladiator 2, praised the film's choreography, emphasizing its balance between tradition and innovation.

"Chinese action is often tighter and more precise," she said. Where Western action can feel grittier, and more punishing, Chinese action retains "a dance element."

"That difference is part of what makes Chinese action cinema distinctive," she stressed.

Music

Singer lets hits speak

Ye attempts comeback with sold-out LA show

LOS ANGELES, April 5, (AP): The artist formerly and possibly again known as Kanye West revealed in support from one of his musical idols, Lauryn Hill, as he staged a sold-out Southern California concert meant to mark a comeback from years of controversy.

Eleven months after releasing a song titled "Heil Hitler" and just over two months after publishing an apology letter for his antisemitism, Ye let two decades of hits - and 70,000 screaming loyal fans - speak the loudest on Friday night at SoFi Stadium.

"I want to thank y'all for sticking by me all these years. Through the hard times, through the low times," he told the crowd. "I love you for that."

Hill joined Ye on a stage for the first time ever for an energetic rendition of his 2004 hit "All Falls Down," which originally sampled her voice. Ye left the stage as she performed "Lost Ones" and "Doo Wop (That Thing)" before rejoining for his 2021 "Doo Wop" -sampling song "Believe What I Say." They hugged as she exited.

Travis Scott, CeeLo Green and Ye's tween daughter North West also strapped on safety harnesses to join Ye high above the stadium floor atop a striking half-orb stage, which alternately depicted a moon, a rotating Earth and a smoking sphere throughout the two hours-plus livestreamed performance.

A loud singalong of "Heartless" midway through the more than 40-song Good Friday show seemed to boost Ye's spirits: "That's what 80,000 people sound like, ladies and gentlemen. ... They said I'd never be back in the States. Two sold-out concerts, baby!"

Performance

The first SoFi show Wednesday, his first major US performance in nearly five years, turned out to be more of a warm-up as Ye was tentative in his rapping and drew attention to technical mishaps.

Fans at that show said they separated the 48-year-old performer's personal beliefs and public statements from his music - and were ready to forgive after his January apology letter.

"You gotta back your family no matter what," said Vince Da Prince, a rapper from Downey, Calif. "He's a part of our fam since we were little kids."

Added fan Yovani Contreras: "I don't really bring into politics or the way someone's personal opinion are. I'm into the music artistry ... Like, I just, to me, Ye is always gonna be Ye. Kanye is always gonna be Kanye."

Luis Velasquez said he'd been a longtime fan and had been put off by controversies in recent years, but felt the apology was sincere.

"Yeah he did apologize," he said. "He's taking the medication I think is what he mentioned. ... For me as a fan that's, like, respect, right? Like I think that's cool enough to bridge that gap."

Ye released his latest album, "Bully," under both the names Ye and Kanye West, at the end of March. He dominated hip-hop and pop charts in the 2000s and early 2010s, winning 24 Grammy Awards despite public outbursts and a polarizing personality. He lost nearly all his major business partnerships and many fans after a string of controversies in the last several years including antisemitic remarks and social media posts.

He closed Friday night's show with his "toast to the douchebags" hit "Runaway," and walked out of the stadium behind his wife Bianca Censori and two of his children.



Kanye West, known as Ye, watches the first half of an NBA basketball game between the Washington Wizards and the Los Angeles Lakers, on March 11, 2022, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Canada's Artemis II astronaut gives thumbs-up to 'Project Hail Mary' film

HOUSTON, April 5, (AP): The new space movie "Project Hail Mary" starring Ryan Gosling is getting rave reviews more than halfway to the moon.

Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen said Saturday that he and his Artemis II crewmates got to watch the film with their families before launching on the lunar fly-around. He said it was "a real treat" to view the movie while getting ready for his own space adventure.

Gosling, a fellow Canadian, sent best wishes to the four astronauts ahead of Wednesday's liftoff.

"Art imitates science and vice versa," Hansen said during a live televised event arranged by the Canadian Space Agency. "I thought it was just such an inspirational example - somebody who goes out there and just gets what was done to save humanity. It's a pretty extraordinary example that we can all follow."

Hansen is the first non-US citizen to fly to the moon.



This image released by Amazon MGM Studios shows Ryan Gosling in a scene from 'Project Hail Mary.' (AP)

Viewers favor emotional resonance over spectacle

Hollywood blockbusters falter in China

BEIJING, April 5, (Xinhua): Hollywood films performing strongly in North America are attracting considerably smaller audiences in China, highlighting a marked shift in viewing preferences in the world's second-largest film market.

A total of 11 foreign films opened in Chinese cinemas in March, a traditionally slow period following the Chinese New Year holiday. Together they generated 371 million yuan (about 54 million US dollars), or just 17.5 percent of China's total monthly box office revenue, according to Chen Jin, an analyst at the data platform Beacon.

Only two titles -- Amazon MGM's sci-fi adventure film "Project Hail Mary" and Disney's original animation "Hoppers" -- crossed the 100 million yuan mark, data from both Beacon and ticketing platform Maoyan showed. "Project Hail Mary" took in 141 million yuan in March, while "Hoppers" earned about 120 million yuan. Several other Hollywood releases performed far more modestly. An adaptation of the classic novel "Wuthering Heights" grossed just about 34 million yuan, while Timothée Chalamet's "Marty Supreme" took in only around 3.7 million yuan.

But the two better-performing titles have still significantly underperformed their North American runs. According to Maoyan data, "Project Hail Mary" has grossed 177 million US dollars in North America as of March 31, while "Hoppers" has taken in 141 million dollars -- a gap that



Audiences walk past movie posters at a cinema in Mengzi City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, Feb. 19, 2026. (AP)

points to broader changes in China's film market.

Chen described the two films' performance in China as "higher than local market expectations," noting that "Project Hail Mary" benefited from strong word-of-mouth and scored a higher box office in the second weekend than its debut weekend. On the Chinese review platform Douban, the film secured a rating of 8.5 out of 10, while "Hoppers" scored a respectable 7.6. Beacon's forecasts project a final China gross of over 200 million yuan for "Project Hail Mary" and over 160 million yuan for "Hoppers."

The cause of the disparity between the two markets remains clear. Chen attributed it in part to the films' rela-

tively niche appeal in China. "Project Hail Mary," with its 157-minute runtime and hard science-fiction themes, may deter casual viewers, while "Hoppers" lacks the kind of established intellectual property that typically draws family audiences in small cities.

"Most imported films currently have a limited core audience in China," he said.

Lai Li, an analyst at Maoyan, offered a similar perspective. Despite the gap with North America, he noted, China is already the second-largest box office contributor globally for both films -- a result that exceeded initial market expectations.

Audience reactions, however, sug-

gest a deeper ambivalence. "If you lower your expectations, it's actually quite enjoyable," one moviegoer wrote on social media. "But I'm really tired of Hollywood's formulaic plots and cookie-cutter characters."

The broader trend, analysts say, reflects a fundamental shift in the composition of China's film market. Since 2020, domestically produced films have accounted for roughly 80 percent of annual box office revenue, up from about 50 to 60 percent before 2019, according to Beacon data.

Rao Shuguang, president of the China Film Critics Association, said audience preferences have evolved significantly in recent years. "In the past, audiences were drawn to Hollywood for its industrial-scale spectacle," Rao told Xinhua. "Now they are no longer simply chasing visual effects, but are looking for emotional resonance and empathy."

He added that geopolitical tensions may also have influenced viewing choices, while underlining the importance of preserving a diverse film market. A wider range of international films, he said, can help broaden audience tastes while encouraging the domestic industry to improve quality and sustain long-term development.

For Hollywood studios, the March figures serve as a reminder that success in North America no longer guarantees comparable results in China. For China's film industry, the divergence signals a market that is becoming more self-defined and less dependent on imported blockbusters.

Variety

NEW YORK: Yup, she wore something blue.

Zendaya, surprising precisely nobody on the planet, showed up in dazzling blue at Thursday's New York premiere of "The Drama," after teasing the bridal theme for weeks by wearing something old, then something new, then something borrowed.

Her strapless Schiaparelli Haute Couture ball gown, accompanied by sapphire earrings, completed the sartorial series just in time for the opening of her movie - a film that has attracted considerable controversy and mixed reviews. Zendaya and Robert Pattinson play a couple whose wedding plans go seriously awry following a dark revelation.

The high-fashion appearances have also echoed the bridal theme of Zendaya's own life, with unconfirmed speculation flying - fed in part by rings she's been wearing - that she's already married to partner Tom Holland. (AP)



Zendaya



This image provided by the Canadian Space Agency, Artemis II astronaut Jeremy Hansen of Canada, connects live from the Orion spacecraft and speaks with Canadian media along with astronauts Victor Glover, left, and Reid Wiseman on Saturday, April 4. (AP)

Modern life, funding shortfalls threaten heritage

English choirs seek to preserve musical tradition

LONDON, April 5, (AP) — On a gray afternoon in the days before Easter, a dozen or so schoolchildren straggled into a side building at Rochester Cathedral and began their transformation.

