



DEATH RUMORS DEBUNKED; LEGAL ACTION WARNED

6 injured as debris pelts Kuwait residential area

Iran rejects latest ceasefire proposal as Trump deadline approaches

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi and Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Ministry of Defense disclosed Monday that the Kuwait Armed Forces detected 14 ballistic missiles, two cruise missiles and 46 hostile drones within the airspace of the country over the past 24 hours, affirming all of which were dealt with in accordance with the established procedures.

In the daily media briefing about the latest developments and operational incidents in light of the ongoing Iranian attacks on Kuwait, spokesman of the ministry Colonel Staff Saud Al-Atwan stated that debris fell in a residential area in the northern part of the country, resulting in human injuries. He stressed that the relevant authorities responded in line with approved procedures.

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Ministry of Social Affairs photo
Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah reviews monitoring screens during an inspection visit to the Central Control Unit at the ministry.



Championing national unity, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef dons the Arfaj flower to celebrate Kuwait's frontline workers and their unwavering service.
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Dean calls for overhaul

'Online exam cheating risks academic future'

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences Ahmed Al-Lafi issued a stern warning to students on his X account, stressing that any attempts to cheat on online exams will result in the application of penalties outlined in the regulations, indicating that the measures could escalate to the penalty of FC (fire for cheating).

Al-Lafi urged students not to jeopardize their academic future, especially with the adoption of audio-visual recording exams.

He questioned whether the issue lies with online learning itself or with the methods of its implementation.

Al-Lafi highlighted five common mistakes that undermine the quality of assessment and negatively affect the educational process.

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Opinion

The GCC states' opportunity for a unified army

Ahmed Al-Jarallah
Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

DOES Tehran want to end the war? Is it prepared to consider the proposed Pakistani plan?

Answering this requires us to understand the Persian mindset and cultural heritage, which are based on defiance and stubbornness rather than realistic approaches. This has been evident since the time of Cyrus.

As a result, Iran is unlikely to accept the proposed plan. In fact, its initial response was negative.

Iran will continue to reject any offer that does not meet its unrealistic demands. This means the war is likely to continue unless a miracle occurs within the regime itself.

However, everyone knows that the age of miracles is over. Today's world operates on facts, power, and winning strategies, none of which Iran currently pos-

esses.

I mentioned yesterday that Iran is selling illusions to its people while being incapable of achieving any real progress in its confrontations with the United States.

If Iran refuses to accept the conditions set by Washington, it should be prepared to face severe consequences.

Even if mediation efforts somehow manage to secure a 45-day ceasefire, which is a highly unlikely scenario at present, Iran will likely attempt to violate it by any means to prevent its citizens from confronting the harsh reality of widespread devastation and triggering massive protests that could threaten the regime.

Regardless of what unfolds in the coming hours and days, it does not change the fact that Tehran is tightly trapped by a choice among several bitter options, as long as stubbornness continues to dictate Iranian political and military behavior.

Iran has followed this approach, which is a mix of inherited religious and cultural tendencies, for the past 47 years.

It is not inconceivable that the Iranian regime might commit political suicide by escalating the conflict, a move that would inevitably hasten its

downfall.

Our primary concern, however, is the GCC states, which continue to endure daily terrorist attacks.

In light of this war, the GCC countries must develop a new security, political, and economic strategy that is fundamentally different from past approaches.

This strategy should be based first and foremost on the inherent strength of the GCC countries, with diversified sources of weaponry and reformed regional and international alliances to ensure a balance between the collective interests of the GCC and those of each individual state.

Today, the need for a unified Gulf army is greater than ever. The past five weeks of this war have proven that the countries of the region possess formidable military capabilities that have successfully countered the aggression. This fact should serve as the basis for building a future strategy.

Undoubtedly, this war will end one day. However, the post-war equations must be entirely different from those that existed before the war.

The Gulf states have much work ahead, particularly after reaffirming that differences in

viewpoints among sisterly GCC countries vanish when facing any threat. We must remember that disputes among the GCC states completely disappeared on August 2, 1990, when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq.

Today, it seems history is repeating itself, as the negative stances between some Gulf states vanished suddenly on February 28 of this year, when the barbaric aggression against our countries began.

This reality must not be ignored by Gulf decision-makers.

I urge them to work toward consolidating their unity in all areas. We must ensure our capability, as states and peoples, to change the equations and strengthen our strategic position.

Peace will not be achievable until the Persian regime is defeated; otherwise, the world will continue to suffer. Will the world accept Iranian terrorist blackmail, given that the word "peace" does not exist in Tehran's dictionary?

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Maintenance shake-up hits Kuwait key routes

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The General Traffic Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Works, announced the partial closure of several roads from Sunday evening, April 5, 2026, as part of its routine road maintenance plan, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The General Traffic Department urged all drivers to follow traffic instructions and designated diversions, and to cooperate with security personnel to ensure smooth traffic flow and public safety.

1. Partial closure of King Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road) for traffic coming from Kuwait City. Vehicles will be diverted to the Fahaheel Club intersection.

2. Partial closure of King Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road) for traffic coming from Nuwaiseeb Road. Vehicles will be diverted to the Ali Sabah Al-Salem Bridge intersection.

3. Partial closure of Mina Al-Ahmadi Road for traffic coming from King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Road toward King Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road).

4. Partial closure of North and South Shuaiba Road for traffic coming from King Fahd Bin Abdulaziz Road toward King Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road).

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Day by Day

AN Arab man asked an American, "How is life with you?"
The American replied, "By day, I drive a Hummer, and at night I spend time with a moon-like woman."

Then the American asked the Arab, "And how are your days?"
The Arab replied, "By day, I drive a tractor, and at night I spend time with a gorilla-like woman!"

Such is the difference in fortune. Perhaps it is for the best for everyone. God's ways are mysterious. He is the ultimate provider of sustenance.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Boost local output before going overseas: Al-Harami

Hormuz crisis sparks Kuwait's global energy pivot

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: With the current losses suffered by the Kuwaiti and Gulf oil sectors due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the ongoing war between the United States and Israel against Iran, the daily inquired about the possibility of Kuwait expanding its overseas oil and gas exploration to partially offset potential future losses if the Strait of Hormuz is closed again.

According to oil expert and analyst Kamel Al-Harami, the best course of action for the Kuwaiti oil sector is to focus on expanding domestic exploration, especially since Kuwait currently produces approximately 2.6 million barrels per day, prior to any export disruptions caused by a closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Once Kuwait's production reaches 3 million

barrels per day, the country could then consider expanding internationally.

Al-Harami stressed that investing in foreign oil resources would require billions of dollars, and emphasized that this step could only be undertaken if the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) had the necessary budget.

Meanwhile, oil expert Dr. Abdullah Al-Kandari supported the view that KPC should expand its overseas oil and gas exploration activities.

He explained that current circumstances make it necessary to diversify KPC's

revenue streams. Kuwait already has three companies operating internationally - the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company, which manages joint operations of the Khafji and Wafra oil fields in the divided zone with Saudi Arabia, the Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), and Kuwait Petroleum International.

Al-Kandari emphasized that international exploration requires patience, citing KUFPEC as an example, which has shifted from losses to positive returns in recent years.

He stressed that KPC's investments are spread in India, China, and Pakistan, with regional offices in Japan and South Korea, in addition to investments in Australia, Vietnam, Oman, Egypt, and Italy.

Al-Kandari noted that KPC's strategy is clearly focused on diversifying its revenue sources.

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Noose awaits son who killed mama

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Criminal Court on Monday sentenced a citizen - born in 1988 - to death for murdering his 75-year-old mother by slitting her throat inside the family home in Saad Al-Abdullah.

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Kuwait draws price red line with subsidy shield

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Marwa Al-Jaidan said the recent decision regarding the basic commodities subsidy aims to ensure the uninterrupted flow of goods into the Kuwaiti market, while maintaining price stability.

Al-Jaidan revealed that the objectives of the decision include protecting consumers from price hikes resulting

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8 KFH announces 754 winners of KD 2.6 mln & 10kg of gold



8 Kuwait Airways hosts an awareness workshop to enhance security & safety procedures amid ongoing developments



Steady work pace, constant monitoring stressed

MoE ponders ways to continue education process in crisis time

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei chaired a meeting on Sunday with a number of senior officials to discuss a set of procedures and regulations aimed at streamlining workflow during the upcoming phase, in line with current circumstances, and supporting the stability of the educational sector.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Education, the participants in the meeting included the acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Mohammad Al-Khaldi, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Hamad Al-Hamad, Director General of Educational Affairs Mohammad Al-Wazzan, Director General of Guidance, Research, and Curricula Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Director General of Educational Support Services Maryam Al-Anzi, and

Director of the Public Relations and Educational Media Department Arwa Al-Ayyar.

During the meeting, Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei stressed the importance of maintaining a steady work pace to ensure the continuity of efficient institutional performance, while intensifying periodic monitoring in all sectors. He noted that this approach will strengthen administrative discipline and achieve the highest levels of readiness.

The minister stressed the importance of using the current period to review and develop administrative and organizational processes within the Ministry of Education. This will support the modernization of work mechanisms and strengthen the principles of long-term institutional sustainability.

Al-Tabtabaei directed the Educa-



Education Ministry photo
Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei chairs the meeting.

tional Affairs Sector to expedite the identification of vacancies in edu-

cational supervisory positions in all disciplines and grade levels. This

will ensure the creation of an accurate and comprehensive database that helps achieve staffing balance within schools and enhances the stability of teaching staff.

During the meeting, Al-Tabtabaei also emphasized the need to establish a clear plan for reviewing transfer requests submitted electronically by the designated period, which ended on March 31. These transfers should be processed based on the actual vacancies and needs of the schools.

Al-Tabtabaei directed the preparation of a comprehensive study outlining schools' needs for teaching staff, including male and female teachers in various disciplines and subjects. This study will be part of the early preparations for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Furthermore, Al-Tabtabaei instructed the Administrative, Finan-

cial, and Technical Affairs Sector to conduct a comprehensive field survey of all schools.

The survey will include monitoring and documenting routine maintenance work through the "Balagh" (report) platform and addressing any issues immediately. The sector is also required to comply with Civil Service Commission (CSC) regulations regarding attendance rates, which must not exceed 30 percent of staff.

Al-Tabtabaei stressed the importance of ensuring the safety of educational facilities and their freedom from any traces of shrapnel that may have resulted from the Iranian aggression, as well as ensuring the closure of any sources of water or electricity waste, given the continuation of online learning and the absence of students in schools.

Opposition up for e-exams as MoE vows transparency

'Distance learning' operating smoothly: Al-Hamad

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: While the educational process continues efficiently under the "distance learning" system despite the exceptional circumstances the country is experiencing, the Ministry of Education is exploring mechanisms for conducting both short and final exams, particularly for secondary school students, while ruling out electronic testing, reports Al-Rai daily.

Under the leadership of Minister Jalal Al-Tabtabai, the ministry has adapted to the shift to distance learning through a series of organizational and technical measures that ensure the continuity of studies, remote monitoring of student attendance, and ongoing educational assessments. This also includes providing technical and psychological support, along with detailed plans for final exams to ensure fairness and protect students' academic futures.

In this regard, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng Hamad Al-Hamad said, "The ministry has developed several flexible scenarios to address various developments leading up to the exam dates. Remote electronic exams are not currently being considered, but alternative plans are in place and will be officially announced as circumstances dictate."

He stressed that all exam-related decisions will prioritize fairness and equality among students

while implementing all necessary measures to ensure their safety and safeguard their academic performance and future studies.

Al-Hamad affirmed that the ministry is continuing preparations to guarantee that exams are conducted in a well-organized and secure environment.

Meanwhile, the Director General of Guidance, Research, and Curricula, Mohammad Al-Otaibi said, "Coordination with school administrations is ongoing to establish clear review mechanisms before finalizing exam procedures, enabling students to prepare effectively. These efforts reflect the ministry's commitment to maintaining educational stability and ensuring students' academic success."

In addition, the Director General of Educational Zones, Mohammad Al-Wazzan, affirmed that, "The educational sector has shown a high level of preparedness in managing the effects of the crisis through continuous coordination between school administrations and educational zones, ensuring the continuity of studies and daily monitoring of students. School administrations have reinforced communication with parents, encouraging them to oversee their children and support their commitment to distance learning, which helps maintain academic discipline."

Meanwhile, a number of public benefit associations affirmed the importance of conducting paper-based exams for students, rejecting remote testing due to the challenges of monitoring and prevent-

ing cheating, particularly through artificial intelligence, reports Al-Jarida daily.

In a press statement, they warned that online exams could create false successes, which would undermine meritocracy for high-achieving students and allow undeserving individuals to secure opportunities, scholarships, and jobs unjustly.

The associations highlighted that amid ongoing aggression in the Gulf region, the stance of Kuwait's wise political leadership, along with leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, remains firm in defending their homelands, protecting lives and resources, and ensuring a safe path toward stability.

They emphasized that young people are a fundamental pillar of society, especially during challenging times, and that education plays a crucial role in shaping them into responsible citizens capable of contributing to the development and defense of their countries.

The associations said, "Since distance learning is essential for ensuring the continuity of education during crises, it is imperative to take all necessary measures to guarantee the quality of knowledge transfer to students. One of the most important tools for achieving this is the administration of exams."

Regarding the types of cheating, the associations said, "Distance testing, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has faced various forms of cheating, resulting in illusory successes that undermine meritocracy and falsify results, allowing undeserving individuals to access opportunities, scholarships, and jobs unjustly. Moreover, the emergence of new Artificial Intelligence programs has made cheating during distance exams easier and more difficult for teachers to detect."



Eng. Al-Hamad

MoE racing against time to prepare for exams

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Ministry of Education is racing against time to prepare for all eventualities related to the end-of-year exams, reports Al-Rai daily.

The Technical Guidance Department for Scientific Subjects has completed the delivery of exam papers for the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, for both science and arts tracks, to the secure printing press.

According to educational sources, the Technical Guidance Department has delivered ten paper samples to the secure printing press. These samples cover the end-of-year exams, second-round exams, supplementary exams, as well as exams for the Religious Institute and students with cerebral palsy.

The exams will be within the usual range "without any leniency."

The department will begin delivering middle school exams for grades 6 through 9 to the secure printing presses in the educational zones this week and next.

The ministry is fully prepared to handle all possible scenarios related to the conclusion of the current academic year, ensuring the quality of academic achievement and upholding equal opportunities for all students.