Off went the jackets and backpacks, on came burgundy cassocks and white surplices. Then they trooped into the cathedral, opened their mouths and sang as one. The youthful gaggle had become a choir, giving voice to a tradition of choral music in the Church of England that has survived largely unchanged for almost 500 years.

"I think for me, it's one of the sounds of our country," said Adrian Bawtree, the choir's music director. "All of our cathedrals are beautiful, sacred spaces where you can come and just sit and be and you can be immersed, bathed, nourished, sent out back into the world transformed by an experience in 30 minutes."

The epitome of that tradition is Choral Evensong, an evening service of hymns, psalms and prayers laid out by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer,

the first Protestant archbishop of the Church of England, in 1549. The service is performed by the choir, with the congregation participating simply by listening.

But that tradition is under threat as the demands of modern life, declining church attendance and tight funding make it harder to find and train the next generation of choristers.

Enthusiasts are trying to reverse that, launching a campaign for the government to recognize English choral services as an important part of Britain's culture under a UN program that seeks to protect "intangible cultural heritage," as well as historic buildings and natural wonders.

The UK government is seeking nominations for a nationwide inventory of cultural traditions - from Morris dancing to the craft of building dry stone walls - that should be preserved. Protecting such traditions is crucial to strengthen community identity and bolster the UK economy as heritage tourism generates billions of pounds in annual spending,



Britain Choral Music Choristers sing during Evensong at Rochester Cathedral in Rochester, England, March 27, 2026. (AP)

the government says.

While many people have been introduced to English choral services through the angelic voices of the choristers in flowing robes and Elizabethan ruffs who sing at royal

weddings and carol services, choirs perform every day in much more humble settings.

And many are struggling, according to the Cathedral Music Trust, which was founded in 1956 to stem

the decline of church music after World War II. Last year it gave 500,000 pounds (\$661,000) to 28 cathedrals and churches around the country.

It can be a lot. Rochester, for example, spends about 250,000 pounds (\$330,000) a year on music, a substantial outlay for a provincial cathedral but less than some.

The trust hopes recognition of the English choral tradition will bring attention and much-needed funding to choirs, which it says are an important training ground for the musicians of tomorrow, both religious and secular.

"Whilst it happens every day, it is actually quite fragile," trust CEO Jonathan Mayes said. "It takes an awful lot of work and it takes a lot of funding to actually make it happen and that doesn't come without effort."

Preserving Evensong is important historically because the service was instrumental in the development and spread of the modern English language, said Diarmaid MacCulloch,

an expert on Christianity and an emeritus professor at the University of Oxford.

The service is based on the Book of Common Prayer, compiled by Cranmer to make English the language of the Church of England after it broke away from the Latin-dominated Catholic Church during the Protestant Reformation.

The idea was to create services everyone could be part of.

"It is very much a drama, and it is a drama which has been performed by the people of England from 1549 through to the present day," MacCulloch said. "It's far more a vehicle of public consciousness performance than any play of Shakespeare."

And while a growing number of choirs including Rochester now take girls as well as boys, in other respects it hasn't changed much since then.

"The service would be really quite recognizable to Queen Elizabeth I as much as Queen Elizabeth II," MacCulloch said. "And that's quite remarkable."

Tech Tip

Regret awkward address?

Google now lets users change Gmail address

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP) — Good news for people who regret the Gmail address they came up with when they registered for an account: Google is now letting users change it.

Google started quietly rolling out the change late last year in India and said this week in a blog post that it's now available for all Google Account users in the United States. There were no details on when it would be available to users in other countries.

Google's CEO suggested the update will be welcomed by people who want to keep their accounts but have outgrown the awkward, embarrassing or nonsensical Gmail handles they created after the service launched 22 years ago.

"2004 was a good year, but your Gmail address doesn't need to be stuck in it," Sundar Pichai wrote in a post on X, adding that the policy change means users could "say goodbye to v0t-3f0rp3dr02004@gmail.com or mrbrightside416@gmail.com (or whatever you were into at the time)."

The company also updated a help page to reflect the new policy. Here's a quick run-through:

The procedure is fairly easy to follow. First, go to your Google Account page. From the Google homepage in your computer browser or the Google mobile app, click the account icon in the top right corner, and then click or tap Manage your Google Account, then Personal info, then Email.

You should be able to click Change Google Account email. If you don't see it, you might not have the option yet. Google says it's "gradually rolling out to all users."

Now you'll have to enter your

new address so make sure you have an idea for what you want. Then click to confirm that you want to make the change. Google says addresses can't be identical to any existing address or one that was "used by someone in the past and then deleted."

But what if you miss your old Gmail address? Don't worry, you'll still be able to access it because Google is effectively creating a second Gmail address.

The old address will remain as an alternate and messages sent to either the old or new addresses will appear in your Gmail inbox. To find out which address an email was sent to, check the "to" field.

You can switch back to the old address by changing the settings in your Google account.

If you don't like the new Gmail address you've created, unfortunately you're out of luck - at least for the next year. Google won't let you create another Gmail address for your account until 12 months have passed. And you can only do so three times in total.

Gmail addresses are also used to sign in to other Google services like YouTube, Google Docs as well as third-party websites and apps. But the company warns that some non-Google apps and services might not recognize you with the new Gmail address, so it provided some troubleshooting tips on a help page.

Google also says Chromebook users might encounter problems, though many issues will go away after a few hours. It advises users to check a troubleshooting page but warned that if the problems persist, "you may need to change back to your previous Google Account email," although the new address can still be used to send and receive messages.



Rhea Seehorn arrives at the PaleyFest LA special screening of 'Pluribus' on Saturday, April 4, at Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Brazilian programs reconnect prisoners with society

Inmates find relief, early release via reading

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 5, (AP) — When 33-year-old Brazilian woman Emily de Souza heard about a program allowing her to shave off four days from her prison sentence by reading a book, she seized the opportunity to reconnect with a cherished habit.

Like tens of thousands of detainees across the country - including former President Jair Bolsonaro - she signed up for a sentence reduction program that encourages inmates to immerse themselves in literary works in exchange for reducing their sentences by up to 48 days per year.

The possibility of reuniting earlier with her 9-year-old autistic son, who her mother and aunt are looking after, only ramped up her motivation to participate in the project.

"One day is an eternity because it feels like it's never going to end," said de Souza, who is incarcerated at the Djanira Dolores de Oliveira Women's Prison in Rio de Janeiro, which houses approximately 820 female detainees.

Reading is "a kind of escape, to get out of this environment for a bit, to think about other things: other stories, other people, not just me," she said.

Like most of her fellow inmates, de Souza was sentenced for drug-trafficking. She said she received five-year prison term for selling a cannabis-infused Brazilian chocolate treat known as "brigadeiro" in Portuguese. She arrived last November, but hopes to progress to Brazil's semiopen prison regime in August, which would allow her to leave prison during the day to work.

Brazil, which has one of the highest per-capita incarceration rates in Latin America, stands out for having one of the most formalized and nationwide systems for sentence remission via reading in the world. The rapidly growing program, which was first formally regulated in 2012 and then standardized across Brazil in 2021, received renewed attention earlier this year after the Supreme Court authorized Bolsonaro - who is serving a 27-year sentence for attempting a coup - to take part.

Andréia Oliveira, coordinator of female prisons and LGBTQ+ inclusion in Rio state's prisons, said that access to reading programs and schools helps the individual once they have left prison - but also society. "When we encourage education, ludic activities, knowledge, we return to society someone who can reconnect, respect rules," she said.

Since 2022, literature professor Paulo Roberto Tonani has been conducting workshops in prisons



Joseane Silva de Oliveira, who is incarcerated, reads a book in the library of the Djanira Dolores de Oliveira Women's Prison in Rio de Janeiro, March 25, 2026. (AP)

so detainees in Rio can benefit from the measure.

Participants choose or are given a book in the initial kick off activity. They then discuss their book in the next encounter and finally, in a third meeting, they produce a review or a drawing that demonstrates comprehension.

Detainees have read "Captain of the Sands" by renowned Brazilian author Jorge Amado, "Crime and Punishment" by Fyodor Dostoevsky and "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker.

A much-loved favorite of participants is the illustrated book "Father Francisco," by Marina Miyazaki Araujo, which tells the story of an incarcerated father from the child's perspective, said Tonani. Many detainees in Brazilian prisons are from a poor background and did not complete basic education.

Some participants in the late March workshop at the Djanira Dolores de Oliveira prison were reading "Unsubmissive Tears of Women" by Brazilian writer Conceição Evaristo - including Celine Maria de Conceição, a 50-year-old woman originally from the northern state of Pernambuco. De Conceição, who took part in the workshops last year and signed up again, said she developed the taste for reading thanks to the project.

"It helps us a lot because we're locked up and it gets very stressful, very noisy," she said. "We get to go to somewhere else, interact with other people and talk about good things, like the book we're studying."

But she said she had to put down Evaristo's book, which explores the impact of violence on Black women's lives, after it upset her.

"It wasn't good for me, because it stirs up our emotions, and we're in a place where the environment is already truly heavy," she said.