The delivery of exam papers to the secure printing facility follows the directives of educational leaders and does not necessarily indicate the adoption of a specific mechanism for concluding the academic

year.

All options are under consideration, and a final decision will be made in the coming period after approval by the Minister of Education, Engineer Jalal Al-Tabtabaei, ensuring the best interests of the students and the integrity of the approved procedures.

According to the approved academic calendar for the current year, the Ministry of Education has scheduled the end-of-year exams for middle school students from June 3 to 11, for grades 10 and 11 from June 3 to 15, and for grade 12 from June 17 to 29.

The ministry also set June 11 as the end date for kindergarten and elementary school students.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah is briefed on work procedures during his visit to the Farwaniya Hospital.

Governor visits Farwaniya hospital, checks readiness

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah on Monday inspected the Farwaniya Hospital to assess the readiness of the health facilities in the governorate, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Director of the Farwaniya Health District Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashidi, Director of Farwaniya Hospital Dr. Ali Al-Mutairi and several other officials warmly welcomed Sheikh Athbi Nasser during his visit.

He looked into the facilities and storage areas, emergency plans and level of preparedness among the medical staff.

Meanwhile, Al-Rashidi affirmed that the medical teams are fully prepared to handle various cases, in accordance with the emergency

plans aimed at ensuring rapid response.

Al-Mutairi said the hospital is keen on updating its emergency plans and boosting its medical supplies to guarantee the uninterrupted provision of services.

This inspection tour proves the commitment of Sheikh Athbi Nasser to monitor operations and make sure that the healthcare facilities are ready.

At the end of the visit, he commended the medical and administrative staff for their organization and preparation efforts.

Officials at the hospital expressed their gratitude to the Governor for his visit, which supports the efforts of the health sector in the governorate.

CAPT postpones deadline for submitting KOC bids

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) announced the postponement of the deadline for submitting bids for the tenders of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) to supply power to industrial lift pumps and remote vertical manifolds in East and South Kuwait for the construction of stations 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13.

In the announcement published on the official gazette - 'Kuwait Al-Youm', the agency set the new deadline for submitting bids on May 3, instead of April 5.

It also disclosed the postponement of the tender for three new electrical substations for KOC -- Maqwa C, Burgan H and Burgan I, operating at 123 kV and fed by 132 kV overhead lines in East and South Kuwait. The new deadline for submission of bids is May 5, instead of April 7.

Moreover, KOC confirmed the postponement of a tender for the construction of three new 123kV power stations in Ahmadi F, Burgan F and Burgan G, along with their associated 123kV overhead lines in East and South Kuwait. The new deadline is May 5, instead of April 7.

The Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) postponed a tender for the construction of the new 123kV power station in Bahra A, along with its associated 123kV overhead lines, in the Bahra field. The new deadline is May 5, instead of April 7.

The Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) announced the extension of the closing date for the tender to supply empty drums and wooden pallets until April 7, instead of March 24.

Meanwhile, KPC announced in the official gazette limited tender for specialized rescue services. The tender will be issued 30 days after its publication in the official gazette and will be open to five companies. Those not listed among the five are invited to submit formal applications to participate.

KPC also affirmed the awarding of the tender for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of the cybersecurity training and awareness platform to the Automated Systems Company, which submitted the lowest and met all the technical specifications and conditions at a cost of KD7,998.

Decree transfers Al-Dhaman shares to KIA for subscription

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm" published on Monday Decree-Law No. 50/2026, concerning the transfer of ownership of shares allocated for public subscription in the Health Assurance Hospitals Company (Al-Dhaman) to the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

Article 1 of the decree-law stipulates that, as an exception to the provisions of Law No. 9/2010 concerning the issuance of the Development Plan, ownership of the shares allocated for public subscription, as specified in Clause 3 of Article 2 of the aforementioned law, shall be transferred to the KIA, effective from the date of entry into force of this decree-law.

The same article authorizes KIA to offer these shares for public subscription to citizens, according to the percentage it determines, and to specify the mechanism and timing of the share offering.

Article 2 stipulates the repeal of any provision that contradicts the provisions of this decree-law.

According to Article 3, the Prime Minister and the ministers, each within their respective jurisdiction, shall implement the provisions of this decree-law, which shall come into force from the date of its publication in the official gazette.

The explanatory memorandum to

the decree-law indicated that Law No. 9/2010, concerning the Development Plan for the years 2010/2011-2013/2014, stipulated in Articles 2, 3, and 4 the need to achieve a balance between financing development projects and ensuring the equitable distribution of their returns among citizens.

Article 2 of the aforementioned law allocated 24 percent of the shares to the government and its affiliated entities, and a minimum of 26 percent to be offered for sale through a public subscription.

Participating companies listed on Boursa Kuwait, along with other companies approved by the Council of Ministers, were eligible to participate, while competing companies were excluded.

Article 2 of the aforementioned law also allocated 50 percent of the shares for public subscription by citizens, with any surplus from the sale of shares to be transferred to the state's public reserve fund.

Article 3 of the same law stipulated that the government entity responsible for establishing the company would determine its capital, and that the shares allocated for public subscription would be distributed among all Kuwaiti citizens.

The value of these shares is to be paid to the state according to specific procedures, without charging citizens any additional interest or fees, within a period not exceeding 60 days from the date of the subscription invitation.

Other Voices

The Group Leader's 'fiction'

By Ahmad alsarraf

The 'Group Leader' published a post on social media containing an inappropriate attack against me. He attached my picture and accused me of declaring my 'neutrality' regarding the Iranian attacks against us.

When I asked him how he reached that conclusion, he sent the following excerpt, taken out of context, from my article published on March 31, 2026,



alsarraaf

titled "More dangerous than Iran and Israel" - "I am among the very few who maintain true neutrality in this country. Despite all my journalistic battles, business interests, and the attacks, accusations, and both genuine and malicious lawsuits I have faced, I have maintained my neutrality, and refused to align with any political, sectarian, or social movement."

The Group Leader conveniently ignored everything I said before and after that excerpt. He even overlooked the article's title, so blatantly nationalistic in its implications, and fixated on the word "neutrality", interpreting it as an expression of my supposed "neutral" stance regarding the destruction, devastation, loss of life, and billions of dollars in lost revenue that my country is enduring. He failed to understand that his words amounted to an accusation of treason, which is an error unbecoming of someone who has spoken so much about his long journalistic career and his extensive knowledge.

Yet, he could not even grasp the true meaning of neutrality in that passage, which simply refers to not belonging to any sect or political party.

The Group Leader conveniently ignored facts known to anyone who follows my articles and is familiar with my past positions on the Iranian regime, positions that even reached the courts in a notorious "State Security" case filed against me by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I nearly faced several years in

prison because of that case. Another well-known incident, witnessed by dozens of prominent figures, occurred in 2000, when I refused to join a meeting with Hassan Nasrallah at the height of his victories, because I believed he was acting in Tehran's interests rather than those of his homeland, Lebanon.

This is in addition to the articles I have written over decades and the dozens of social media posts, some from just a few days or weeks ago, which have consistently been critical of the hard line religious regime in Iran.

What would the Group Leader's stance toward me have been if he were not a regular reader of my articles and had not followed them closely, as he himself acknowledged in his message, addressing me as "My dear friend, Ahmad Al-Sarraaf"?

I am neither foolish nor unpatriotic enough to declare in a widely circulated article that I am "neutral" regarding the current war between my country and a foreign enemy that has been bombarding us with hundreds of missiles and drones for over a month.

After accusing me of treason, he resorted to superficial flattery, claiming he does not doubt my patriotism and asserting that today we are all - Kuwaitis, Sunnis and Shiites, urbanites and tribes - united against Iranian treachery.

His admission that he follows my writing serves as evidence against him. He had no right to twist the word "neutrality" to suit his own agenda. This alone gives me grounds to sue him for questioning my loyalty to my country. My neutrality has always kept me free from sectarian or religious influence. Yet, it is not in my character, especially at this time, to take legal action against him.

The nation needs our unity and solidarity, not baseless accusations against one another. The opportunists who supported the "Group Leader's" post do not deserve a response. They claim to be issuing "certificates of patriotism" even though no one has authorized them to do so.

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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Ferocious attacks fail to hamper daily life in Gulf

"UNITY is not a slogan but a way of life. The Gulf states have proven that they share a common destiny and are united to the fullest extent," columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The ongoing aggression against the Gulf states has shown the strength of this unity, both in confronting Iranian attacks and in the support they provide to one another. The Gulf states have adopted a unified stance, particularly in response to recent threats. The principle that the security of the GCC states is indivisible has reinforced joint defense and collective efforts to protect Gulf interests.

"Over the past five weeks, the total number of attacks against the Gulf states has exceeded 5,200, despite these states not being parties to the war. Yet, the Gulf states continue to maintain normal day-to-day life, relying on stability and their commitment to providing a dignified life for citizens and residents. This is a difficult and significant task, but these countries have proven their ability to overcome all difficulties.

"In recent developments, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have proven themselves as a major power in all fields, including defense, as well as a significant economic bloc capable of influencing international markets.

"During the Roman Empire, it was said, 'If Rome is afflicted with a fever, the whole world is sick.'

"Recent events have shown that the Gulf states are at the heart of the global economy. Although the GCC's GDP is approximately \$2.5 trillion annually, its influence is substantial in vital sectors such as oil and petrochemicals.

"The challenges facing the Gulf states are considerable, especially after the end of this war, which is expected to bring profound changes, particularly in the political and economic spheres.

"The elites must develop future plans that consider all these variables and aim to strengthen joint Gulf action. It must be recognized that economic power is the primary driver of the future, and that collective Gulf efforts have the potential to reshape the regional and global landscape.

"The Gulf states possess many distinctive qualities, including soft power, which is of paramount importance in the modern era.

"These factors confirm that our countries share many common strengths that qualify them to commit fully to this unity in a manner suited to the future."

Also:

"When Iranian aggression against the Gulf states receives international condemnation and denunciation, as reflected in UN Security Council Resolution 2817 issued last March with the overwhelming support of 135 countries, the arms and media outlets of the Iranian regime resort to deliberate distortion of facts and realities," columnist **Khaled Ahmad Al-Tarrah** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The international resolution affirmed the right of the concerned states to self-defense, and demanded that Iran immediately and unconditionally cease its attacks. It also refuted Iranian pretexts and justifications aimed at obscuring the truth behind the heinous aggression against the Gulf states and their non-military facilities.

"The overwhelming majority in the Security Council documented its position regarding the clear and undeniable Iranian aggression against the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

"Teheran continues to rely on flimsy pretexts and fabricated excuses. The Iranian embassy in Kuwait distorted facts and spread lies by issuing a statement attributed to one of the mouthpieces of the Supreme Leader's regime, claiming that Israel was responsible for the attack on a Kuwaiti desalination plant.

"The Iranian embassy has not provided a single piece of evidence to support these claims, which are aimed at exonerating the hostile Iranian regime.

"What do these Iranian data and indicators mean? The Iranian regime interprets events and aggression against the Gulf states as it pleases, or as it imagines, in line with its own objectives.

"Field indicators show that 80 percent of Iranian missiles and drones targeted the Gulf states, compared to approximately 20 percent targeting Israel.

"Teheran and its regime have ignored the voice of the overwhelming majority of the international community, while listening to the clamor of a minority of its proxies in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, whose arguments are weak from an international perspective and lack a sound scientific research basis.

"Iran, mired in political, social, and religious crises, is being driven by miscalculations in this war, backed by a theocratic authority.

"A careful review and thorough analysis require an understanding of the international resolution issued by an overwhelming majority.

"The reality indicates that Iran suffered a military defeat after striking 15,000 military targets. In response, it targeted Israeli facilities, despite Israel's reluctance to share information from Tel Aviv regarding the course of the war.

"What concerns us about the Iranian aggression against the Gulf states is that Iran miscalculated and failed to assess the situation accurately and transparently.

"Iran will not emerge victorious from this war; rather, it will incur a significant political loss by damaging its relations with the Gulf states. Any attempt to repair these relations or justify the Iranian attacks

on the Gulf states will be extremely difficult.

"I refer to what my senior colleague Abdullah Bishara mentioned in his recent article, 'The Gulf Cooperation Council... and the Dictates of Our Time', regarding the targeting of military sites in the Gulf.

"This description reflects a misinterpretation of the aggression, as such claims are not relevant to the current situation and do not reflect the reality of the shifting political balance in Iran.

"I believe that my esteemed colleague Abdullah Bishara either has a memory lapse or lacks accurate data on all the targets affected in the Gulf states. Most of these targets were civilian, including ports, power stations, and vital infrastructure, not military sites.

"We hope that veteran diplomat Abdullah Bishara will reconsider his statements, as these misleading claims could be exploited by the Iranian embassy in Kuwait and the regime in Tehran."

"For decades, the Middle East has been viewed as a stage for global diplomatic conflicts, with external powers, particularly the United States, shaping much of its economic and political landscape," researcher in Social Sciences Dr. **Randa Diab Bahman** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Recent developments, however, suggest a shift in US focus to other regions, creating strategic gaps that could be turned into opportunities. What if the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and other Middle Eastern countries pursued self-reliance, instead of relying on external guidance, and coordinating their economies and diplomacy independently of US-led frameworks?"

"The Gulf states already enjoy high levels of economic integration, substantial sovereign wealth, and infrastructure capable of supporting robust intra-regional trade. Moreover, shared cultural and historical ties provide a natural foundation for cooperation, while regional logistics networks, financial systems, and investment platforms are starting to emerge.

"If these countries collectively assert their economic independence, they can establish stability and prosperity on their own terms, without relying on external approval. The economic implications of such a joint effort are considerable. Oil and gas markets, long influenced by international politics and the dominance of the dollar, could instead be managed through agreements centered on domestic demand, intra-GCC distribution, and diversified trading partnerships.

"With full commitment to this level of coordination, regional markets could maintain stability, as domestic demand and intra-regional trade would absorb much of the volatility. While global markets might initially react to the absence of US-mediated coordination, the combined production capacity, reserves, and financial strength of GCC countries would serve as a stabilizing force.

"Financial systems can also be restructured. Sovereign wealth funds, regional banks, and local currency arrangements can handle the majority of regional capital flows. If all GCC states adhere to a unified framework, trade among them can continue uninterrupted, creating a resilient network that reduces the impact of external pressures. Trade beyond the Gulf region would also continue, but under new terms.