Brazilian prisons are renowned for overcrowding and harsh conditions. In 2023, the Supreme Court recognized mass human rights violations in the prison system and ordered the federal government to develop a plan to resolve the situation. Called "Just Punishment," it was launched in 2025 and among other goals seeks to expand study and work opportunities.

While progress has been made, access to earning time off by reading remains unequal across Brazil, said Rodrigo Dias, head of education, culture and sport in the country's National Secretariat of Penal Policies.

In the northeastern state of Alagoas, some prisoners were handed a Kindle with 300 literary works on them, whereas other, more conservative states have heavy bureaucracy which hinders access, Dias said.

A 2023 government report found that some 30% of Brazilian prison units do not have libraries or adequate reading spaces. But Dias pointed to the secretariat's data, which shows that the number of remission requests via reading has increased sevenfold since 2021.

Like de Conceição, once people began participating, they often want to continue. "The book gives them the possibility to dream, and often to 'talk' with other people - not those who are imprisoned or working in the facility, but with the characters in the stories," Dias said.

While Elionaldo Fernandes Julião, co-author of the book "Sentence Remission Through Reading in Brazil: The Right to Education in Contest" and a professor at the Fluminense Federal University, underscores the importance of accessing books in prisons, he argues that oftentimes Brazil's sentence reduction programs through reading are used as a substitute for developing access to education, which is much more costly.

Julião also said that access to the policy and books often depends on local projects. "Unfortunately, these are very easy to eliminate or shut down as quickly as possible," he said.

During the recent workshop, de Souza read out loud a poem written by formerly imprisoned Argentine writer Liliana Cabrera. One of the lines affirms the narrator is "Also something more / than the letters in black / of a court case."

De Souza shared that the words resonated deeply.

"Someone knew how to explain with beautiful terms (...) that I'm a lot more than a court case, a lot more than the mistake I made, that I'm a human with my story," she said.

Variety

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: More than 200 years after being sunk by Adm. Horatio Nelson and the British fleet, a Danish warship has been discovered on the seabed of Copenhagen Harbor by marine archaeologists.

Working in thick sediment and almost zero visibility 15 meters (49 feet) beneath the waves, divers are in a race against time to unearth the 19th-century wreck of the Dannebrog before it becomes a construction site in a new housing district being built off the Danish coast.

Denmark's Viking Ship Museum, which is leading the monthslong underwater excavations, announced its findings on Thursday, 225 years to the day since the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801.

"It's a big part of the Danish national feeling," said Morten Johansen, the museum's head of maritime archaeology.

A great deal has been written about the battle "by very enthusiastic spectators, but we actually don't know how it was to be onboard a ship being shot to pieces by English warships and some of that story we can probably learn from seeing the wreck," Johansen said. The Associated Press was the only international outlet given access to the site.

In the Battle of Copenhagen, Nelson and the British fleet attacked and defeated Denmark's navy as it formed a protective blockade outside the harbor. (AP)

ROME: The Uffizi Galleries, one of Italy's most prestigious museums, was hit by a cyberattack earlier this year that disrupted internal systems, and its director was also threatened by hackers, local media reported on Friday.

Hackers infiltrated the Galleries' network over the weekend of Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, forcing staff to shut down the computer system and temporarily suspend work email accounts, according to the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera.

The report said that hackers had gained access to the entire museum network, including the Uffizi Gallery, Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli Gardens. They allegedly sent a ransom demand directly to the museum's director Simone Verde via phone, threatening to sell the stolen information on the dark web if their demands were not met.

The compromised information also reportedly consisted of security maps of the museum, forcing the galleries to transfer some valuable artefacts to the Bank of Italy and seal additional doors in the building. The case is under investigation by Italy's National Cybersecurity Agency.

In a statement released on Friday, the Uffizi Galleries did not deny the cyber-attack or alleged blackmail, but clarified that no damage had been caused and that there was no evidence that hackers had obtained security maps.

The museum added that the transfer of some treasures to the Bank of Italy was related to reconstruction work, and that the sealing of some doors was part of fire prevention measures aimed at "reducing the excessive permeability of spaces."

According to the General Directorate of Museums, Florence's Uffizi Galleries is Italy's second most visited museum after Rome's Colosseum, and houses some of the most prestigious Renaissance and modern paintings by renowned masters such as Michelangelo, Botticelli, Caravaggio and Rembrandt. (Xinhua)

Mental health care gaps drive targeted therapy

One therapy session works if mindset is positive: experts

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): Just before the holidays in 2025, Julie Hart felt stuck. A nagging problem she had struggled with for years left her ruminating all day and questioning nearly everything she had ever said, done or could do. She was considering traditional therapy but decided instead to try single-session counseling. Rather than committing to weekly therapy sessions, she would get only 60 minutes to tackle the problem. It worked.

"It helped me get unstuck, is how I would describe it, in a very positive, meaningful and effective way," said Hart, of Springfield, Virginia.

Hart joined what experts say is an increasing number of people who, at least for now, have decided to forgo the weeks, months or even years that traditional therapy implies in favor of a more targeted approach.

The therapy is what it sounds like: one session, typically an hour, where a counselor helps the client identify concrete steps toward relieving a specific problem. The intention is not to completely solve a problem, but rather to help clients walk away with a toolbox of strategies on how to approach it.

"Those strategies made all kinds of sense," Hart said. "But you can't identify them when you're in it."

It's not new. Sigmund Freud notably offered it.

But it has become increasingly common as a way to fill gaps in access to mental health care, and the need is greater than ever, said Jessica Schleider, a Northwestern University psychology professor and the founding director of the Lab for Scalable Mental Health.

The cost of traditional therapy has risen to several hundred dollars a month,

and even those who can afford it or have insurance encounter long waiting lists. "Even if we doubled miraculously the number of trained mental health professionals overnight, we still wouldn't come anywhere close to meeting the need for mental health support," Schleider said.

That doesn't factor in other barriers, such as people who can't take time off work to attend weekly sessions.

Besides, data show that the most common number of sessions people are likely to receive is just one because many people start and don't come back, Schleider said.

"It's a really elegant solution to get people support they need at the moment that need arises," she said.

Sharon Thomas, a psychologist and director of signal-session therapy at the Ross Center in Washington, D.C., said both counselor and client enter the session with expectations: "That the client will be able to have meaningful change in their life, and that we'll see an improvement in both their self-efficacy and a decline in their symptoms in just one visit."

Rather than do a full assessment of the client's past and current circumstances, the counselor targets a specific problem. By the end of the session, the client walks away with a written plan of steps toward alleviating it.

"Not everyone wants to discuss childhood trauma," Thomas said. "It's very much focused on what the client wants to focus on in that moment."

Most people can benefit from single-session therapy, whether they are struggling with a difficult circumstance like a work problem or something

more persistent, such as anxiety, said Arnold Slive, a psychology professor at Our Lady of the Lake University in Texas, who helped pioneer walk-in single-session therapy clinics in Canada in the 1990s.

Slive said counselors still have an obligation to screen for risk of self-harm, and many people with chronic mental health issues could still benefit from traditional therapy or medication.

"It's not meant to replace all those other things that mental health professionals do, but it can help people feel better," Slive said.

Another expectation is that every client already walks in with strengths that will help them address their issue. Single sessions also often attract a different type of client, such as someone who might be skeptical about whether traditional therapy is right for them.

"It's like putting a toe in the water," Slive said.

Schleider said research on single-session intervention has "blossomed in the past five or 10 years to where this has become a more well-established form of mental health support."

Her lab conducted a meta-analysis of 415 clinical trials and found that in most cases, single-session approaches reduced mental health difficulties across various problems, including depression and anxiety, for both youth and adults, she said.

For Hart, she has continued to feel better months later, and she said she felt more confident because she knew she could come back.

"I left feeling so optimistic," Hart said.

CBT and Pomodoro work

ADHD adults can boost 'focus' with smart plans

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

By Laura E. Knouse
University of Richmond

Do you ever find yourself at the end of a nonstop day feeling like you haven't made progress on the things that are actually important to you? If so, you're not alone.

If you are a person with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, you might find it even harder to direct your effort toward what's most important - especially if your goal is a ways in the future and you have lots of distractions to manage.

Fortunately, there are research-backed strategies that can help you start and finish a task even when you feel stuck.

I'm a professor and clinical psychologist who has spent my career researching the challenges that adults with ADHD experience and ways to help improve their quality of life. I co-authored a book with Dr. Russell Barkley, a preeminent ADHD expert, published in October 2025 called "Living Well with Adult ADHD: Practical Strategies for Improving Your Daily Life."

There are a few strategies that may help you more effectively direct your efforts toward the things that matter most.

One of the most effective nonmedication treatments for ADHD in adults is specialized cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT.

By teaching skills that help manage thoughts, feelings and behaviors, CBT helps people with ADHD learn and use self-regulation skills. Research shows that CBT for adult ADHD can help reduce ADHD symptoms and improve quality of life.

But you don't have to be in full-time therapy or even have ADHD to potentially benefit from CBT strategies.

Deadlines

If you find that you have difficulty doing what's most important in our increasingly distraction-filled world, these tips might help.