"Middle Eastern countries could negotiate directly with Europe, Asia, and Africa, forming partnerships that reflect regional priorities.

Coordinated planning would reduce dependence on external actors and allow global supply chains to adapt without undermining regional stability. This is not isolationism, but a strategic realignment in which the region acts with confidence and asserts its interests.

"The political dimension is equally important. Collective independence means that cooperation, mutual respect, and a shared regional identity, rather than external pressure, determine outcomes. When regional powers align their positions, the traditional influence of external actors diminishes.

"The message is clear - Middle Eastern countries are capable of shaping their own economic and political future without interference, and instability in the region does not have to disrupt economic progress or logistics.

"Of course, there are challenges. Historical rivalries, differing national priorities, and varied economic structures can complicate coordination. Nevertheless, the principle is strong. The United States has shifted its focus away from the region in ways that reveal both risks and opportunities. If Gulf states work along with other regional countries to strengthen infrastructure, coordinate financial systems, and expand trade, they can build a network of interdependence that reduces the impact of external pressure.

"Collective independence does not weaken any party; it strengthens all. The United States has repeatedly overlooked the Arab world, showing little real interest in safeguarding the GCC states or their neighbors. It is therefore time to reconsider this approach. Regional powers are far stronger when they act together.

"A shared commitment can turn vulnerability into resilience and dependence into self-determination. Stability and prosperity no longer need to hinge on external approval or endorsement. The future of the Middle East lies in recognizing that unity is its greatest source of strength."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



Al-Sabah

Mol deploys 600 patrols, boosts security presence

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Ministry of Interior intensified its field deployment by dispatching approximately 600 patrols from various security sectors to roads and intersections in all six governorates within a 24-hour period, with the aim of expediting responses to reports and enhancing security presence, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The General Directorate of Emergency Police revealed that it handled around 1,970 different reports from February 28 to April 5, the majority of which were concerning drones, with 1,141 reports, followed by 388 reports related to hearing explosions.

Statistics presented on the television program "Good Morning Kuwait" showed that the emergency police also responded to 375 reports of suspected foreign objects and dealt with sites where shrapnel had fallen. They received 66 reports of suspicious individuals near sensitive facilities.

In addition, the Hotline No. 112 of the central operations room received 6,571 reports during the same period, while establishing 1,664 field posts and executing 117 service orders to secure vital sites.

Heroin-filled syringes seized: Patrols from the Capital Governorate's support unit recently arrested two individuals in possession of eight syringes containing heroin, ready for use, along with other quantities of narcotics, cash suspected to be proceeds from drug sales, and drug paraphernalia, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to security sources, the suspects were taken into custody along with the seized items, and transferred to the Drug Control General Department to complete the investigation, uncover their network of associates, and take the necessary legal measures before referring them to the appropriate authorities.



KUNA photo
Municipality inspectors issuing citation at an under construction building in Al-Riqqa.

Raids in Al-Riqqa

Strict checks launched on construction works

KUWAIT CITY, April 6, (KUNA): Kuwait Municipality announced on Monday the launch of field inspection campaigns to monitor construction works across the country's six governorates, with the aim of enforcing building regulations and ensuring compliance with their requirements across all types of use, including private residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural, investment and craft sectors.

In a press release, the municipality affirmed that field operations by supervisory teams will continue throughout the current month, carried out by national personnel.

It noted that the first campaign, conducted by the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in Al-Ahmadi Governorate earlier today, resulted in the issuance of three violations and 15 warnings related to private housing regulations and space exploitation in Al-Riqqa area.

The municipality added that the specialized inspection team carried out field checks in a number of areas and locations where violations had been recorded, taking the necessary legal measures. It stressed that the initial campaign will be followed by several field tours across all governorates according to a set timetable prepared by the Public Relations Department in coordination with the relevant authorities to ensure the implementation of these campaigns over the coming weeks.

Fraud case ruling delayed

Verdict upheld as court frees ex-MP Al-Muwaizri

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Court of Cassation upheld the ruling of the lower and appeals courts, which acquitted former MP **Shuaib Al-Muwaizri** of disseminating false information about the biometric fingerprinting and Nationality Law.

Lawyer for Al-Muwaizri, Attorney Dr. **Khaled Al-Kuifaifa**, attended the appeal hearing and argued on behalf of his client. He asserted that the material and moral elements of the crime of disseminating false information and malicious rumors were not present. He emphasized that his client's statements are within the realm of expressing political opinion. He explained that the statements and publications in question are just political opinions and positions expressed by a public figure, not false news or malicious rumors.

He also pointed out the absence of criminal intent and the lack of evidence suggesting the deliberate dissemination of false information. He added that the statements of the defendant are within the context of public debate on issues of national interest, thus, they are not within the criminalization framework.

The higher court upheld the acquittal ruling due to the absence of the elements of the crime.

Court postpones ruling: The Court of Cassation postponed until May 18 the announcement of its verdict on the case of a luxury car dealership owner and manager, who are accused of fraud, embezzlement and money laundering.

The Court of Appeals previously sentenced the defendants to 12 years in prison and fined them KD34 million, along with the confiscation of all funds from the company's accounts. They were found guilty of misappropriating funds from clients through fictitious offers to sell luxury cars at attractive prices.

The Court of Appeals also upheld the prison sentence for the fraud charges.

In its initial ruling, the Criminal Court sentenced the defendants to 10 years in prison and fined them the same amount, along with the confiscation of funds and referral of the civil case to the competent court.

The two defendants faced the accusations from more than 500 victims in and outside Kuwait as they misled them by claiming they could provide luxury vehicles at prices lower than the dealerships, only to misappropriate their funds and transfer the money to conceal the origin.

The total amount obtained was estimated at more than KD17 million, in addition to around 1.5 million Qatari riyals.

Mol: Surrender illegal weapons

Respect common man: Al-Wuhaib

By **Munif Naif/Jaber Al-Hamoud**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: **Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib has inspected several police stations to assess their operations, as the extended deadline for surrendering unlicensed firearms and ammunition without legal repercussions ends Wednesday.**

Head of the Public Security Sector Major General **Hamad Al-Munifi** and Director General of the Public Relations and Security Media General Department Brigadier General **Nasser Bousulaib** accompanied Al-Wuhaib in the inspection tour.

Al-Wuhaib reviewed the security situation in residential areas, emphasizing the importance of continuous and effective security presence to maintain security and reassure the public. He commended the ongoing efforts of the security personnel in performing their duties with utmost efficiency and competence.

He stressed the necessity of treating citizens and residents with respect, responding promptly to reports, and handling these reports with the highest degree of professionalism and expertise.

He reiterated that surrendering unlicensed weapons during this period has no legal repercussions, which proves the shared commitment to support the security system and maintain national stability.

He affirmed the high level of discipline and readiness shown by the security personnel in conducting this operation, which embodies the sense

of responsibility and dedication of the members of the security establishment and depicts the honorable image of the security personnel in serving the nation.

He pointed out that the current phase requires everyone to adhere to the issued instructions and guidelines, such as refraining from hunting in the desert as it could endanger lives.

He added that the security personnel remain true to their pledge to serve as a shield against anything that undermines national security, while continuing to perform their national duties with utmost sincerity and dedication to protect the homeland and its resources.

False theft report case: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict of a lower court that acquitted an individual of filing a false theft report after Attorney **Mohammad Ahmad Al-Rifai** appeared on behalf of the defendant.

The Public Prosecution stated that the defendant lodged a report with the investigating authority, falsely accusing the victim of theft despite knowing the incident was untrue. The prosecution then demanded for the punishment of the defendant as per Article 145 of the Penal Code.

During the investigation, both parties exchanged theft accusations. The victim denied the accusations, asserting the report was malicious. The police investigation also indicated that the theft reported by the defendant was false.

Al-Rifai argued in court that the elements of the crime of filing a false report were not met, that there was no criminal intent, and that the evidence was insufficient. He affirmed the innocence of his client.

The court concluded that the presented evidence was insufficient, stressing that the police investigations alone are not enough evidence for conviction and that the documents lacked conclusive evidence proving the defendant deliberately lied or intended to harm the victim, while doubting the validity of the supposed confession of the defendant.

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MEWRE rolls out plan to modernize energy, water

373 projects to boost services

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The annual plan of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for the current fiscal year includes 373 supply and service contracts worth more than KD75,000.

The plan, published in the official gazette - 'Kuwait Al-Youm' -- indicated that the contracts covered 11 technical and administrative sectors, including 124 contracts for power and water desalination plants, 90 for electricity transmission networks, 56 for distribution networks, 45 for technical services and main workshops, 18 for water projects, 11 for water operation and maintenance, 10 for monitoring, control and surveillance centers, eight for planning and information systems and one for financial affairs.

ects, 11 for water operation and maintenance, 10 for monitoring, control and surveillance centers, eight for planning and information systems and one for financial affairs.

This is in addition to the contracts for the electricity transmission and distribution network -- 56 for distribution networks, 45 for technical services and main workshops, 18 for water projects, 11 for water operation and maintenance, 10 for monitoring, control and surveillance centers, eight for planning and information systems and one for financial affairs.

The contracts for the Financial Affairs Sector cover two power station projects, one is for the supply, installation, operation and maintenance of photovoltaic panels on the roofs of the Subiya groundwater reservoirs, with a production capacity of 42 to 48 megawatts. The other is for the supply, installation, and

maintenance of photovoltaic panels for the Al-Abdaliyah project, which aims to generate photovoltaic electricity.

This project, studied by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), is located in an area measuring 2.28 square kilometers, with a maximum expected installed capacity of 180 to 200 megawatts.

These contracts will be tendered by the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) in accordance with Public Tenders Law No. 49/2016.

All contracts included in the plan aim to modernize, develop and improve the efficiency of the electricity and water networks, increase productivity, provide better services to citizens and residents, maintain the reliability of the electricity network and ensure its efficient operation to handle increased loads, particularly during the summer months when electricity demand rises, through the periodic maintenance contracts.



Farwaniya Health District Director Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashidi with participants of the awareness lecture on creative work teams, highlighting teamwork, innovation, and collaborative strategies to enhance healthcare performance.

Teams drive healthcare innovation

Farwaniya health boosts quality care

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Farwaniya Health District Director Dr. Mohammad Al-Rashidi delivered an awareness lecture on creative work teams and their role in developing institutional healthcare performance.

This is one way of supporting institutional work and fostering an environment of innovation.

During the lecture, Al-Rashidi emphasized that institutional success is not achieved through individual efforts, but through integrated teams working with a unified spirit, effective

communication and collaborative decision-making skills, which could transform challenges into achievement opportunities.

He pointed out that the sustainable development of work teams depends on continuous learning and professional development, in addition to creating a stimulating environment that supports creativity and embraces new ideas, within a clear strategic vision aimed at achieving sustainable results.

He affirmed that building innovative work teams is vital to improving the quality of healthcare services and enhancing performance efficiency,

which positively impact the level of care provided to patients and in line with the directives of the Health Ministry on providing integrated and safe healthcare services based on quality and innovation. He added that these efforts put the patient at the heart of priorities and raise performance levels to meet the highest international standards in the healthcare sector.

This is part of a series of lectures offered by the Leadership Training Center in Farwaniya Health District in line with its commitment to invest in human capital and promote participatory leadership concepts to achieve institutional excellence.

MoE, Youth Affairs forge stronger cooperation



MoE photo
Minister of Education with Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Minister along with Ministry of Education officials during the meeting.

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei on Sunday met with Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tariq Al-Jalahima to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between the education and youth sectors, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Education revealed that acting Undersecretary Eng. Mohammad Al-Khaldi and Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad also attended the meeting.

This meeting proves the commitment of both sides to support national development efforts by strengthening integration between educational and youth-related entities, thereby, building a conscious and qualified generation capable of fulfilling

future demands.

They deliberated on several topics of mutual interest, such as the development of youth programs and organizing sports activities in the educational field for the personal development of the students and to improve their physical and mental skills.

The two sides also discussed expanding cooperation in identifying and nurturing talented individuals and providing a stimulating environment that allows them to showcase their abilities in various fields, in line with the State's direction towards optimal investment in young talent.

They emphasized the need for continuous coordination between them and to launch joint initiatives to achieve the educational and youth goals and improve the services provided to the children and youths.

Farm-to-Co-op sales push

Kuwaiti farmer praises dedicated market section for local produce

By Adnan Makkawi
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Farmer Dr. Yousef Abdulrahman Al-Safran praised the allocation of a dedicated section for Kuwaiti farmers in all fruit and vegetable markets in cooperative societies.

He stressed that providing a specific section for local agricultural products benefits both farmers and consumers.

Dr. Al-Safran, who owns a farm in Abdali, encouraged consumers to purchase their fruits and vegetables from local producers, highlighting their quality and the fact that the products arrive fresh in the markets without any harmful chemicals.

He also called on the committee formed by the Ministry of Social Affairs to adopt a lottery system for farmers wishing to participate in the national farmers' section, rather than relying on an auction system.

Dr. Al-Safran explained that auctions favor cheaper products and reduce the chances for higher-priced, higher-quality items. The higher cost of some products reflects the expense of producing first-grade vegetables and fruits.

He noted that consumers in Kuwait prefer to buy fresh, safe Kuwaiti agricultural products, even if their prices are higher than those of second-grade and third-grade produce.

Dr. Al-Safran urged fellow farmers to select the best seeds and seedlings for planting and to use the highest-quality fertilizers and pesticides, regardless of their cost.

He explained that producing vegetables and fruits early in the season is not the priority, as what matters most is that the produce is safe, healthy, and nutritious. Providing consumers with safe and healthy fruits and vegetables is the responsibility of honest



Dr. Al-Safran

and dedicated farmers committed to their country and people.

Dr. Al-Safran also highlighted the state's role in monitoring and inspecting every vegetable market, whether fixed, mobile, permanent, or seasonal, wherever it may be.

He urged the relevant committee to require farmers participating in the "Farmers' Corner" to label their crates of produce with their name and code, as it would allow consumers to identify the source and distinguish quality products from substandard ones.

Dr. Al-Safran indicated that consumers would stop buying adulterated produce once they can identify the source and would be more inclined to purchase high-quality products.

He also expressed his satisfaction with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's decision to stabilize the prices of Kuwaiti agricultural products at the start of the US-Israeli-Iranian war.

He called on the ministry to stabilize the prices of agricultural materials and supplies in local markets, ensuring they remain consistent with pre-war levels, especially since these materials were already stored by agricultural companies and not imported during the war.

Although he does not receive the allocated cash subsidy for sales of local produce, Dr. Al-Safran clarified that he does not seek financial support because his goal is to serve consumers and uphold the reputation of the farm founded by his late father, Abdulrahman Al-Safran.

He emphasized his desire, shared by most Kuwaiti farmers, to eliminate the role of the "middleman" between producers and cooperative societies, as he favors direct dealings, noting that middlemen have profited for years at the expense of both producers and consumers.

Dr. Al-Safran also stressed the importance of intensifying oversight of fruit and vegetable markets to prevent manipulation and the mislabeling of imported produce as local, and vice versa, for illicit gain.

He expressed his gratitude to the officials of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Kuwait Farmers Union for their efforts in supporting Kuwaiti farmers.

Following heavy rain, Kuwait to see spring revival as pre-Sarayyat begins

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Kuwait experienced varying intensities of rainfall in some areas since the early hours of Saturday morning, leading to water accumulation in certain locations, which the Ministry of Public Works addressed after receiving reports, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources from the Ministry of Public Works, emergency teams were immediately deployed to these areas to pump out the accumulated water. They also monitored locations previously affected by flash floods.

The ministry is working in coordination with various state agencies to maintain road conditions and ensure the safety of motorists during the current rainy weather.

In this regard, meteorologist Issa Ramadan said rainfall during March and April has been above average, which has revitalized local plants and flowers, and they continue

to thrive even at this time of year.

Ramadan explained that April typically brings rising temperatures and longer days that signals a gradual shift toward warmer weather. In recent years, clear changes in the weather have been observed, resembling conditions from over a hundred years ago. Rainfall, which was previously scarce and limited, has recently increased.

Cloud cover would gradually decrease, the rain would stop, and the weather would improve this week, with spring-like conditions and increased growth of spring and annual plants in the coming days. Sunny weather is expected to continue until Wednesday, after which cloud cover will increase, resulting in partly cloudy skies until Friday. The current period is known as the "pre-Sarayyat" period, and mid-April marks the start of the Sarayyat period, when local cumulonimbus clouds typically form.

Continued from Page 1

Maintenance shake-up

5. Partial closure of Route 306 (Al-Wafra Road) for traffic coming from the Shuaiba Industrial Area roundabout and Ali Sabah Al-Salem area toward King Abdulaziz Al-Saud Road (Fahaheel Road).

6. Partial closure of Khalid Al-Sufaih Street in Fahaheel, from the Al-Kout Mall roundabout to the Al-Dhaman Hospital roundabout in South Sabahiya.

Noose awaits

Case files indicate that the Operations Unit at the Ministry of Interior received information from a female citizen, stating that her brother killed their mother and then fled. Jahra security patrols, forensic investigators, medical examiners and a public prosecutor then rushed to the scene of the crime.

The victim was transported to the hospital by her daughter, but she succumbed

to her severe injuries. The deputy public prosecutor ordered transfer of the victim's body to the Forensic Medicine Department.

Security forces apprehended the defendant after a chase in Saad Al-Abdullah. The murder weapon, which had traces of blood, was found in his possession. He was referred to the investigation authorities.

During the investigation, the accused confessed to the crime, admitting that he planned to murder his mother due to family disputes. He revealed that before committing the crime, he purchased a knife and a sharp instrument at a shop in Jahra Industrial Area. He returned home and murdered his mother in her bedroom.

The accused was remanded in custody pending further investigation, while the Criminal Investigation Department was assigned to conduct interrogations.

The case was referred to the Criminal Court, which imposed the death sentence on the accused.

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Arfaj flower blooms as Kuwait's symbol of unity, resilience

Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef endorses campaign to celebrate national dedication

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The yellow Arfaj flower, which is Kuwait's official plant symbol, has recently spread across social media to become a national icon representing resilience and steadfastness in the face of extraordinary circumstances.

The flower, which thrives in harsh desert environments, embodies the spirit of national unity. Kuwaitis have widely shared it in a spontaneous national campaign reflecting patriotism to affirm that Kuwait can overcome challenges, no matter how severe.

The Arfaj flower was chosen as the campaign's symbol under the direct guidance of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, who supported the idea of Kuwaitis wearing the flower in appreciation of frontline workers. The initiative honors medical teams, security forces, and employees in education, media, and energy sectors, demonstrating a striking display of national unity.

In support of national initiatives reflecting patriotism and dedication and in recognition of the efforts of frontline heroes, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef endorsed the national campaign "Zahrat Al-Arfaj."

Also, the Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Salah Al-Maliki participated in the national campaign "Zahrat Al-Arfaj" (The Flower of the Arfaj Plant) to express his solidarity with the Kuwaiti people and support for frontline workers.

Al-Maliki posted a message on the X platform in which he prayed for the protection of frontline workers by saying, "O God Almighty, on the front lines are men who have truly fulfilled their commitment to You. They are the vigilant guardians of the security and safety of our homeland. O God, grant them Your aid, strength, and success, protect them with Your watchful eye, guide them, defeat our enemy, and grant us a glorious victory."

Meanwhile, Dr. Fadaa Al-Aoun, Professor of Plant Microbiology at the College of Basic Education, emphasized that the choice of the Arfaj flower carries profound significance, as it thrives in the harshest environments, symbolizing resilience and recovery during times of crisis.

She noted that the flower conveys a clear message - Kuwait is unbreakable, regardless of the challenges it faces.

Dr. Al-Aoun explained that the campaign transcends its symbolic meaning to encompass environmental and strategic dimensions. It represents a proactive effort to enhance environmental security and



Championing national unity, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef dons the Arfaj flower to celebrate Kuwait's frontline workers and their unwavering service.



Bahraini Ambassador Salah Al-Maliki joins national campaign.



Photo courtesy of @alarfajflower 'Arfaj Flower' transcends symbolism, uniting society and nation.



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq The Arfaj, Kuwait's national flower, thrives in nature.

rehabilitate ecosystems during crises, particularly given concerns about the impact of pollution on soil and air.

Furthermore, Dr. Mohammed Al-Moussa, a botany specialist and faculty member at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), explained that the Arfaj flower is more than just a flower, but it is a national symbol reflecting the resilience of the Kuwaiti people. Choosing the Arfaj flower reflects an awareness of the importance of spreading optimism and reinforcing confidence in facing challenges, especially in light of past experiences that have shown the impact of wars on the environment and the decline of vegetation cover.

Also, Dr. Fnees Al-Ajmi, Director of Security and Safety at PAAET, affirmed that choosing the Arfaj flower reflects the essence of Kuwait and its people, as the plant is highly resilient even in the most challenging conditions and produces new seeds that ensure its sustainability.

He highlighted that the widespread

participation in the campaign, shown by wearing the flower on the chest, highlights strong national unity, appreciation for frontline workers, and boosts morale in the face of challenges.

Dr. Al-Ajmi also referenced the Amiri decree issued by the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, which mandates the protection of the Arfaj plant and the preservation of its national significance.

He reviewed PAAET's efforts in planting one million trees since 2016, including the Arfaj.

Dr. Al-Ajmi concluded by emphasizing that the "Arfaj Flower" campaign has gone beyond a symbolic initiative, evolving into a societal phenomenon with national, environmental, and psychological significance.

He stressed that protecting the homeland is not limited to military efforts but includes awareness, solidarity, and the ability to transform simple symbols into a unifying soft power.

In addition, Sheikh Al-Ibrahim, Director of Public Relations and Media at the

Environment Public Authority (EPA), praised the public's unity, affirming that Kuwaitis stand together in various fields, drawing inspiration from the Arfaj plant, which represents strength, perseverance, and generosity.

She explained that adopting the Arfaj flower as a national icon highlights its environmental and symbolic value. It is distinguished by its high resistance to drought, extreme temperatures, and salinity, and its tendency to bloom in the spring after rainfall.

Al-Ibrahim highlighted the vital environmental role of the Arfaj plant, noting its contribution to soil stabilization and the mitigation of desertification.

She warned of the challenges it faces, including overgrazing, human activities, urban expansion, and the impacts of climate change.

Al-Ibrahim emphasized the importance of raising environmental awareness to preserve this natural resource, which holds national significance beyond its botanical value.


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LOCAL

Kuwait, Saudi Foreign Ministers discuss rising regional tensions

KUWAIT CITY, April 6, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Sunday a phone call from his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan.

During the phone conversation, they addressed the latest regional

developments, including mounting military escalation triggered by the heinous Iranian aggression on the region's countries, along with its serious repercussions for regional and global security and stability, said the Foreign Ministry in a press release.

College expands programs

PAAET's 146 graduates set to boost healthcare sector

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Bader Al-Khalaf affirmed that the college continues to play a vital role in supplying the health sector with qualified national personnel.

Dr. Al-Khalaf revealed that 146 students graduated last semester in various allied health specialties to meet labor market demands.

He explained that the college has begun issuing graduation certificates to graduates. Kuwaiti students are directly and immediately employed by the Ministry of Health through clear pathways without obstacles. The appointment of non-Kuwaitis takes relatively longer due to different contracting terms and special administrative procedures.

Graduates in biomedical specialties, such as anesthesia, respiratory therapy, and medical laboratories, are prioritized for employment due to the growing demand for these fields.

Any delays in appointments are caused by the procedures of the employing entities, not by the college's output or the readiness of the graduates.

Dr. Al-Khalaf clarified that all exams for the current semester are being conducted fully electronically based on the instructions of the relevant authorities.

He confirmed that there will be no in-person exams at the college until further notice, except for practical assessments related to field training, which require students to attend work sites.

Dr. Al-Khalaf stated that students are required to complete preparatory training before beginning field training, indicating that this training familiarizes them with procedures for accessing shelters within training facilities and ensures they are ready to handle emergencies according to safety protocols.

He stressed that the college has resumed field training programs in direct coordination with the Ministry of Health, affirming that students receive training in hospitals and laboratories under strict professional standards to enhance their competence and readiness to enter the labor market.

Dr. Al-Khalaf noted that the college is working on introducing several new specializations to meet future needs, including programs in food science and nutrition.

He highlighted the coordination with the Ministry of Health to launch a Bachelor of Science in Emergency Medical Services, a vital specialization that supports the healthcare system.

Dr. Al-Khalaf emphasized that the college is proceeding with its development plans according to a strategic vision focused on improving the quality of education and training, and enhancing integration with employers.

He reaffirmed his commitment to ongoing cooperation with relevant government agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health, to ensure that educational outcomes align with labor market demands and to achieve the highest standards in applied education and training.

Emergency shelters mandatory in investment, commercial buildings

Municipal Council approves key cable and sewer line routes

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, unanimously approved the proposed inclusion of a clause mandating the construction of shelters in investment and commercial buildings in the updated regulations during its regular session on Monday.

This measure aims to guarantee public safety and raise the level of readiness for emergency situations.

The council also approved the following:

■ Request of the Amiri Diwan to amend the decision to allocate the Kuwait Motorsports City site in Arifjan. This amendment pertains to the establishment, completion, maintenance and operation of the project based on Cabinet Resolution No. 907/2019, which includes utilizing a 561-square-meter land for four activities – a central market, a café and two restaurants.

■ Request of the Ministry of Public Works to allocate cable routes in Dhali' Al-Zunaif, East Ahmadi, South Sabahiyah and Shuaiba for the sewage treatment plants and reservoirs (R-600, R-400, R-500 and R-800).

■ Allocation of routes in Ali Sabah Al-Salem and Arifjan to connect these areas to the primary and secondary substations.

■ Request of the Ministry of Defense, which was distributed to council members in sealed envelopes, to maintain confidentiality under the current circumstances.

■ Recommendations presented at the first workshop of the Environment Affairs Committee regarding public transportation and bus stops. These recommendations include assigning the Kuwait Municipality to study, design



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

The Municipal Council, chaired by Abdullah Al-Mahri, during its regular session on Monday.

and oversee the public transportation system and bus stations by signing a contract with a consulting firm. The study will include a comprehensive survey of bus stations, an assessment of their technical and operational conditions, establishment of standards, and identifying future locations for them in accordance with the general structural plan of the State. It is also recommended to coordinate with the Secretariat General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and other entities to study the establishment of a national public transport authority or body responsible for regulating passenger services, setting regulations and encouraging investment in the sector.

On the other hand, the council rejected three proposals in Jahra Governorate

– allocation of land for the pedestrian walkway, road leading to a popular café, and elderly care facilities in Khuwaissat and Ashairij as per the technical opinion of the Municipality.

The council accepted the response of the executive branch regarding the mechanism and procedures for structural safety of buildings.

At the request of several members, a closed session was held to discuss the extension of the landfill contract, as well as the State Audit Bureau's comments about the municipal landfill sites.

Meanwhile, council member Alia Al-Farsi praised the decision to include the construction of shelters in investment and commercial buildings in the updated regulations, considering it a qualitative leap in enhancing the public safety

system. In a press statement, Al-Farsi emphasized that the decision proves the level of institutional awareness on the importance of integrating security and safety regulations into urban planning. She believes this will raise the level of preparedness in various governorates and improve the ability to protect lives and properties.

She added that the decision is taken amidst the geopolitical circumstances the region is witnessing, which necessitates adopting precautionary policies to guarantee community security.

She pointed out that its application in new projects, along with studying its gradual expansion to existing buildings, will lead to a safer and more sustainable urban environment.

Kuwait strongly condemns attack on Sudan hospital

KUWAIT CITY, April 6. (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry on Sunday emphatically condemned and denounced an attack by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on Al-Jabalain Teaching Hospital in White Nile State in Sudan, which killed and injured ci-

vilians and medics.

In a press release, the ministry said that targeting medical and vital facilities is a blatant breach of international law, international humanitarian law and Jeddah Declaration adopted in May 2023 regarding the protection

of civilians, and medical and health teams, and undermines efforts aiming at de-escalating tensions and protecting civilians.

It also called on the international community and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to take on their

due responsibilities by halting these serious violations.

The ministry also extended sincere condolence to the government and people of Sudan as well as the victims' families, while wishing a swift recovery of those injured in the attack.

Continued from Page 1

6 injured

Al-Atwan added that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit at the Land Forces Engineering Department handled 22 reports, while the Kuwait Army firefighting teams dealt with three incidents, as per the established protocols.