Before diving in:

■ Identify the goals that are most important to you, not just most urgent. Sometimes the most meaningful tasks, like taking steps toward a new career or growing your social network, fall by the wayside because they don't have external deadlines.

■ When testing out new strategies, it can take some time to see results. But if you could take meaningful action just 10% more often, that could add up to much better outcomes. So choose one of the following tips and practice until it becomes a habit.

Important tasks are often also bigger, scarier and more ambiguous, which can make it hard to get started. Imagine you want to get a new job and the next step is to draft your cover letter.

If you saw "Write cover letter" on your to-do list, would you jump right into that task? Maybe. But if you're like me, this task might be daunting and vague enough to make you turn to an easier task instead.

To get past that emotional barrier, break the task into much smaller steps. No step is too small if it gets you started.

So instead of "Write cover letter," try "Outline cover letter" or "Find template for cover letter." Still in avoidance mode? How about "Create cover letter document with opening line." Even if you stop there, you'll be one step closer to the goal.

When breaking down tasks, a timer can be your best friend. "Work on cover letter for 15 minutes" might feel less overwhelming and build behavioral momentum.

Consider, for instance, the Pomodoro technique, invented by a university student in the 1980s who was trying to come up with a strategy to work more efficiently.

A pomodoro, the Italian word for tomato, represents an amount of time - typically 25 minutes - to focus on a task, followed by a short break. The creator of this technique used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer, thus the name.

To practice the technique, write down the task you'll work on, start the timer and get to work. When the alarm sounds, take a five-minute break to refresh. Then move to the next interval of 25 minutes, until after four repetitions you get a longer break, such as 15 to 30 minutes.

Technique

Research shows that this technique may reduce distractibility while working, leading to greater productivity and a sense of completion. It helps me get started on my most avoided task: grading papers. I'm much more likely to commit to 25 minutes of grading than I am to tackle them all at once.

"I have much more time to do that later."

"I'll do just one more thing before I leave."

Do these thoughts sound familiar? If so, you're not alone. Using mini-surveys sprinkled throughout the day, my lab found that college students reported having thoughts like this about 50% of the time. For non-college adults, the rate was only slightly lower, at about 45% of the time.

We also found that when people had recently had these thoughts, they were more likely to be distracted and avoid something they should have been doing. We decided to call these thoughts "avoidant automatic thoughts" because they pop into your head effortlessly and are associated with putting off doing a task.

Importantly, we found that college students with ADHD report more avoidant automatic thoughts, along with the distraction and procrastination that come with them.

Just becoming aware of these automatic thoughts in daily life is a good place to start. Make a list of the thoughts that you experience most frequently when you go into avoidance mode.

If you catch yourself having one of these thoughts, coach yourself by adding a strategy to your self-talk. For example, when "Write cover letter" results in the thought, "I'll have time for that on Friday," say to yourself: "But you can do a little bit now. Maybe just two Pomodoros." Then add: "After that, you can check your email."

When people are avoiding tasks, they're not usually sitting around doing nothing.

In one study mentioned above, we found that work-related tasks were among the most frequently avoided. What were people likely to be doing instead? Other work-related tasks. A similar example: The only times in college I ever did a dorm room deep-clean was when I should have been studying for finals.

This so-called "procrastivity" might contain some useful clues about how to motivate your way through tasks you tend to avoid.

It's helpful to think about rewards not as things - like cookies, video games and gold stars - but as activities, like eating cookies, playing video games, seeing gold stars and thinking about what they represent.

There's a name for this: Psychology's Premack principle holds that the opportunity to do a more preferred activity can be a reward for doing a less preferred activity. An example would be what's commonly known as "grandma's rule" - if you eat your vegetables, then you can eat dessert. (AP)



In this image from video provided by NASA, Artemis II astronauts, (from left), Reid Wiseman, Jeremy Hansen, Christina Koch and Victor Glover gather for an interview en route to the moon on Saturday, April 4. (AP)

Lunar spacecraft toilet acts up again

Artemis II astronauts speed toward moon to break Apollo 13's record

HOUSTON, April 5, (AP): Now more than halfway to the moon, the Artemis II astronauts prepared for their historic lunar fly-around to push deeper into space than even the Apollo astronauts.

On the downside, their toilet is on the blink again.

The three Americans and one Canadian are set to reach their destination Monday, photographing the mysterious lunar far side as they zoom around. It is the first moon-bound crew in more than 53 years, picking up where NASA's Apollo program left off.

"The Earth is quite small, and the moon is definitely getting bigger," pilot Victor Glover reported.

Until the Orion capsule's bathroom is fixed, Mission Control has instructed the astronauts to break out more of the backup urine collection bags. The so-called lunar loo malfunctioned following Wednesday's liftoff and has been hit-and-miss ever since. A version of the Artemis II toilet was tested on the International Space Station several years ago.

Engineers suspect ice may be blocking the line that is preventing urine from completely flushing overboard. The toilet is still open for No. 2 business.

Debbie Korth, NASA's Orion program deputy manager, said the astronauts have also reported a smell coming from the bathroom, which is buried in the floor of the capsule with a door and curtain for privacy.

"Space toilets and bathrooms are something everybody can really understand... it's always a challenge," she said, noting that the space shuttle toilet was also often on the fritz.

John Honeycutt, chair of the mission management team, said it is human nature to be interested in the space commode, and even though it is "in a good state right now," he'd like it to be



This photo provided by NASA shows the exterior of the Orion spacecraft Integrity during the Artemis II mission en route to the moon on Friday, April 3. (AP)

working at 100%.

"They're OK," he said of the astronauts. "They trained to manage through the situation."

Artemis II is poised to set a distance record for humans, traveling more than 252,000 miles (400,000 kilometers) from Earth before heading home without stopping or entering lunar orbit. The record is currently held by Apollo 13.

The Canadian Space Agency celebrated the country's role in the mission, speaking from Quebec with astronaut Jeremy Hansen as he headed toward his lunar rendezvous. Hansen is the first non-U.S. citizen to fly to the moon.

"Today he is making history for Canada," Canadian Space Agency President Lisa Campbell said. "As we

watch him taking this bold step into the unknown, let his journey remind us that Canada's future is written by those who dare to reach for more."

In the live televised linkup, Hansen said he has already witnessed "extraordinary" views from NASA's Orion capsule.

Hansen, Glover, Reid Wiseman and Christina Koch are the world's first lunar astronauts since Apollo 17's crew of three in 1972. Koch and Glover are the first female and first Black astronauts to the moon, respectively.

Their nearly 10-day mission - ending with a Pacific splashdown on April 10 - is the first step in NASA's bold plans for a sustainable moon base. The space agency is aiming for a landing by two astronauts near the lunar south pole in 2028.

'Drinking water safety a top concern'

EPA lists microplastics, drugs as water contaminants

NEW YORK, April 5, (AP): The Environmental Protection Agency proposed Thursday to include microplastics and pharmaceuticals on a list of contaminants in drinking water for the first time, a step that could lead to new limits on those substances for water utilities.

EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said they are responding to Americans who have worried about plastics and pharmaceuticals in their drinking water. The gesture also aims to hand a win to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s MAHA movement, which for months has pressured Zeldin to further crack down on environmental contaminants.

The EPA's Contaminant Candidate List identifies contaminants in drinking water not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The agency is publishing the draft of the sixth version of the list, which opens a 60-day public comment period. It expects to finalize the list by mid-November.

"I can't think of an issue that hits closer to home for American families than the safety of their drinking water," Zeldin said at EPA Headquarters.

Studies have looked at the prevalence of microplastics in drinking water and in people's hearts, brains and testicles. Doctors and scientists are still assessing what it means in terms of human health threats, but say there's cause for concern. There is also growing worry about pharmaceutical drugs that get into the water supply because humans excrete them and conventional wastewater treatment plants fail to remove them.

The EPA uses the list to prioritize research, fund-

ing and regulatory decision making, but rarely moves pollutants off the list to set limits for how much is allowed in public drinking water. The EPA said in March that it will not develop regulations for any of the nine pollutants from the list it most recently examined.

"It's the beginning of a very long process that routinely ends in nothing," said Erik Olson, a senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council who works on drinking water protection.

Still, some who are urging the government to do more to stop plastic pollution say the announcement is a good start.

"Including it in the list would be the first step toward eventually regulating microplastics in public water supplies and hopefully this is not the last step," said Judith Enck, a former EPA regional administrator who now heads up Beyond Plastics.

Dr. Philip Landrigan, director of the Global Observatory on Planetary Health at Boston College, said that while the EPA is moving in the right direction, if the United States does not rein in the accelerating growth in plastic production, which leads to plastic pollution, it will make little difference. The US is participating in talks on a treaty to address the global crisis of plastic pollution, but strongly opposes limits on plastic production.

Food & Water Watch says the listing is important but it ultimately falls short of their call for monitoring. EPA uses the Unregulated Contaminant Moni-

toring Rule to collect data for contaminants that are suspected to be present in drinking water.

The American Chemistry Council, an industry group, said it supports monitoring of microplastics in drinking water and research to better understand potential impacts, as long as the monitoring is standardized and consistent nationwide.