He affirmed that members of the Armed Forces continue to carry out their national duties with determination, discipline, high level readiness and field experience, thereby, maintaining the security and stability of the country.

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

Also, the Ministry of Interior announced Monday that the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams handled 21 reports in the last 24 hours about falling debris on homes and vehicles due to defensive interception operations, which caused injuries to some individuals without human fatalities.

In the daily media briefing, spokesperson of the ministry Brigadier Nasser Bouslaib disclosed that the total number of debris-related reports since the beginning of the aggression has risen to 699.

He said warning sirens were activated seven times, increasing the total number of activations since the start of the attacks to 178.

He also presented a visual briefing on the efforts of the special forces in dealing with reports about falling debris or objects inside and outside the threat zones.

Regarding the defensive interception operations, he confirmed that the ministry, in coordination with the relevant authorities, responded efficiently to all incoming reports to ensure rapid response and the protection of lives and properties.

He added that some citizens and residents gathered at debris-impact sites, urging the public to avoid such gathering and not to approach affected areas or unidentified objects until the arrival of the emergency and EOD teams.

He stressed that these warnings aim to ensure public safety, reduce risks, and enable response teams to reach the incident sites quickly and perform their duties effectively.

He stated that some individuals and accounts were found to be spreading rumors about fatalities, clarifying that only injuries were recorded, not deaths, and that legal action will be taken against the violators.

He emphasized that the ministry will take legal measures against rumor-mongers and anyone spreading wrong information that threatens public security or causes panic.

He reiterated the call of the ministry for the public to rely solely on official sources, and to act with full awareness and national responsibility.

Moreover, the ministry warned against publishing any information before an official announcement is issued, stressing that announcing details is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities handling the incidents and providing

accurate information to the public.

Director of the Security Media Department at the ministry Colonel Othman Al-Mansour reiterated in a statement to Kuwait TV the need to obtain information only from official sources, especially since the relevant authorities are keen on keeping the citizens and residents informed about the developments as they occur through the daily media briefing.

He asserted that the information circulating on some social media platforms is incorrect and it is the work of a minority who are being monitored and will face legal action.

He added that the competent authorities are closely monitoring anyone who spreads rumors or sympathizes with the Iranian aggression. He warned that anyone who violates the law or contributes to spreading misleading information will be held accountable according to legal procedures, calling on everyone to cooperate in maintaining the nation's security and stability.

He then pointed out that the security and military agencies are working continuously to apprehend anyone who sympathizes with Iranian aggression or tampers with the country's security by terrorizing people through social media.

He stressed that the attacks the country has witnessed have increased the determination of the concerned authorities, who continue to perform their duty efficiently and faithfully without interruption.

In a related development, official spokesperson of the Ministry of Health Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad said the Central Operations Unit of the ministry received reports early Sunday morning about projectiles and shrapnel falling in a residential area.

In a press statement, Al-Sanad confirmed that the medical emergency teams and ambulance services immediately responded to the incident with the highest level of readiness.

He stated that the ambulance crews treated two women at the scene, providing them with the necessary medical care without requiring further treatment. He added the third injured person was transferred to the Emergency Department at Jahra Hospital, indicating the department also received patients who arrived at the hospital on their own, bringing the total number of treated cases—whether at the scene, via transport or self-referred to six.

He revealed that the injuries ranged from superficial lacerations to the head and limbs and temporary hearing impairments due to loud noises related to the explosion.

He affirmed that all cases are stable, by the grace of Allah, and received the necessary medical care according to the approved protocols without any serious complications.

He added that the field teams conducted a comprehensive survey of the affected area immediately after treating the cases to ensure there were no unreported injuries, as part of the ongoing field health response.

He emphasized the health system's complete readiness to handle various

emergencies through the 24/7 operational system, urging everyone to adhere to official guidelines and follow the instructions of the relevant authorities to ensure their safety.

On the other hand, Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthab Al-Huwailah stressed the importance of tightening control and ensuring the availability of essential goods and food supplies in view of the current regional conditions.

Al-Huwailah made this statement following an inspection visit to the Central Control Unit at the ministry, accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa, during which she reviewed the readiness of cooperative societies in various governorates.

She assessed the real-time monitoring mechanisms for workflow within the cooperatives and the indicators of the strategic stock of food supplies.

During the inspection, she underscored the importance of strengthening coordination efforts to ensure swift response to any developments and to closely monitor the performance of cooperatives in line with the commitment of the State to guarantee food security.

It is worth noting that the Central Control Unit is considered an advanced step in monitoring performance and improving the quality of work to achieve stability and cover all essential needs, especially under the current circumstances.

In latest developments, Iran on Monday rejected the latest ceasefire proposal and instead said it wants a permanent end to the war, even as U.S. President Donald Trump's ultimatum loomed for progress to avoid a major escalation in attacks against power plants and bridges.

"We won't merely accept a ceasefire," Mojtaba Ferdousi Pour, head of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Cairo, told The Associated Press. "We only accept an end of the war with guarantees that we won't be attacked again."

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency said Tehran had conveyed its response through Pakistan, a key mediator.

Trump's deadline centers on Tehran opening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped in peacetime. Ferdousi Pour said Iranian and Omani officials were working on a mechanism for administering the shipping chokepoint.

Iran's grip on the strait has caused oil prices to surge and shaken the world economy.

Iran's rejection came after Israel struck a key petrochemical plant in the massive South Pars natural gas field and killed two paramilitary Revolutionary Guard commanders.

The gas field attack aimed at eliminating a major source of revenue for Iran, Israel said. The field is critical to electricity production, but the strike appeared to be separate from Trump's threats. The gas field shared with Qatar is the world's largest.

Under pressure at home as consumers worry, meanwhile, Trump has warned Iran that if no deal is reached to reopen

the strait, the U.S. would set the country "back to the stone ages."

Trump has given multiple deadlines to Iran. The report of Iran's rejection came as he was making comments to journalists at an annual Easter event at the White House, ahead of more extensive comments Monday afternoon.

It was not clear whether Trump was aware of the news. He called Iran a "strong" enemy but "not so strong like they were about a month ago."

Asked if Tuesday at 8 p.m. Washington time was his final deadline, Trump replied simply, "Yeah."

Egyptian, Pakistani and Turkish mediators had sent Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff a proposal calling for a 45-day ceasefire and the reopening of the strait, two Mideast officials told The Associated Press. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private negotiations.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei earlier told journalists that messages were being exchanged with mediators but "negotiations are entirely incompatible with ultimatums, crimes and threats of war crimes."

In Islamabad, two senior officials said Pakistan's ceasefire efforts are at an advanced stage but "several spoilers and detractors" are trying to sow confusion. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the talks.

Hormuz crisis

An official report issued by KPC revealed that the oil sector is making significant efforts to enhance the efficiency of operational processes in exploration and international oil projects.

The report highlighted ongoing efforts to improve the Khafji joint operations to maximize the utilization of available resources.

It explained that the average daily production of exportable gas reached approximately 14.64 million standard cubic feet per day last year. Production of exportable natural gas liquids reached around 4,190 barrels per day, while crude oil production reached an impressive level of approximately 128,000 barrels per day.

The daily production rate of the Wafra joint operations increased to approximately 77,520 barrels per day, along with the shipment of about 22 million standard cubic feet of associated gas to Kuwait Oil Company (KOC).

KOC has completed drilling operations on three new wells as part of its development plan. Exploration in the North Wafra area led to the discovery of new oil reserves in the Ibra and Ramthan reservoirs, with daily production ranging between 260 and 380 barrels per well.

Regarding KUFPEC, the report confirmed that the company has achieved significant global successes in recent years, reporting revenues of \$1.47 billion and net profits of \$737 million in its latest financial statements.

KUFPEC's operations cover five continents through projects and assets in Australia, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe, contribute to the diversification of its investment portfolio and strengthen its global presence.

KUFPEC recently discovered a new oil well in the Geisum and West Tawila concession in the Gulf of Suez, Egypt, which enhances its production capacity in North Africa.

The company continues its strategic achievements in Canada, having completed its first contract in the Kaybob-Duvermay shale gas project, where production increased from 750 barrels of oil equivalent per day to 25,927 barrels per day by the end of last year.

KUFPEC also recorded 6.2 million safe work hours without any injuries at its non-operational assets. In Indonesia, the company secured two major blocks in the first round of direct bidding – the Melati block, the largest in the tender, and the Amanah block in South Sumatra.

This expansion reflects KUFPEC's commitment to growth in Southeast Asia. Production capacity in Australia was increased, with the pilot phase contributing to a seven percent rise in the local gas plant's capacity, reaching 210 million standard cubic feet per day.

The KPC report highlighted KUFPEC's outstanding achievements in the manufacturing sector through its strategic overseas projects.

At the Nghi Son refinery and petrochemical complex in Vietnam, KUFPEC successfully distributed low-sulfur diesel under a petroleum products purchase agreement. The refinery maintained operating rates exceeding its design capacity by 120 percent.

Regarding the Duqm Refinery project in Oman, the report noted that KUFPEC made significant progress in collaboration with the Omani OQ Group as part of its operational transformation efforts. Several quality initiatives were implemented, resulting in cost savings of US\$41.1 million as of March 2025.

The report stated that the Milazzo Refinery recorded zero accidents for four consecutive years as of May 2025. This achievement reflects the efficiency of the operational team, the strength of the organizational model in place, and the effectiveness of the refinery's safety culture.

The modification of the Milazzo refinery's vacuum unit to process sour crude oils was successfully completed, enhancing the refinery's operational flexibility and its ability to refine multiple types of crude oil.

Kuwait draws

from disruptions in global supply chains, helping importers to bear additional costs, and ensuring supply continuity.

She said decision takes effect from the date of issuance until June 30, indicating the ministry reserves the right to extend it as circumstances dictate. She added this is part of ongoing efforts to enhance food

security and ensure the stability of the local market in light of the current challenges.

About the goods covered by the subsidy, she disclosed that some products, such as long-life milk and eggs, are produced locally, and the producing companies benefit from feed support programs in coordination with the relevant authorities.

She also emphasized that the ministry has the authority to add other goods, such as meat, to the subsidy list as needed, especially if they are affected by global supply disruptions.

She confirmed that the ministry has intensified its field monitoring since the beginning of the crisis, deploying inspection teams to monitor prices and goods availability, as well as to ensure that beneficiary companies adhere to the subsidy terms.

She warned that any company proven to have violated the regulations will face strict measures, including full refund of the subsidy amount and exclusion from subsidy programs in the future.

She said these measures prove the commitment of the ministry to balance supporting the private sector with protecting consumers, thereby, ensuring market stability and strengthening the food security system in the country.

'Online exam

He explained that the first mistake is excessive reliance on cameras. Visually monitoring a student does not guarantee attentiveness. While cameras monitor the face, they do not reveal what the student is thinking. Cameras alone cannot detect cheating or improve focus.

The second mistake is designing questions that are easy to memorize or whose answers can be quickly found online.

He criticized limiting assessments to a single day, arguing that a one-hour exam is insufficient to fairly evaluate a student's true understanding.

Al-Lafi went on to explain that differing interpretations of regulations among faculty members constitute another flaw, leading to inconsistent standards and unfairness, and leaving students vulnerable to subjective evaluations in the absence of a clear framework. The fifth mistake lies in neglecting the ethical dimension. The focus is often on preventing cheating rather than addressing its root causes.

He emphasized that the absence of reinforcement of values allows breaches of any monitoring system, no matter how sophisticated.

Al-Lafi stressed that exam integrity is not built solely on surveillance tools, but on an integrated system based on fairness, quality assessment, and clear regulations.

He called for a re-evaluation of the assessment philosophy to keep pace with modern educational developments.

INTERNATIONAL

America

Gasoline tanker erupts in flames: A tanker truck in Texas hauling gasoline erupted into a fiery blaze Sunday after colliding with another vehicle and knocking over power lines, leaving the truck driver in critical condition, Fort Worth authorities said.

The 18-wheeler was carrying 9,000 gallons of gasoline that began leaking after the truck spun off the road near a gas station. The downed power lines then sparked a fire around 1 a.m., Fort Worth Fire Department spokesperson **Craig Trojacek** said.

"The driver of the 18-wheeler was trying to do everything he could to keep the gas from draining into the parking lot of the Valero gas station when it lit off," Trojacek said.

The driver was hospitalized with burns, but no one else was injured, Trojacek said. Fire crews spent hours spraying the tanker with water and used sand to try and contain the gasoline, he said. Firefighters left the scene around 7 a.m.

Videos of the fire show what appears to be front of the truck engulfed in flames as plumes of smoke rise.

One witness, Bailey Moss, said he was staying with a friend nearby when he heard "a loud crash" and peered outside.

"The fire spread quickly, and you could feel the heat even from a distance. It was pretty intense," Moss said.

NBC Philadelphia reported that the utility vehicle was riding on the shoulder of Route 222 when the Camry swerved off of the road. Police told the station that a male and a female who were in the Camry when it crashed fled and were later arrested.

Video from the crash scene shows the utility vehicle on its side.

No further details about the arrest or the search for the missing woman were immediately available Sunday.

A call and an email seeking information were made to the



Trojacek

Fleetwood Police Department.

Autopsies on the firefighters, both residents of Fleetwood, were scheduled for Monday.

"At this time we would like to send our thoughts and prayers" to the Shick and Buck families, the Walnuttown Fire Company said in a Facebook post. "Rest easy chiefs, we got it from here." (AP)

2 firefighters killed in vehicle collision: Two firefighters traveling in a utility vehicle along a Pennsylvania road during a search for a missing woman were killed in a head-on crash with a car, officials said.

The two members of the Walnuttown Fire Company died after the crash with a Toyota Camry at about 6 p.m. Saturday, roughly 45 miles (72 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia. Fire Chief Jeff Buck and Assistant Fire Chief Robert Shick Jr were heading north when they were struck by a sedan heading south on Route 222, according to the Berks County Coroner. (AP)

Toddler injured by wolf: A toddler was lightly injured by a wolf at a Pennsylvania theme park zoo after he crawled under a fence and stuck his hand into the animal's enclosure, officials at the zoo confirmed Sunday.

The child was never inside the wolf habitat at the Zo-oAmerica North American Wildlife Park, which is part of the Hersheypark theme park, and the officials characterized the injuries as minor without elaborating.