The joint move from Kennedy and Zeldin comes as activists from Kennedy's MAHA movement have forged fragile political ties with the EPA but expressed frustration with lack of action on their priorities, including pesticide regulation.

The movement erupted earlier this year over an executive order from President Donald Trump that is aimed in part at boosting the production of a controversial herbicide ingredient known as glyphosate. Kennedy has said he was disappointed by the executive order but sees it as necessary for agricultural stability and national security.

The EPA has teased a forthcoming MAHA agenda that it says will address issues such as forever chemicals, plastic pollution, food quality, Superfund clean-ups and lead pipes. In February, EPA press secretary Brigit Hirsch told The Associated Press that the agenda was in its "final stages."

Kennedy, whose 2024 independent presidential campaign focused in part on tackling plastic pollution, also announced a \$144 million effort to better measure, understand and remove microplastics that have made their way into human bodies.

Space cargo

China advances space networks

BEIJING, April 5, (Xinhua): An official with China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) on Friday stressed the necessity of solid efforts to develop the space computing industry in an orderly manner.

Space computing boasts advantages such as real-time on-orbit processing, low-cost energy and wide-area coverage, said Zhao Ce, deputy director of the MIIT department of information and communication development, at an industry conference in Beijing.

In recent years, China has gradually carried out pilot construction and verification of space computing networks, accelerated technological breakthroughs and advanced multiple constellation projects, he noted.

More efforts should be made to plan measures to guide space computing development, support qualified localities to engage in the industry in line with local conditions, and promote R&D in technologies and products involving satellite-based radiation-resistant chips and inter-satellite laser communication.

He also encouraged the exploration of space computing applications in areas such as remote sensing and communication enhancement, as well as on-orbit data processing for low-altitude economy and emergency communication.

Meanwhile, the newly launched Qingzhou cargo spacecraft test vehicle will be followed by a final version that will dock with the Chinese space station and provide cargo supply services, according to the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IAM-CAS).

The test vehicle was launched aboard the Lijian-2 Y1 carrier rocket on Monday from a commercial aerospace innovation pilot zone in northwest China and was successfully placed into its designated orbit.

Developed by IAMCAS, the test vehicle weighs 4.2 tonnes and is compatible with multiple rocket types and highly adaptable for launch. The test mission carries 27 projects, including in-orbit verification tasks, scientific research and outreach initiatives, with a total payload of 1.02 tonnes. It will conduct in-orbit tests at altitudes ranging from 200 to 600 kilometers.

The spacecraft consists of a sealed main cabin and an unsealed rear section. The main cabin contains 40 cargo compartments, offering a total volume of 27 cubic meters to carry supplies such as daily necessities for astronauts, scientific equipment and research payloads.

What makes it especially unique is that it can carry a 300-liter refrigerator composed of five 60-liter cold chain units, which will provide storage for astronauts' daily needs as well as biological experiment samples that require low-temperature preservation.

The unsealed rear section can carry additional payloads and equipment that need to be exposed to the space environment, helping maximize the spacecraft's transport efficiency.

Jokic outduels Wembanyama as Nuggets top Spurs

Pistons dominate 76ers to clinch top seed in Eastern Conference

PHILADELPHIA, April 5, (AP) - Tobias Harris scored 19 points, and Daniss Jenkins added 16 points and 14 assists as the Detroit Pistons beat the Philadelphia 76ers 116-93 to clinch the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The last time the Pistons (56-21) were the top seed in the East was in 2006-07. They have already clinched the Central Division title for the first time since 2007-08.

Jalen Duren added 16 points and seven rebounds, and Ausr Thompson had 14 points for the Pistons, who have won 12 of their last 15 games.

Both Duren (illness) and Harris (left knee contusion) had been listed as questionable. The Pistons are 8-2 in the 10 games that Cade Cunningham has missed with a collapsed left lung.

Tyrese Maxey led the 76ers with 23 points. Paul George scored 20 points, and VJ Edgecombe added 19. George has averaged 25.8 points in six games since returning from a 25-game suspension for violating the league's drug policy.

The 76ers played without Joel Embiid, who was ruled out with right oblique injury maintenance/illness in the second half of a back-to-back. The Sixers had won eight of their last 11.

The teams went back and forth in the first half, the Pistons leading by 10 points after one quarter before the 76ers tied the game in the second. A 15-4 run to end the first half gave Detroit control, and the Pistons stretched their lead to 26 points in the second half.

Nuggets 136, Spurs 134, OT

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 40 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds, Christian Braun added 21 points and the Denver Nuggets beat San Antonio 136-134 in overtime to snap the Spurs' 11-game winning streak.

Cameron Johnson scored 17, Jamal Murray finished with 15 points and 10 assists and Aaron Gordon scored 15 for the Nuggets.

Gordon scored with 6.2 seconds left in regulation to tie the game, then forced Victor Wembanyama into a miss on the final shot of regulation.

Wembanyama finished with 34 points, 18 rebounds, seven assists and five blocked shots for the Spurs, who lost for only the third time in their last 30 games. Stephon Castle scored 20 points for San Antonio, while Devin Vassell and Julian Champagnie each scored 18 for the Spurs.

Heat 152, Wizards 136

In Miami, Jaime Jaquez Jr. scored 32 points before dashing out to fly to the NCAA women's basketball title game, Kel'el Ware finished with 24 points, 19 rebounds and seven blocks, and the Miami Heat rolled past the Washington Wizards.

Bam Adebayo - who scored 83 points in Miami's last game with Washington - faced a triple-team on his first possession and scored 14 for Miami. Andrew Wiggins had 21 and Pelle Larsson scored 16 for the Heat. Adebayo also had nine rebounds and seven assists.

Miami reached 150 points for the third time in franchise history. It scored 153 against New Orleans last April 11 - and finished with 150 against the Wizards in Adebayo's 83-point night on March 10.

Will Riley scored 31 for Washington, which has reached the 60-loss mark for the third straight season. Sharife Cooper scored 20 for the Wizards, who trailed by as many as 35 at one point.

Jaquez was heading to Phoenix for the women's final - he's a UCLA grad and his sister, Gabriela, plays for the Bruins, who'll face South Carolina on Sunday.

"That's the beauty of their family relationship. They really support each other," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We've gotten to know his sister from all the times that she has visited. And it's awesome to see."

The Heat paid tribute to retiring public address announcer Michael Baiamonte, who is making this his 35th and final season. He got a standing ovation from fans after the first quarter.

"I've enjoyed the greatest seat to some of the greatest basketball in the world," Baiamonte said.



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray, left, drives past San Antonio Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox in the first half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

UConn and Hurley muscle way to 3rd national title game in 4 years



Michigan's Nimari Burnett (4) drives past Arizona's Jaden Bradley (0) during the first half of an NCAA college basketball tournament semifinal game at the Final Four in Indianapolis. (AP)

Michigan storms into National Championship with rout of Arizona

INDIANAPOLIS, April 5, (AP) - Dan Hurley had UConn ready for another Final Four fight night. Once again, his Huskies scored a knockout.

Fabulous freshman Braylon Mullins made another last-minute 3-pointer - his only basket of the second half - and the Huskies muscled their way past Illinois 71-62 to reach their third national championship game in four years.

Tarris Reed Jr. had 17 points and 11 rebounds and Mullins finished with 15 points as the Huskies (34-5) rode strong inside play and tough defense to their 19th straight victory in the Sweet 16 or later rounds of the NCAA Tournament.

They'll face Michigan with a chance to win their seventh national title, all since 1999, as Hurley tries to become the only active coach with more than two championships.

Mullins sent the Huskies past Duke, the top overall seed, in the Elite Eight last weekend with the shot of the tourney - a 35-foot 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left. He was equally effective this time, a short drive from his hometown of Greenfield, Indiana.

After Silas Demary Jr. secured an offensive rebound, Mullins hit a catch-and-shoot 3 with 52 seconds left that gave UConn a 66-59 and thwarted Illinois' late charge.

UConn needed it on a night star forward Alex Karaban struggled with his shot. He had nine points on 1-of-8 shooting while adding four rebounds and four assists as he tied Hurley's brother, Bobby, for second in career March Madness victories by a player with 18. A win Monday also would make him the first player since John Wooden's dominant UCLA teams in the 1960s and 1970s to finish as a three-time champion.

Thanks in part to Karaban, the Huskies haven't



UConn's Alex Karaban (11) and Illinois' Kylan Boswell (4) dive for a loose ball during the first half of an NCAA college basketball tournament semifinal game at the Final Four in Indianapolis. (AP)

lost a tournament game played past the opening weekend since 2009, when they fell in the national semifinals to Michigan State. With one more victory, they would break a tie with North Carolina and move into third place alone in national titles, trailing only UCLA (11) and Kentucky (eight).

Freshman guard Keaton Wagler had 20 points and eight rebounds to lead the Fighting Illini (28-9), who reached their first Final Four since losing the championship game to UNC in 2005.

Game of the year? This wasn't even the game of the night.