After the "unsupervised" child reached the metal enclosure around the wolf habitat on Saturday morning and put his hand through, a wolf approached "and made contact with the child's hand," according to a statement from the zoo.

"This type of response is consistent with natural animal behavior, and was not a sign of aggression," the zoo said in a statement. "Our habitats are designed with multiple layers of protection, and clear signage and barriers are in place to help ensure safe viewing. Guests are expected to remain within designated areas and closely supervise children at all times."

The zoo is part of the entertainment complex in Hershey, Pennsylvania, featuring a chocolate-themed amusement park. The zoo's website says it has three gray wolves. (AP)

Hegseth to allow troops to take personal weapons onto army bases

WASHINGTON, April 6, (AP): US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said that he will allow service members to carry personal weapons onto military installations, citing the Second Amendment and recent shootings at bases across the country.

In a video posted to X, Hegseth said he is signing a memo that will direct base commanders to allow requests for troops to carry privately owned firearms "with the presumption that it is necessary for personal protection."

He said any denial of a service member's request must be explained in detail and in writing.

"Effectively, our bases across the country were gun-free zones," Hegseth said. "Unless you're training or unless you are a military policeman, you couldn't carry, you couldn't bring your own firearm for your own personal protection onto post."

Questions about why service members lacked access to weapons have often emerged following shootings on the nation's military bases. Such shootings have ranged from isolated events between service members to mass casualty events, such as the shootings by an Army psychiatrist at Texas' Ford Hood in 2009 that left 13 people dead.

Hegseth cited some of the events in his video, including a shooting that injured five soldiers at Fort Stewart in Georgia last year. Officials said the



US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks to members of the media during a press briefing at the Pentagon in Washington on March 31. (AP)

shooter, an Army sergeant who worked at the base, used his personal handgun before he was tackled by fellow soldiers and arrested.

"In these instances, minutes are a lifetime," Hegseth said. "And our service members have the courage and training to make those precious, short minutes count."

Defense Department policy has prohibited military personnel from carrying personal weapons on base without permission from a senior commander,

with strict protocol for how the firearms must be stored.

Typically, military personnel must officially check their guns out of secure storage to go to on-base hunting areas or shooting ranges, then check all firearms back in promptly after their sanctioned use. Military police are often the only armed personnel on base, outside of shooting ranges, hunting areas or in training, where soldiers can wield their service weapons without ammunition.

WH asks appeals court to pause order halting ballroom construction

Judge halts Trump effort requiring colleges to show they aren't considering race in admissions

BOSTON, April 6, (AP): A federal judge has halted efforts by the Trump administration to collect data that proves higher education institutions aren't considering race in admissions.

The ruling from US District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV in Boston on Friday granting the preliminary injunction follows a lawsuit filed last month by a coalition of 17 Democratic state attorneys general. It will only apply to public universities in plaintiffs.

The federal judge said the federal government likely has the authority to collect the data, but the demand was rolled out to universities in a "rushed and chaotic" manner.

"The 120-day deadline imposed by the President led directly to the failure of NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) to engage meaningfully with the institutions during the notice-and-comment process to address the multitude of problems presented by the new requirements," Saylor wrote.

President Donald Trump ordered the data collection in August after he raised concerns that colleges and universities were using personal statements and other proxies to consider race, which he views as illegal discrimination.

In 2023, the Supreme Court ruled against the use of affirmative action in admissions but said colleges could still consider how race has shaped students' lives if applicants share that information in their admissions essays.

The states argue the data collection risks invading student privacy and leading to baseless investigations of

colleges and universities. They also argued that universities have not been given enough time to collect the data.

"The data has been sought in such a hasty and irresponsible way that it will create problems for universities," a lawyer for the plaintiffs, Michelle Pascucci, told the court, adding that the effort seem was aimed at uncovering unlawful practices.

The Education Department has defended the effort, arguing taxpayers deserve transparency on how money is spent at institutions that receive federal funding.

The administration's policy echoes settlement agreements the government negotiated with Brown University and Columbia University, restoring their federal research money. The universities agreed to give the government data on the race, grade-point average and standardized test scores of applicants, admitted students and enrolled students. The schools also agreed to be audited by the government and to release admissions statistics to the public.

The National Center for Education Statistics is to collect the new data, including the race and sex of colleges' applicants, admitted students and enrolled students. Education Secretary Linda McMahon has said the data, which was originally due by March 18, must be disaggregated by race and sex and retroactively reported for the past seven years.

If colleges fail to submit timely, complete and accurate data, the admin-



Students relax on the front steps of Low Memorial Library on the Columbia University campus, in New York City, Feb. 10, 2023. (AP)

istration has said McMahon can take action under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, which outlines requirements for colleges receiving federal financial aid for students.

The Trump administration separately has sued Harvard University over similar data, saying it refused to provide admissions records the Justice Department demanded to ensure the school stopped using affirmative action. Harvard has said the university has been responding to the government's requests and is in compliance with the high court ruling against affirmative action. On Monday, the Edu-

cation Department's Office for Civil Rights directed Harvard to comply with the data requests within 20 days for face referral to the US Justice Department.

Also:

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration is arguing that a judge's order to halt construction of a \$400 million ballroom creates a security risk for President Donald Trump as it asks a federal appeals court to pause the ruling.

In a motion filed Friday, National Park Service lawyers say that the fed-

eral judge's order to suspend construction of the new facility is "threatening grave national-security harms to the White House, the President and his family, and the President's staff."

"Time is of the essence!" the lawyers write, citing materials that will be installed to make a "heavily fortified" facility. The ballroom construction also includes bomb shelters, military installations and a medical facility, according to the filing. The ballroom is part of President Donald Trump's plans to quickly remake Washington.

U.S. District Judge **Richard Leon** in Washington on Tuesday ordered the temporary pause of the construction project that has included demolishing the East Wing of the White House. He concluded that unless Congress approves the project, the preservationist group suing to stop it is likely to succeed on the merits of its claims because "no statute comes close to giving the President the authority he claims to have."

The judge suspended enforcement of his order for 14 days acknowledging that the administration would appeal his decision.

Leon's ruling and the appeal come the same week a key agency tasked with approving construction on federal property in the Washington region gave final approval to the project.

In his ruling Leon, who was nominated by Republican President **George W. Bush**, suspended enforcement of his order recognizing that "halting an ongoing construction project may raise

logistical issues."

Leon also addressed national security in his ruling, saying that he reviewed information that the government privately submitted to him and concluded that halting construction wouldn't jeopardize national security. He exempted any construction work that is necessary for the safety and security of the White House from the scope of the injunction.

Trump lashed out at the ruling, but also noted that it would allow work on underground bunkers and other security measures around the White House grounds to continue - even though those will be paid for by taxpayers. Trump has pledged that he, along with private donors, will cover the costs for the ballroom construction.

But the National Park Service argues in its motion that the president has "complete authority to renovate the White House" and the current state of the grounds, which is an open construction site, make it harder to protect the White House.

"Canvas tents, which are necessary without a ballroom, are significantly more vulnerable to missiles, drones, and other threats than a hardened national security facility," the motion says.

The Trump administration is asking the appeals court to make a decision on its request by Friday. It also asked that the 14-day suspension of Leon's order be extended by another two weeks so that the case can be taken to the Supreme Court.

China willing to cooperate with Russia to de-escalate ME situation, says FM

BEIJING, April 6, (Xinhua): China is willing to continue working with Russia within the framework of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, maintain timely communication on major issues, and make joint efforts to help de-escalate the situation in the Middle East, safeguard regional peace and stability, and uphold common security for the world, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Sunday.

Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, made the remarks in a phone conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

China and Russia, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, should uphold fairness and justice on matters of principle, adopt an objective and balanced approach, and seek greater understanding and support from the international community, Wang said.

Noting that China has consistently advocated the resolution of international and regional hotspot issues through dialogue and negotiation, Wang said that the situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate, hostilities are still escalating, and the fundamental solution to ensuring navi-



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks during a press conference on the sidelines of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the media center, in Beijing on March 8. (AP)

gation through the Strait of Hormuz lies in achieving an early ceasefire and bringing the war to an end.

For his part, Lavrov said Russia is highly concerned about the continued escalation of tensions in the Middle East.

Regarding the ongoing conflict and the issue of the Strait of Hormuz, Lav-

rov said Russia maintains that military operations must be stopped immediately and efforts should return to the track of political and diplomatic settlement to address the root causes of the conflict, and the UN Security Council should play a constructive role in this regard.



A rescue worker walks in front of a residential building which was heavily damaged after a Russian strike in Odesa, Ukraine on April 6. (AP)

Russian attack kills 4 in Odesa while Ukraine targets Russian oil infrastructure, say officials

KYIV, Ukraine, April 6, (AP): A Russian drone attack on Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa killed two women and a toddler, authorities said Monday, while Ukrainian long-range drones targeted Russia's key Black Sea port for oil exports.

The nighttime attack on Odesa heavily damaged an apartment block, killing the women and a 2-year-old child, officials said. Rescuers working under floodlights pulled four people from the rubble.

Eleven people were hospitalized, including a pregnant woman and two children - the youngest less than a year old, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

Russia has pounded civilian areas of Ukraine since it invaded its neighbor just over four years ago, killing more than 15,000 people, according to the United Nations.

It has also taken aim at Ukraine's power grid, and the Russia overnight barrages also hit energy infrastructure in the Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv and Dnipro regions, Zelenskyy said.

More than 300,000 households were without electricity in the northern Chernihiv region after distribution



People remove broken glass from their windows after a Russian strike on residential neighbourhood in Kriukivshchyna, Kyiv region, Ukraine, on April 3. (AP)

facilities were damaged in attacks, according to the regional power utility.

Over the past week, Russia has launched at Ukraine more than 2,800 attack drones, nearly 1,350 powerful glide bombs and more than 40 missiles

of various types, according to Zelenskyy.

Zelenskyy expressed concern in a weekend interview with The Associated Press that the Iran war is draining stockpiles of weapons that Ukraine needs to defend itself, especially American-made Patriot air defense systems that can stop missiles.

Zelenskyy said Monday that the country's partners "need to strengthen air defense together so that the interception rate of drones and missiles continues to increase."

With U.S.-led peace efforts stalled, Zelenskyy added: "Russia has no intention of stopping" its invasion.

Ukraine has fought back by developing its own long-range drones, which now reach targets some 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) inside Russia.

Ukraine has used them recently to hammer Russian oil facilities as Moscow looks to boost its exports after the Trump administration gave it a temporary waiver from sanctions to ease supply constraints. Kyiv officials complain that Russia will use the additional revenue on new weapons to hit Ukraine harder.

Subcontinent

Nepal announces two-day weekend: The Nepali government on Sunday decided to introduce two-day weekly holidays in the government offices and academic institutions in a measure to counter disruptions in petroleum supplies, according to a minister.

Making public the cabinet decisions, Minister for Education, Science and Technology **Sasmit Pokharel** said the decision of holidays on Saturday and Sunday will be enforced with immediate effect. Nepal has been practicing a one-day weekend on Saturdays.

He also informed that the cabinet has decided to prepare laws necessary to facilitate conversions of fossil fuel vehicles into electric vehicles. (Xinhua)

45 dead in Pakistan rain-related incidents: At least 45 people were killed and over 100 injured after heavy rains triggered different incidents across Pakistan's north-west Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province since March 25, said the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on



Pokharel

Sunday.

The PDMA said in a statement that the casualties were caused by collapsing roofs and walls amid heavy rains in different districts of the province.

According to the PDMA, the deceased include 23 children, 17 men and five women, while the injured include 45 men, 44 children and 16 women.

In addition to the human toll, the rains caused significant property damage, with over 440 houses affected, including dozens that were completely destroyed.

The PDMA warned of another spell of rain expected from April 6 to 9, urging the public to avoid unnecessary travel, particularly to sensitive tourist areas. (Xinhua)

3 killed in rickshaw cylinder blast: At least three people were killed and 14 others injured after a liquefied petroleum gas cylinder exploded in a passenger rickshaw in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province on Sunday, rescue officials said.

The incident took place in the Multan district, where the cylinder installed in the vehicle caught fire following the blast, a spokesperson for Rescue 1122 said.

All victims belonged to the same family and were traveling from Muzaffargarh to Multan at the time of the accident.

Rescue teams shifted the injured to hospitals, where three later died, while 14 others remain under treatment at Nishtar Hospital. (Xinhua)

Bursa Kuwait closes trading higher

KUWAIT CITY, April 6, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Monday with its general index inclining by 96.62 points, or 1.14 percent, to reach 8,540.71 points, with 285.9 million shares traded through 17,858 cash deals, valued at KD 72 million (about USD

234.9 million).

The Main Market Index inclined by 90.20 points, or 1.17 percent, to reach 7,828.77 points, through trading of 149.6 million shares across 9,431 cash deals, valued at KD 23.4 million (about USD 76.3 million).

OPEC+ backs May production boost

Kuwait Oil Min. warns of energy market volatility

KUWAIT CITY, April 6, (KUNA): Kuwait's Oil Minister Tariq Al-Roumi affirmed Sunday that current regional developments necessitate enhanced joint coordination to maintain the stability of energy markets, ensure supply security, and safeguard international maritime routes to guarantee the uninterrupted flow of energy.

A statement carried by the Ministry of Oil, said the remarks came following his chairing of Kuwait's delegation to the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) meeting and the meeting of eight countries participating in the voluntary oil production cut exit agreement within the framework of OPEC+, both held via video conference.

Al-Roumi also said any actions undermining energy supply security, whether through attacks on infrastructure or disruption of international shipping lanes, would increase market volatility and weaken collective efforts to support market stability for the benefit of producers, consumers, and the global economy.

He noted that the two meetings come at a highly critical time for global energy markets following the outbreak of a regional war and subsequent attacks posing challenges to energy security.

Al-Roumi commended the decision by the eight countries to raise total production by 206,000 barrels per day for May 2026, adding that the next meeting will be held on May 3.

He further noted that the JMMC meeting represents a key pillar in monitoring compliance among participating countries and assessing market developments, noting that the next meeting is scheduled for June 7.

Kuwait's delegation also included the country's Governor to Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Mohammad Al-Shatti and Kuwait's National Representative to OPEC Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Enhancing liquidity & credit flow

Kuwait Economic Society backs CBK stimulus steps

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Kuwait Economic Society expressed its appreciation for the measures announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait as part of the stimulus package for local banks.