Michigan overpowered Arizona early and humbled the 'Cats for 40 long minutes, turning their highly anticipated Final Four matchup into a 91-73 Wolverines dunkfest-slash-highlight reel.

Junior center Aday Mara scored a career-high 26 points and grabbed nine rebounds. About the only question in this one concerned the health of Wol-

verines forward Yaxel Lendeborg, a first-team All-American who landed on an Arizona player's foot, rolled his ankle and sprained his knee, but still had 11 points over 14 minutes.

He vowed he'd be ready for Monday's title match-up against UConn, a 71-62 winner over Illinois in the early semifinal that was billed - wrongly - as the undercard to this battle of No. 1 seeds.

This one was over in about five.

The Blue blew through their fifth straight March Madness opponent by double digits while becoming the first team to break 90 points five times in a single tournament.

It was all quite a shock, considering Michigan and Arizona came in with the nation's top two defenses, a pair of top-five offenses and somewhere between eight and a dozen NBA stars between them.

But it was the Wolverines (36-3) who looked like pros, running to a double-digit lead only 5:31 into the contest, then swatting (three blocks) and slamming (nine dunks) Arizona into oblivion.

The game plan against the Big 12 champion Wildcats (36-3) couldn't have worked any better.

Michigan packed the paint on defense, basically giving the team that averaged the fifth-fewest 3-point attempts in the country this year free rein from long distance, then daring Arizona to create inside. The Wildcats failed at both.

Koa Peat had a quiet 16 points and 11 rebounds for Arizona, which shot 6 for 17 from 3, 36% overall and had two assists and nine turnovers over a first half that ended with them trailing 48-32. Sparkplug Jaden Bradley got his fourth foul 94 seconds into the second half and finished with 13 points, most in extended garbage time.

Arizona's only two losses before this were by four and by three back in February. The Wildcats trailed by nine less than 2:30 into this one.

Price keeps three welterweight belts

Wilder outlasts Chisora in brutal heavyweight fight as Brit retires

LONDON, April 5, (AP) - Former world champion Deontay Wilder sent Derek Chisora into retirement by edging their chaotic heavyweight fight in the O2 Arena.

The boxers, aged 40 and 42 respectively, threw hopeful knockout punches and barely jabbed. Both slipped and fell to the canvas frequently.

Wilder got the only knockdown in the eighth round, sending Chisora through the ropes, but the American was deducted a point in the same round for pushing. Chisora was rattled but Wilder didn't press his advantage.

Wilder dominated the early rounds and Chisora rallied late. The judges were split: Wilder received scores of 115-111 and 115-113, and the third picked Chisora by 115-112.

Wilder said the fight was fun and suggested he didn't want to knock out Chisora.

"Tonight, I looked out for him, I want him to live for his kids," he told broadcaster DAZN. "It's time for us to take care of each other."

Chisora said in the buildup the fight was to be his last, but the Londoner was reluctant to confirm it afterwards.

"I'm going to go home with the boss lady and see," he told DAZN. "I'm going to go home and drop the kids, do the school run."

It was the 50th fight for both in the professional ranks. Wilder improved his record to 45-4-1. The WBC titleholder from 2015-20 came to London having lost four of his last six fights.

Chisora's record since 2007, when he turned pro a year before Wilder, dropped to 36-14. He lost his only two title shots against Vitali Klitschko in 2012 and Tyson Fury in 2022.

Lauren Price won a bloody and bruising fight against unbeaten Stephanie Pineiro to retain her WBC, IBF and WBO welterweight belts in Cardiff.

The faster Price dominated and could afford to hold back in the 10th and final round for the unanimous decision, but Puerto Rican challenger Pineiro contributed to an entertaining bout.

Former Olympic champion Price took a battering to improve her pro record to 10-0. Pineiro dropped to 10-1.

Pineiro's left eye was punished by Price's right hooks, but Pineiro cut Price's mouth in the fifth round and Price couldn't prevent blood spattering her chest, white shirt and shorts for the rest of the bout.

Price was fighting on Welsh home ground for the first time in nearly two years, and fighting anywhere since March 2025 when she beat Natasha Jonas to add the WBC and IBF titles.

At ringside was Claressa Shields (18-0), the undisputed heavyweight champion. The managers of Shields and Price have been in talks for a fight this year at compromising middleweight.

"Credit to Stephanie, Lauren was in the fight of her life today," Shields told the BBC. "You did great tonight, I'll say it to you face to face, we can fight at the end of the year."

Price said: "This is why I'm in the game, I want to fight the best. We all need a dance partner but I'm backing myself."



Boxer Deontay Wilder, right, battles Derek Chisora during a fight in London. (AP)



Boxer Lauren Price poses with her belts after winning a welterweight title bout against Stephanie Pineiro in Cardiff, Wales. (AP)

Former Chelsea player Oscar retires from soccer after heart issue

SAO PAULO, April 5, (AP) - Former Chelsea midfielder Oscar has retired from soccer five months after being admitted to the hospital with a heart issue, Brazilian club Sao Paulo said.

Sao Paulo said the 34-year-old Oscar finalized the termination of his contract with the team this week. The deal was set to run until the end of 2027.

Oscar hasn't played for Sao Paulo since experiencing vasovagal syncope - a common cause in fainting after a sudden drop in blood pressure or heart rate - in November, requiring surgery. He collapsed during preseason testing and was reportedly unconscious for about two minutes. Sao Paulo said at the time he "presented a complication with cardiac changes."

Oscar returned to his boyhood club on a free transfer late in 2024 after a long spell in China.

"I wanted to do more for São Paulo, I wanted to play more," Oscar said in a club statement. "I think I had both the footballing ability and the age to play more, but unfortunately this happened. Now I'm going to retire and continue supporting São Paulo, continue my life

as a fan."

Oscar won one Europa League title and two Premier League trophies with Chelsea, which he joined in 2012.

He moved to Shanghai in the middle of Chelsea's 2016-17 season for a transfer fee reported to be \$73 million. He won three Super League titles in China and became a fan favorite in Asia.

SPORTS

Lille dents Lens title hopes as discriminatory chants halt play



Lille's Olivier Giroud celebrates at the end of the French League One soccer match between Lille and Lens, in Lille, France. (AP)

Nice slumps to 15th defeat

PARIS, April 5, (AP): Lens was overwhelmed by northern rival Lille 3-0 and lost ground in the Ligue 1 title race after the Derby du Nord was briefly interrupted because of discriminatory chanting.

A day after Paris Saint-Germain increased its lead to four points by beating Toulouse 3-1, Lens endured an off night. PSG is in an ideal position to retain its league title as it has a game in hand over second-placed Lens going into the final rounds.

The game was halted in the 35th minute and the announcer at Stade Pierre-Mauroy urged the Lille fans to stop the insults hurled at their opponents. The referee threatened to take the players back to the dressing room.

After the game resumed, Matias Fernandez-Pardo delivered an assist and scored to guide his team to third place, nine points behind Lens.

Hakon Haraldsson put the host ahead just before the interval, finishing a swift move sparked by a long, precise pass from Lille captain Aïssa Mandi. Fernandez-Pardo burst down the left flank then slipped the ball between two defenders and found the unmarked Haraldsson at the far post.

An embarrassing mix-up led to Lille's second goal. Matthieu Udol's poor back pass was intercepted by Felix Correia after Nidal Celik let the ball run. The Portuguese winger was quicker to the ball than goalkeeper Robin Rissler and scored in an empty net in the 50th.

Lens later was awarded a penalty after Ismaël Ganiou handled the ball in the box. Fernandez-Pardo wrongfooted Rissler from the spot to put the Derby du Nord firmly beyond Lens.

Without its top striker, Strasbourg extended its unbeaten run in all competitions



Lille's Ayyoub Bouaddi, left, and Lens' Jonathan Gradi challenge for the ball during the French League One soccer match between Lille and Lens, in Lille, France. (AP)

to 10 matches with a 3-1 win over Nice.

Joaquín Panichelli tore his right ACL while training with Argentina last week and underwent surgery on Thursday. He will miss the World Cup and maybe the start of next season, too. Panichelli leads the French league with 16 goals.

In his absence, winger Martial Godo and Samir El-Mourabet delighted the home fans to keep eighth-placed Strasbourg in contention for a European spot.

Godo hit the crossbar after 24 minutes and broke the deadlock soon after with another header into the far corner. They went into halftime 3-0 ahead after scores from midfielders Julio Enciso and El-Mourabet, the latter striking a beautiful half-volley from outside the box.

After dribbling past the Nice goalkeeper to make it 2-0, Enciso put on a jersey emblazoned with the name Panichelli before celebrating his goal in front of the Strasbourg fans.

More good news for Strasbourg was the sight of captain Emanuel Emegha, who will join Chelsea next season, returning from a four-month injury layoff when he went on in the 77th.

Defender Antoine Mendy pulled one back in the 82nd for Nice, which slumped to a 15th defeat. Strasbourg and Nice will face off again in the French Cup semifinals on April 22.

Rennes won a spectacular encounter at Brest 4-3. Esteban Lepaul scored twice from the penalty spot including the winner.

The visitors came from behind after Junior Dina Ebimbe also had a brace for Brest.