In a press statement on Sunday, the society affirmed that this is a proactive and balanced regulatory approach in dealing with current developments, given the geopolitical challenges that the region is currently facing.

It pointed out that the importance of the stimulus package lies not only in its technical content, but also in its timing, since it shows that the Central Bank is closely monitoring economic and financial developments and committed to taking well-considered measures to maintain monetary and banking stability and guarantee the continuous ability of banks to play their financial role in various sectors.

It clarified that the announced measures, which include reducing liquidity and capital requirements, do not indicate weakness in the banking sector, as they are additional precautionary measures that ensure the flexibility and ability of banks to deal with exceptional circumstances.

It cited the positive effects of such a move, such as easing pressures related to liquidity management and granting banks more capacity to continue financing without tightening credit, thus, ensuring the stability of banking activity and the continuity of services

provided to customers.

It added that one of the important outcomes of these measures is supporting the flow of credit to individuals and companies to mitigate the potential economic slowdown, especially in light of the regional challenges.

It emphasized that maintaining the smooth flow of financing is a fundamental factor in supporting the business environment and boosting market confidence.

It affirmed that the stimulus package proves the confidence of the Central Bank in the resilience of the banking sector, particularly since local banks enjoy strong financial indicators and comfortable margins exceeding regulatory requirements, thereby, allowing the use of a portion of funds to support the economy without affecting banking stability.

It pointed out that this step sends reassuring messages to markets and investors, indicating that the monetary policy of Kuwait is capable of adapting to changes and that the relevant authorities have the necessary tools to maintain financial and economic stability.

It then praised the role of the Central Bank in monitoring indicators and taking timely measures, considering this package a model of flexible precautionary policies that contribute to strengthening the stability of the national economy and supporting the ability of the banking sector to continue its developmental role efficiently during the current stage.

Kuwait sets new merger notification thresholds

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Board of Directors of the Competition Protection Authority issued a decision regarding the overall and individual thresholds for prior notification of economic concentrations.

Article One of the decision, as published in the official gazette - 'Kuwait Al-Youm' -- mandates all parties involved in an economic concentration to submit an approval request to the authority using the specified form, provided that one of the following overall or individual criteria is met:

1. One of the parties involved in the concentration achieves annual sales within the State of Kuwait exceeding KD1.5 million, according to the audited financial statements for the previous fiscal year.

2. The combined annual sales of all parties involved in the concentration within Kuwait exceed KD3 million, according to the audited financial

statements for the fiscal year preceding the completion of the concentration, provided that the company or activity targeted for acquisition achieves sales within Kuwait of not less than KD 1.5 million.

3. The value of the registered assets of the parties involved in the concentration within the State of Kuwait exceeds KD7.5 million, based on the audited asset statements for the previous fiscal year.

Article Two defines 'sales within the State of Kuwait' as sales realized in the Kuwaiti market, whether achieved directly or through branches, subsidiaries or companies under its control.

Article Three states that if any party breaches the obligations stipulated in this decision, the authority may take the measures stated in Law No. 72/2020 and its executive regulations.

Article Four repeals the Board of Directors Decision No. Q-A-S/2021/26 issued on Sept 23, 2021 regarding the controls on aggregate and individual limits.

Asia shares advance

TOKYO, April 6, (AP): Asian markets that were open for trading mostly rose Monday, as investors continued to closely watch the war in Iran, soaring oil prices and what President Donald Trump might say next.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 0.6% to finish at 53,413.68. South Korea's Kospi gained 1.4% to 5,450.33. Trading was closed in Australia for Easter; in Hong Kong and Shanghai for a traditional Chinese holiday, and in France, Germany and Britain in observance of Easter.

Trump threatened to hit Iran's critical infrastructure hard if the country's government doesn't reopen the Strait of Hormuz by his Tuesday deadline. But there was no sign Iran was easing its closure of the strait crucial to global oil supplies.

The market is keeping focused on oil prices. Benchmark U.S. crude dropped

\$1.76 to \$109.78 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 73 cents to \$108.33 a barrel. Energy markets were closed Friday, but the prices have been surging lately on fears that the Iran war will drag on longer than expected.

The U.S. relies on the Persian Gulf for only a fraction of the oil it imports, but oil is a commodity and prices are set in a global market. Some nations, like resource-poor Japan, import a large portion of their energy needs and rely heavily on access to the Strait of Hormuz.

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told lawmakers recently that Japan was releasing its reserves and was working on alternative routes. South Korea's trade ministry said it plans to send at least five ships to Saudi Arabia in the coming weeks to establish new oil transport routes in the Red Sea.

Business

Reaffirming its commitment to passenger and staff safety

Kuwait Airways hosts an awareness workshop to enhance security & safety procedures amid ongoing developments

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: As part of its commitment to the safety and security of its passengers and employees, and in line with its efforts to strengthen operational readiness amid evolving regional developments, Kuwait Airways organized a specialized awareness workshop. The session was aimed at educating employees on security and safety procedures before and after the current circumstances, as well as to highlight recent updates to operational processes, particularly those related to aircraft safety.

Kuwait Airways Acting Chief Executive Officer, Captain Abdulwahab Ibrahim Al-Shatti emphasized that security and safety are the foundation of operational excellence and business sustainability at Kuwait Airways. He noted that it is a shared responsibility that everyone is committed to protect the safety of passengers, employees, aircraft and company assets.

Al-Shatti added that these awareness initiatives are designed to promote responsiveness and foster positive behaviours that support safe operational practices for the benefit of all. He emphasized the importance of all employees adhering to applying security and safety requirements in the daily work environment, based on the individual's awareness, behaviour, and professional commitment.

Al-Shatti urged all employees to actively participate and commit to applying the highest standards of security and safety, and to contribute to fostering a safe and sustainable work environment.

Al-Shatti concluded by emphasizing that Kuwait Airways will continue to organize such awareness and training programs, which contribute to enhancing performance, elevating safety standards, and keeping pace with the evolving challenges and developments in the aviation sector.

For his part, the Director of Operational Compliance, Safety & ERP at Kuwait Airways, Captain Yousef Al-Ali, stated that the workshop highlights the most significant changes in security and safety procedures arising from the current circumstances. He indicated that the importance of



Captain Abdulwahab Al-Shatti

Al-Shatti:

■ Security and safety are shared responsibilities, and raising awareness is an operational priority

Al-Ali:

■ Introducing new measures to keep pace with evolving developments and enhance operational readiness



A scene from the workshop.

this course is in raising employee awareness of the reasons behind these changes, their potential implications, and their impact on operational processes, as well as the outcomes that participants are expected to achieve upon completing the training program. Al-Ali added that the workshop includes a review of the new procedures

to be implemented during the next phase, which will enhance employees' readiness and responsiveness, and ensure effective handling of various operational scenarios. He noted that such programs contribute to raising awareness and fostering a culture of safety within the work environment. Al-Ali noted that the workshop

witnessed a wide attendance from aircraft crew, including cabin crew and pilots, as well as representatives from operational departments concerned with security and safety procedures. This, he said, reflects Kuwait Airways' commitment to unifying concepts and strengthening integration across its various sectors.

In Al-Rabeh and Al-Hassad draws

KFH announces 754 winners of KD 2.6 mln & 10kg of gold

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the resumption of Al-Rabeh and Al-Hassad account draws following the fulfillment of all regulatory requirements and receipt of the necessary approvals from the Central Bank of Kuwait. KFH confirmed that customers maintained their chances of winning during the postponement period.

On April 5 and 6, 2026, KFH conducted 97 previously postponed draws, awarding 754 winners total prizes exceeding KD 2.6 million and 10 kilograms of gold. The prize distribution was as follows:

Al-Rabeh Account: 55 draws were held, resulting in 424 winners.

Al-Hassad Account: 42 draws were held, announcing 330 winners.

KFH Deputy General Manager of Products, Nehal Al-Musallam, confirmed the engagement of independent auditors to oversee the draw process, ensuring maximum transparency and integrity in full compliance with Central Bank of Kuwait regulations.

Al-Musallam emphasized that the resumption of draws reflects KFH's commitment to rewarding customers and encouraging them to explore the bank's premium products. She noted that Al-Rabeh and Al-Hassad programs are among the most popular draw campaigns in Kuwait.

She congratulated the winners and reaffirmed KFH's continued commitment to rewarding customers and valuing their loyalty.

Al-Musallam also encouraged new and existing customers to open Al-Rabeh and Al-Hassad accounts, highlighting the chances to win valuable prizes in upcoming draws. These accounts form part of KFH's comprehensive range of services designed to meet customer needs and enhance the overall banking experience.



Nehal Al-Musallam and Jassim Al-Dhomid from Kuwait Finance House with representatives of auditing firms.

Al-Musallam:

■ Resumption of draws underscores KFH's commitment to rewarding customers and pro

Facing renewed inflation pressure

EU nations seek windfall tax on energy firms

BRUSSEL, April 6, (AP): The finance ministers of Spain and four other European countries are urging the European Union to impose a bloc-wide windfall tax on energy companies, concerned that surging oil and gas prices driven by the war in Iran will fuel inflation and strain households.

Spanish Economy Minister Carlos Cuerdo said Saturday that his counterparts from Germany, Italy, Portugal and Austria had signed a letter to the European Commission citing "market distortions" caused by the price spike.

"The conflict in the Middle East has caused oil prices to rise, placing a significant burden on the European economy and on European citizens," the letter, dated Friday and made public by Cuerdo in an online post, said.

"It is important to ensure that this burden is distributed fairly," it added.

Europe is largely dependent on imported oil and gas, leaving it vulnerable to external shocks. In 2022, turmoil in energy markets following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine pushed inflation into double digits in many European countries.

At the time, the EU imposed a "solidarity contribution" that included caps on excess energy profits.

"Given the current market distortions and fiscal constraints, the European Commission should swiftly develop a similar EU-wide contribution instrument," the letter said. "It would also send a clear message that those who profit from the consequences of the war must do their part to ease the burden on the general public."

Driven largely by higher oil prices, the annual inflation rate in the 21 countries that use the euro rose to 2.5% in March, from 1.9% in February.

Iran has blocked most tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz - a chokepoint for about 20% of global oil and gas - in a move that threatens to stress fuel markets for months.

European Union Energy Commissioner Dan Jorgensen warned this week that disruption caused by the closure means fuel prices are unlikely to "go back to normal in a foreseeable future."

Moscow reports attacks on TurkStream, Blue Stream pipelines

Russia warns Iran war hits global economy

MOSCOW, April 6, (KUNA): Russia on Monday renewed its warning over the negative repercussions of the attack on Iran on the global economy amid escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said during a press briefing that "everyone now understands the scale of the consequences we are facing, including very negative impacts on the global economy," stressing that Moscow had warned from the outset of the inevitability of such repercussions even before the fighting began.

He added that the level of tension in the Middle

East related to the Iran-linked conflict is "worsening," considering the expansion of the conflict a serious outcome of the ongoing military developments.

On the energy front, Peskov revealed that a large portion of the "TurkStream" and "Blue Stream" gas pipelines had been subjected to repeated attacks, accusing Kyiv of being behind them and describing the situation as "extremely dangerous."

He added that Moscow does not rule out the possibility of finding a "Ukrainian trace" in the investigation into an attempted attack on a gas pipeline in Serbia, while stressing that "there is still no reliable

evidence" identifying those responsible for the attacks.

Moscow expressed hope that Turkey had made it clear to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that attacks on gas infrastructure are "unacceptable," affirming at the same time that it is taking measures to ensure the security of the TurkStream and Blue Stream pipelines.

Earlier today, the Kremlin said Russia had called on both Hungary and Serbia to exert additional efforts to reduce threats facing gas pipelines amid rising security risks surrounding energy infrastructure in Europe.

BUSINESS

Middle East turmoil rattles global markets

By KAMCO Invest

Global equity markets witnessed declines across the board as investors feared a larger fallout from the ongoing conflict in the Middle East region. Global financial markets lost more than USD 7 Trillion during the month led by the war. The MSCI World index dropped 7.4% during the month reflecting double-digit declines in Asia Pacific and the broader emerging market universe. Advanced markets also witnessed high single-digit declines with European benchmarks falling by 8% while the US indices showed recovery on the last day of the month to close with a decline of around 5%. On the commodities front, crude oil prices witnessed the second-biggest quarterly rise of the century with prices almost doubling, in line with doubling of gas prices in Europe. Expectations of interest rate cuts were off the table, although recent dovish comments from the Fed calmed investor fears of rising funding costs.

However, contrary to the sharp decline in global markets, the GCC equity market index witnessed a relatively smaller decline of 2.6% mainly led by gains in Saudi Arabia and Oman that offset sharp declines in the rest of the markets. Dubai witnessed the biggest monthly decline in the GCC with a fall of 16.4%, the biggest since the March-2020 and the second biggest since a similar oil crisis-led decline in 2014. Abu Dhabi was next with a fall of 8.9%. Kuwait, meanwhile, showed a sharp recovery towards the end of the month and closed the month with the smallest decline of 1.8%. On the other hand, TASI continued to show resilience during the crisis with a gain of 5.0% due to the relatively smaller impact from the war as well as due to 9.8% gain in shares of Aramco.

The sector level performance in the GCC was mixed with Real Estate and Transportation showing double digit declines during the month while defensive sectors like Pharma, F&B and Healthcare showed healthy gains. The Energy sector also gained 5.4% during March-2026.

Boursa Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait witnessed the smallest monthly decline in the GCC despite steep volatility due to the middle east conflicts. The benchmarks witnessed a broad-based decline that affected most sectors on the exchange. In terms of market segments, the Main 50 Index witnessed the biggest monthly decline of 4.3% followed by the Main Market Index and the Premier Market index with declines of 3.0% and 1.6%. The net impact was a 1.8% slide in the All-Share Market Index during the month. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, all market segments remained in the red resulting in a 5.5% decline in the All Share Index during Q1-2026. During the month, Boursa Kuwait announced the listing of Trolley General Trading Co. on the Premier Market and in under the Consumer Discretionary sector.