Lepaul netted the winner from the spot in the 74th. Goalkeeper Grégoire Couderc dived the right way but couldn't get enough touch to stop the strike.

Rennes rose to sixth place, just three points behind Lille.

LAFC routs Orlando City 6-0

Messi on target as Inter Miami opens new stadium with draw against Austin

MIAMI, April 5, (AP): Lionel Messi scored on the long-awaited opening night in his new home stadium. And Luis Suarez found a way to tie things up late in the second half.

It was good enough to salvage a point for Inter Miami.

Messi scored on a header in the 10th minute, Suarez hammered home a volley in the 82nd minute and Inter Miami escaped with a 2-2 tie against Austin FC in the defending MLS champions' first match at their still-under-construction stadium near Miami International Airport on Saturday night.

Inter Miami (3-1-2) is now unbeaten in its last five MLS matches, and Austin (1-2-3) is now winless in its last four contests.

MLS Commissioner Don Garber was at the match, lauding the work that David Beckham - who picked Miami 13 years ago - did to get to this day. Inter Miami is in its seventh MLS season, its third with Messi, but has played home matches in Fort Lauderdale until now.

Garber touted the stadium opening as the latest sign of growth for MLS.

"I think our best days are still ahead," Garber said. "David shined a light on our league, and Leo's taking that torch, and he's showing it around. And we're getting calls from players around the world."

The Herons never led; Austin took a 1-0 lead on Guilherme Biro's goal - the first ever at Nu Stadium - in the sixth minute, and the visitors went up 2-1 when speedy reserve Jayden Nelson scored in the 53rd minute.

Messi and Suarez both got tying goals, and Inter Miami missed some chances for a potential winner in the final minutes. Maybe the best of the lot: Mateo Silveti's chance in the 87th minute, when



Inter Miami CF forward Lionel Messi, right, takes a shot on the goal as Austin FC defender Oleksandr Svatok (5) during the second half of an MLS soccer match in Miami. (AP)

he accepted a cross from the right wing and tried to one-time the ball but sent it sailing high.

Denis Bouanga scored three goals, his fifth career hat trick in MLS, and Son Heung-min had four assists to help Los Angeles FC beat Orlando City 6-0.

Sergi Palencia and Tyler Boyd each added a goal for LAFC (6-0-1). Hugo Lloris had six saves.

Paul Rothrock scored a goal in the 83rd minute, Andrew Thomas had three saves, and the Seattle Sounders beat the Houston Dynamo 1-0.

Seattle (4-1-1) is unbeaten, with three wins, in its last four games.

Sebastian Berhalter and Thomas Müller scored stoppage-time goals, Edier Ocampo also scored a goal, and the Vancouver Whitecaps beat the Portland Timbers 3-2.

Yohei Takaoka had two saves and an assist - his first career goal contribution in MLS - for the Whitecaps (4-1-1).

Juan Mosquera made his season debut and had a goal and an assist for the Timbers (1-3-2), and Da-

vid Da Costa also scored a goal. Anthony Markanich and Kelvin Yeboah each scored a goal Saturday night, Drake Callender had six saves, and Minnesota United beat the LA Galaxy 2-1.

Tomás Chancalay added two assists for Minnesota (2-2-2).

Chancalay flicked a low cross from near the left post through a crowd of defenders for a one-touch finish by Yeboah into a wide-open net that gave Minnesota the lead for good in the 67th minute.

Markanich opened the scoring in the 51st minute but Marco Reus responded for the Galaxy (1-3-2) in the 57th to make it 1-1.

JT Marcinkowski had two saves for LA.

Niko Tsakiris scored two goals, Preston Judd added a goal and an assist, and the San Jose Earthquakes beat San Diego FC 3-0 on Saturday night.

Daniel De Sousa Britto - known simply as "Daniel" - stopped one shot for the Earthquakes (5-1-0). Daniel his second consecutive shutout and his fifth of the season.

Philip Zinckernagel scored 17 seconds into the match and Chris Brady made it stand up as the Chicago Fire handed Nashville SC its first loss this season with a 1-0 victory.

Wessam Abou Ali scored two goals in the first eight minutes of the second half and the Columbus Crew won for the first time this season, beating Atlanta United 3-1.

Columbus (1-3-2) earned its first victory under first-year coach Henrik Rydström after Abou Ali ignited the offense.

Julian Hall, Emil Forsberg and Mohammed Sofo each scored a goal and the New York Red Bulls beat Cincinnati FC 4-2 on Saturday night.

Ethan Horvath had four saves for the Red Bulls (3-2-1)

Logan Farrington and Petar Musa continued red-hot starts and Dallas breezed to a 4-0 victory over D.C. United on Saturday night.

Michael Collodi finished with three saves to earn his second clean sheet this season for Dallas (3-1-2) and his fifth in 15 career starts.

Ashley Westwood and Wilfried Zaha each scored a goal to help Charlotte FC beat the Philadelphia Union 2-1 on a rain-soaked Saturday night.

The Union (0-6-0) - the 2025 MLS Supporter's Shield winners - are off to the worst start in franchise history.

Luca Langoni scored early before notching his league-high fifth assist on defender Mamadou Fofana's first career goal, and the New England Revolution beat CF Montreal 3-0.

Diego Luna scored his first goal of the season in the fourth minute, 19-year-old Xavier Gozo added a goal and two assists, and Real Salt Lake beat Sporting Kansas City 3-1.

Unbeaten Rajasthan goes top of IPL

AHMEDABAD, India, April 5, (AP): Medium-pacer Tushar Deshpande held his nerve bowling the last over to give Rajasthan Royals a thrilling six-run win against Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League.

Gujarat needed 11 runs from the final over and Deshpande conceded only four for Rajasthan's second win from two matches and top spot in the table on net-run-rate from Delhi Capitals, who beat Mumbai Indians earlier.

Rajasthan notched 210-6 thanks to Dhruv Jurel's 75 off 42 balls and Yashasvi Jaiswal's 55 off 36.

Gujarat, on the back of Sai Sudharsan's 73 off 44 and tailenders Rashid Khan and Kagiso Rabada, mounted a terrific comeback to reduce the chase to a reachable 15 off the last 12 balls.

But Rajasthan's England pacer Jofra Archer allowed only four runs in the 19th over, and Deshpande, who played two Twenty20s for India in 2024, was given the last over. He also allowed only four and closed with two dot balls and Khan's wicket. With Gujarat stranded at 204-8, Deshpande thumped his chest in jubilation.

"(The last two overs) was just incredible," Rajasthan captain Riyan Parag said. "Took a chance to go full and fast and the boys delivered." Parag admitted Deshpande was to bowl the 19th and Archer the last but he was persuaded to switch by Jurel.

Earlier, Delhi beat Mumbai by six wickets in the national capital and went top of the table for approximately four hours.

Sameer Rizvi blew away Mumbai with 90 runs off 51 balls to help set up Delhi's second win from two matches.

The impact player followed his unbeaten 70 against Lucknow SuperGiants on Wednesday with seven sixes and seven boundaries in his highest IPL score.

Delhi raced to 164-4 and a six-wicket win with 11 balls to spare in reply to Mumbai's 162-6 and a first loss in the young season for the five-time champion.



Rajasthan Royals Yashasvi Jaiswal plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati, India. (AP)

Rajasthan opted to bat first and Jaiswal and 15-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi launched 70 runs off 38 balls for the first wicket.

Suryavanshi scored 31 off 18 including five fours and a six before he miscued to deep midwicket.

Jaiswal took over to score 50 off 32 balls including three sixes and six boundaries.

Jaiswal and Jurel combined for 56 into the 12th over before Jaiswal was bowled by Rabada. Jurel carried Rajasthan past 200 in the 19th over before he nicked behind in the 20th. Jurel hit five sixes and five fours.

De Gea's huge saves lift Fiorentina to tense win over Verona

MILAN, April 5, (AP): Fiorentina goalkeeper David De Gea starred with several huge saves to preserve a 1-0 win against Hellas Verona and pull further away from the Serie A relegation zone.

The former Manchester United shot-stopper kept his side in the match before teammate Nicolò Fagioli scored the winner eight minutes from time, against the run of play.

Jack Harrison, on loan from Leeds United, got down the right and laid it off for an unmarked Fagioli to fire in off the inside of the right post.

The tension spilled over four minutes later when Verona midfielder Tomas Suslov and Fiorentina counterpart Albert Gudmundsson got into a brawl, leading to both of them getting sent off with ripped jerseys.

Fiorentina spent most of the first half of the season mired to the foot of the table but

has lost only two league matches in 2026. It moved to five points above the drop zone.

Verona remained nine points from safety.

Andrea Pinamonti's sublime strike helped



Fiorentina's goalkeeper David de Gea makes a save in front of Verona's Kieron Bowie during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Hellas Verona and Fiorentina in Verona, Italy. (AP)

Sassuolo fight back to win 2-1 as Cagliari fumbled a precious lead.

Cagliari, which was only three points above the relegation zone, went in front through a first-half Sebastiano Esposito penalty.

However, Sassuolo leveled five minutes into the second half. A corner was headed clear only as far as Ulisses Garcia outside the area. The defender controlled the ball on his chest before drilling into the bottom right corner for his first goal in Italy after joining from Marseille in February.

And the comeback was completed in the 78th. Pinamonti gathered a ball with his back to goal, turned his defender and slipped the ball through a narrow gap into the bottom left corner.

Elsewhere, Lazio was held to 1-1 by Parma, which inched seven points above the drop zone.

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Rajasthan Royals' Sandeep Sharma bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals in Ahmedabad, India. (AP)
- See Page 15

Sports

Arteta's decision to field weakened lineup backfires

2nd-tier Southampton stuns Arsenal as Chelsea hits 7 past Port Vale in FA Cup



Arsenal's Kai Havertz, centre left, and Southampton's Taylor Harwood-Bellis challenge for the ball during the English FA Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Southampton and Arsenal in Southampton, England. (AP)



Chelsea's Alejandro Garnacho, centre, challenges for the ball with Port Vale's Jordan Lawrence-Gabriel, left, and Port Vale's Ethon Archer during the English FA Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Chelsea and Port Vale in London, England. (AP)

LONDON, April 5, (AP): Second-tier Southampton caused a huge shock by beating Premier League leader Arsenal in the FA Cup quarterfinals after Manchester City dispatched Liverpool 4-0 thanks to a hat trick by Erling Haaland.

Fresh off losing the English League Cup final to City before the international break, Arsenal saw another potential trophy slip from its grasp when conceding in the 85th minute to lose 2-1 at Southampton - a team in seventh place in the Championship.

It left City as the big favorite to clinch a cup double this season, with the thrashing of Liverpool securing a place in the FA Cup semifinals for a record eighth straight season.

Chelsea also advanced, routing third-tier Port Vale 7-0. The semifinal line-up will be completed Sunday when West Ham hosts Leeds, after which the last-four draw will be made.

So much for Arsenal's hopes of a quadruple of major trophies this season.

It's now just the Premier League and Champions League up for grabs with manager Mikel Arteta's decision to field a weakened lineup backfiring at St. Mary's stadium.

Trailing to a 35th-minute strike by Ross Stewart, Arsenal sent on Viktor Gyokeres - fresh off scoring the goal that lifted Sweden into the World Cup on Tuesday - and the striker equalized in the 68th.

Still, Southampton continued to look dangerous on the counterattack and Shea Charles, a former academy product at Man City, fired home from inside the area to secure a famous win.

"To go and beat arguably the best team in Europe at the minute is an incredible

feeling," Stewart said.

In an added blow to Arsenal ahead of its upcoming Champions League quarterfinal against Sporting Lisbon, Brazil center back Gabriel Magalhaes was forced off with a left knee injury midway through the second half. He was seen later with ice on the knee.

"This is the first moment that we have (this season) with a certain level of difficulty," said Arteta, whose team has a nine-point lead in the Premier League.

Chelsea romped to a big win - though this one was expected.

Playing without Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez for disciplinary reasons, Chelsea still had more than enough to dispatch Port Vale at Stamford Bridge thanks to goals by Jorrel Hato, Joao Pedro, Tosin Adarabioyo, Andrey Santos, Estevao and Alejandro Garnacho. There was also an own-goal.

Chelsea has won the FA Cup eight times, most recently in 2018.

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta acknowledged his team is going through its first tough period of the season after being stunned by second-tier Southampton in the FA Cup quarterfinals, two weeks after losing in the final of the English League Cup.

A knee injury to Gabriel Magalhaes, which forced off the Brazil center back in the second half, added more misery for Arteta, who suggested there were players who took the field against Southampton despite having fitness problems of their own.

What Arteta wasn't prepared to do was criticize his squad.

"I love my players and what they've done for nine months," he said. "What am I going to do now? Criticize them because we lost a game here in the manner that

they tried and the way they are putting their bodies through everything? Some of them probably didn't even have to be here today.

"No, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to defend them more than ever. If someone has to take responsibility that's me and we have the most beautiful period of the season ahead of us. And now it's a moment in the season - you always have moments, usually two or three. This is the first moment that we have with a certain level of difficulty."

Arsenal plays Sporting Lisbon - the weakest team remaining - in the Champions League quarterfinals over the next 10 days and has a nine-point lead in the Premier League as the club goes in search of a first trophy since 2020.

Arsenal has finished as the runner-up in the league in each of the last three seasons and was beaten in the semifinals of the Champions League last year.

"When I say difficulty, we're going to play in the Champions League quarterfinals and the run-in for the league," Arteta added. "It is a difficult period but I believe that many other ones are much more difficult."

"So, stand up, make yourself accountable, and deliver as we've been doing all season."

Gabriel was seen with an ice pack on his knee after coming off in the 72nd minute. He missed Brazil's games over the recent international break because of fitness concerns.

"I think he felt something," Arteta said of his key defender. "I don't know exactly what it is, we will have to assess him. But when a player asks to be substituted it is never good news."

Barca tightens grip on La Liga



Atletico Madrid's Javi Morcillo right vies for the ball with Barcelona's Pau Cubarsi during a La Liga soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Barcelona in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Lewandowski sinks 10-man Atletico

MADRID, April 5, (AP): Barcelona came from behind away from home to beat 10-man Atletico Madrid 2-1 and take a big step toward winning La Liga after Real Madrid lost at Mallorca.

It was the first of three matches between the teams in 10 days. Barcelona and Atletico will meet twice more in the quarterfinals of the Champions League. They also met in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey in February and March when Atletico advanced to the final 4-3 on aggregate. The Spanish rivals will face each other five times in less than two months.

"We are happy with the victory," Barcelona's Dani Olmo said. "We hadn't forgotten the last Copa match here ... we wanted to win and get the three points, which were very important."

Robert Lewandowski scored the decider in the

87th minute with his shoulder from a parried save by the Atletico goalkeeper.

Barcelona, which has won eight of its last nine games in all competitions, has a seven-point lead over Madrid, which lost at Mallorca 2-1 earlier.

Atletico, 19 points off the lead in fourth place, opened the scoring at Metropolitan Stadium through Giuliano Simeone in the 39th. Marcus Rashford equalized in the 42nd, and Atletico went a man down in first-half stoppage time when Nico González was sent off for a second yellow card.

"We played a good game," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. "We have to focus on the Champions League game now."

The winning goal was almost by accident. João Cancelo made a nice run through the left side of the area with a couple of cutback moves to get past defenders but his shot was parried by keeper Juan Muso and rebounded in off Lewandowski's shoulder.

Barcelona has 301 official goals in 107 matches under coach Hansi Flick.

Atletico has lost three in a row in all tournaments

and stayed one point behind third-placed Villarreal, which visits Girona on Monday.

Barcelona defender Gerard Martín was sent off in the second half but the decision was overturned by video review.

Real Madrid dropped further behind Barcelona after conceding in stoppage time.

Host Mallorca opened the scoring thanks to Manu Morlanes in the 42nd minute. Madrid equalized in the 88th through Éder Militão, who was back after an injury layoff of nearly four months.

The winner came from Vedat Muriqi one minute into added time.

Mallorca has risen out of the relegation zone after its second win in three league matches. It moved to 17th place, two points clear of the bottom three.

Madrid suffered its third defeat in its last six league matches. The club has five league losses all season.

Also, Real Sociedad beat Levante 2-0 at home, and Real Betis drew 0-0 with Espanyol, which has yet to win in 13 games this year.

Kuwait Club begins training in Dammam

Al-Qadsia departs for Doha, Humaidan set to join squad

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 5: Al-Qadsia's squad departed overland today to Doha for an overseas training camp ahead of its Gulf Champions League semifinal against Al-Rayyan on April 19. Preparations will officially begin tomorrow under Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul.

Maaloul is determined to continue Al-Qadsia's strong run and push for the title, having recently turned down an offer from CR Belouizdad to remain with the team until the end of the season.

The team will play two friendlies during the camp to rebuild fitness levels after a forced halt in training since early March due to the suspension of sporting activity.

Al-Qadsia will be without Bader Al-Mutawa, Talal Al-Fadhel, and Khaled Ibrahim, while Bahraini international Mahdi Al-Humaidan is

set to join the squad tomorrow from Manama.

If Al-Qadsia advances, it will meet the winner of Zakho (Iraq) and Al-Shabab (Saudi Arabia) in the final scheduled for April 23. The semifinal against Al-Rayyan will be played at Ahmed bin Ali Stadium at 8:00 PM, while the other semifinal will take place at Khalifa International Stadium at 5:00 PM. The final will also be staged at Ahmed bin Ali Stadium.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club has begun its overseas camp in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, holding double training sessions under Montenegrin coach Nebojša Jovović, who has named a 24-player squad.

"The Whites" are also set for two friendly matches before heading to Kyrgyzstan to face Oman's Al-Shabab in the AFC Challenge League quarterfinals. Fahad Hamoud, Sami Al-Sanea, and Ahmed Al-Zanki were absent from the traveling squad.



Qadsia's Mahdi Al-Humaidan controls the ball during a league match.