The sector performance chart highlighted the broad-based declines in the market with merely five sectors witnessing gains. The gainer's side was topped by the Technology index with a gain of 1.9% followed by Insurance and Telecom with gains of 1.8% and 1.2%, respectively. On the other hand, the Energy index registered the biggest fall of 11.0%, followed by the Consumer Discretionary and Financial Services indices with declines of 8.2% and 6.6%, respectively. The gain in the Technology sector was led by an equivalent gain in the shares of its sole constituent Automated Systems Co. Within the Telecom sector, all the constituent stocks posted gains supported by solid earnings. The gains in the Healthcare sector was buoyed by a 1.3% increase in shares of Al-Maidan Clinic. Gains in the Basic Materials sector was mainly led by 8.5% surge in shares of Al Kout for Industrial Projects Co. In the Banking index showed a marginal decline of 0.7% during the month after decline in shares of four out of nine constituents was partially offset by gain in shares of KFJH, Burgan Bank, Boubyan Bank, Warba Bank and KIB. In the Energy sector, all the stocks reported declines during March-2026. Shares of Independent Petroleum Group dropped by 24.4% followed by the Energy House Co. with monthly decline of 16.3%. The Consumer Discretionary Sector was dragged down by losses in most of the constituent stocks including Jazeera Airways Co. (-22.3%) and Kuwait Resorts Co. (-15.3%).

In terms of monthly stock performance, Dar Al Thuraya Real Estate Co. topped with a gain of 85.2% followed by National Cleaning Co. and National Industries Co. with gains of 41.3% and 20.2%, respectively. On the decliner's side, First Takaful Insurance Co. topped with a decline of 20.0% followed by Kuwait Investment Co. and The Energy House Co. with declines of 17.4% and 16.3%, respectively. In terms of trading activity, total volume of shares traded during March-2026 decreased by 3.5% to 3.5 Bn shares as compared to 3.6 Bn shares during February-2026. Value traded, meanwhile, increased by 3.6% to reach KWD 1.15 Bn during March-2026 as compared to KWD 1.11 Bn during the previous month.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

The Saudi market showed partial recovery from previous month's decline and once again regained the 11,000 points mark during March-2026 to close with a gain of 5.0% at 11,249.5 points. During the month, TASI came under pressure due to broader regional and global factors. However, strong performances in major banking and large-cap stocks helped provide support to the index. Overall, March-2026 saw a recovery from mid-month lows, with a gradual shift toward modest upward momentum. Investor sentiment was influenced by volatility in energy prices along with ongoing geopolitical developments. The monthly performance pushed the YTD-2026 gains for TASI further into the positive zone to 7.2%, the second-highest in the GCC. The month marked the listing of Saleh Abdulaziz Al Rashed & Sons Co. in the Materials sector. This IPO represents the first listing on the Saudi exchange this year. With this addition, the total number of companies listed on the main market of the exchange has now reached 250.

The monthly sector performance chart favored gainers and was topped by the Health Care Equipment & Svc index with a double-digit gain of 11.7% followed by F&B and Energy indices with gains of 10.0% and 9.7%, respectively. On the decliner's side, the Software & Services index witnessed the biggest decline of 9.1% during the month followed by Consumer Services and Commercial & Professional Svc indices with declines of 4.3% and 1.9%, respectively. In the Energy sector, shares of Aramco gained by 9.8% during the month. The company said it has temporarily redirected some crude oil shipments to the Yanbu Industrial Port as a precautionary measure to maintain reliable supply and ensure continuity of exports. The move is intended to provide an alternative shipping route for customers thereby reducing potential disruption risks. In the Banking sector, most of the listed banks reported gains during the month resulting in the sector gaining 4.1% during the month. Shares of Saudi Awwal Bank, Riyad Bank, and Bank Albilad led the gains during the month at 9.0%, 6.1% and 5.9%, respectively.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by Rabigh Refining and Petrochemical Co. with a gain of 44.6% followed by Al Rajhi Co for Co-operative and Yanbu National Petrochemical Co. with gains of 41.9% and

GCC Equity Markets	Index Closing	MTD Chg%	YTD Chg%	M-Cap (USD Bn)	Val Traded - (USD Bn)	P/E (x) TTM	P/B (x) TTM	Div. Yield
Kuwait - Premier Market Index	9,009.2	(1.6%)	(5.1%)	165.8	3.7	13.7	1.2	2.4%
Kuwait - Main 50 Index	7,989.7	(4.3%)	(8.0%)					
Kuwait - Main Market Index	7,683.5	(3.0%)	(7.5%)					
Kuwait - All Share Index	8,416.5	(1.8%)	(5.5%)					
Saudi Arabia	11,249.5	5.0%	7.2%	2,629.7	27.7	17.8	2.3	3.3%
Abu Dhabi	9,520.8	(8.9%)	(4.7%)	737.0	7.9	18.5	2.3	2.5%
Dubai	5,434.4	(16.4%)	(10.1%)	238.7	6.7	8.7	1.5	5.2%
Bahrain	10,188.5	(7.8%)	(5.3%)	164.9	2.9	11.4	1.3	4.6%
Qatar	1,899.1	(7.8%)	(8.1%)	69.7	0.02	16.1	1.2	10.9%
Oman	8,168.4	10.5%	39.2%	55.4	3.7	16.4	1.8	3.8%
Total GCC				4,061.3	52.6	16.4	2.1	3.5%



Source: GCC Stock Exchanges, Kamco Invest Research

41.6%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Saudi Arabian Cooperative Insurance Co. topped with a decline of 16.2% followed by Alkhaleej Training and Education Co. and Flynas Co. with declines of 15.8% and 14.7%, respectively. Shares of Flynas was affected by regional airspace disruptions and cancellations due to the ongoing conflict.

Trading activity on the exchange strengthened in March-2026 with total value traded surging by 19.1% to reach a five-month high level of SAR 103.8 Bn compared to 87.1 Bn in February-2026. The total volume improved 6.3% to reach 4.8 Bn shares compared to 4.5 Bn in February-2026. Americana Restaurants topped the monthly volume chart with 667.4 Mn shares followed by Saudi Arabian Oil Co. and Saudi Kayan Petrochemical Co. at 397.7 Mn shares and 195.6 Mn shares, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Saudi Arabian Oil Co. topped with SAR 10.6 Bn worth of shares traded during the month followed by Al Rajhi Bank and Saudi National Bank at SAR 9.2 Bn and SAR 4.8 Bn, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

The FTSE ADX Index fell 8.9% in March-2026, the largest decline in six years since March-2020, due to the instability caused by the war on Iran. The FTSE ADX Index closed the month at 9,520.84 points during the month. Sectoral performance during March-2026 was heavily skewed towards decliners with nine out of the ten sector indices on the exchange recording declines. The Real Estate Index experienced the largest fall, dropping by 27.8% to close the month at 11,345.8 points after four of the five companies comprising the sector witnessed monthly decline led by RAK Properties which recorded a 32.8% decline. The Health Care Index recorded the second-largest monthly decline, falling by 17.2% to close at 1,542.4 points after three of the four companies that comprise the sector recorded double-digit declines during March-2026 led by Pure-Health which recorded a share price decline of 19.5% during the month. In contrast, the Basic Materials Index recorded the only gain among all other sectors, posting an 5.0% increase during March-2026.

In terms of individual stock performance, Fertiglode topped the monthly gainers chart, with its share price increasing by 16.8%. It was followed by Al Dhafra Insurance Co. and Al Buhaira National Insurance Co., which recorded gains of 14.9% and 14.8%, respectively. Recently, Fertiglode shareholders approved H2-2025 dividends of USD 135 Mn, bringing total capital returns to shareholders for 2025 to USD 334 Mn. The company also recently said that it remains operationally and financially sound despite the conflicts in the Middle East. It said that it sees no material impact on its global production, business, liquidity, or financial position, with contingency plans in place to ensure the smooth running of operations. On the decliners' side, RAK Properties registered the largest drop, with its share price falling by 32.8%. It was followed by Al Dar Properties Co. and Waha Capital Co., which posted declines of 27.9% and 26.7%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange was mixed during March-2026, after registering an increase in the previous month. The total volume of shares traded rose by 11.1% to 7.1 Bn shares, compared to 6.4 Bn shares in February-2026. On the other hand, the total value of shares traded declined marginally by 0.7% to AED 28.9 Bn, down from AED 29.1 Bn in the prior month. Dana Gas Co. was the most active stock by volume, with 1.6 Bn shares traded, followed by Al Dar Properties Co. and Two Point Zero Group, which recorded 653.3 Mn and 628.1 Mn shares, respectively. In terms of value traded, Al Dar Properties Co. led the market with AED 5.2 Bn worth of shares exchanged during the month, followed closely by Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank and First Abu Dhabi Bank Pjsc with AED 2.9 Bn and USD 2.4 Bn, respectively.

On the economic front, the UAE central bank announced a resilience package to support the country's banking sector and boost liquidity in the sector to deal with the ongoing conflict in the region. The measures will allow banks in the UAE to tap as much as 30% of their cash reserve requirement balances and access term liquidity facilities in AED and USD. The measures also include temporary relief related to liquidity and stable funding ratios and include the release of key capital buffers to support the economy, as per a Bloomberg report. Overall the resilience package covers five pillars including monetary policy measures, liquidity and funding relief, capital buffer relief, credit risk management and additional support measures for lenders.

Dubai Financial Market

The DFM General Index witnessed the biggest decline since the pandemic and the second-biggest decline since 2014 during March-2026 registering a fall of 16.4% due to the geopolitical situation in the region. The DFM General Index closed the month at 5,434.41 points during the month. Sectoral performance during March-2026 was strongly negative, with nine out of the ten sector indices on the exchange recording declines. The Real Estate Index experienced the largest fall, dropping by 27.4% to close the month at 11,721.04 points after all constituent companies that comprise the

sector recorded declines during the month led by the 30% share price slide of Emaar Properties. Moreover, the Consumer Staples Index recorded the second-largest monthly decline, falling by 20.1% to close at 73.2 points. In contrast, the Materials Index recorded the only gain among all other sectors, posting an 8.1% increase during March-2026.

In terms of monthly stock performance data from Bloomberg, Naem Holding topped the gainers' table in March-2026, with its share price rising by 15.0%. It was followed by Int'l Financial Advisors Co. and Talabat Holding, which recorded gains of 10.3% and 9.7%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Emaar Development led with a share price decline of 30.2%, followed by Emaar Properties and Air Arabia, which posted decreases of 27.8% and 24.8%, respectively, during March-2026.

In terms of monthly trading activity, total volume traded declined marginally by 0.3% to 5.1 Bn shares in March-2026, compared to 5.2 Bn shares in February-2026. Similarly, the total value of shares traded rose at a relatively higher pace of 26.2%, reaching AED 24.7 Bn in March-2026. Emaar Properties topped the monthly volume chart with 0.9 Bn shares traded, followed by Talabat Holding and Drake & Scull International, which recorded 484.2 Bn and 364.4 Bn shares changing hands, respectively.

In terms of value traded, Emaar Properties led the market with AED 10.8 Bn worth of shares exchanged during the month, followed by Emirates NBD and Emaar Development with AED 2.9 Bn and AED 2.1 Bn, respectively. In economic developments, as a result of the disruption caused by the ongoing conflict, Dubai has introduced a stimulus package valued at AED 1 Bn (USD 272 Mn) for supporting businesses operating in the Emirate. The package is designed to inject immediate liquidity through a broad deferral of government fees over the next one or two quarters in key sectors such as hospitality. The package provides new breathing room for hotels, in which they can postpone 100% of sales and tourism fees for up to a three-month period. This financial easing is intended to enhance cash flow for the tourism and hotels sector. Meanwhile, despite the ongoing regional tensions, Dubai's property transactions remain resilient. According to reports, following Eid Al Fitr, Dubai's property market rebounded strongly, with weekly transactions increasing by 49% to reach AED 8.7

Bn. Off-plan sales, particularly those involving apartments, dominated the activity, driven largely by cash purchases. The ready market, while comparatively smaller in scale, witnessed mortgage activity concentrated in established residential areas such as Business Bay. Investor interest remains focused on high-liquidity locations, suggesting continued momentum for the sector.

Qatar Exchange

The Qatar Stock Exchange reported decline for the second consecutive month during March-2026, registering the fourth biggest monthly decline in the GCC during the month. The headline DSM index climbed early in the month to 11,055.18 points, supported by foreign institutional buying, before declining over the remainder of the month to close at 10,188.5 points, registering a steep monthly drop of 7.8%. The exchange witnessed some buying towards the end of the month that resulted in a slight rebound towards the end of the month. The broader Qatar All Share Index also reported a monthly decline of 6.1% and closed at 3,957.59 points. In terms of YTD-2026 performance, the QE 20 index was down 5.3%, the fourth-biggest decline in the GCC while the All-Share index declined by 2.5%.

In terms of sectoral performance, all the sector indices recorded declines during March-2026. The Transportation sector posted the biggest decline among the sectoral indices at 12.4% to close the month at 5,265.29 points. The Industrials Index and the Banks & Financial Services index followed with declines of 7.1% and 5.7%, respectively. All the constituents of the Transport sector declined during the month with Qatar Gas Transport Co. and Qatar Navigation leading the declines at 15.0% and 8.8%, respectively. During the month, both the constituents in Telecoms sector, Ooredoo and Vodafone Qatar, reported declines of 9.2% and 12.9%, respectively. In the Banking sector, shares of most of the listed banks reported declines during the month. Large-cap banks like Qatar National Bank declined by 11.7% while shares of Doha Bank continued to see healthy gains for the second consecutive month and surged 9.8% to reach QAR 3.24/share. In the Industrial Sector Index, ten out of the eleven companies that constitute the sector recorded declines during March-2026. All the constituents of the Real Estate sector also declined during the month with Ezdan Holding Group and United Development Co. leading the declines that came in at 13.9% and 9.7%, respectively. In the Insurance sector, all the constituent stocks declined during the month.

The monthly gainer's chart was topped by Doha Bank with a gain of 9.8% followed by Meseaied Petrochemical Holding and Zad Holding Co. with gains of 4.3% and 0.9%, respectively. In terms of decliners, Gulf International Services led with a monthly stock price decline of over 23.7% followed by Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. and Inma Holding Co. with declines

of 19.8% and 15.5%, respectively.

Trading activity improved during the month as compared to the previous month. Total volume traded increased by 33.6% to 3.5 Bn shares in March-2026 vs. 2.6 Bn shares in February-2026. Value traded during the month also gained by 31.0% to reach QAR 10.4 Bn as compared to QAR 8.0 Bn during February-2026. Qatar Aluminum Manufacturing Co. topped the monthly volume chart with 421.1 Mn traded shares followed by Meseaied Petrochemical Holding and Ezdan Holding Group QSC at 280.8 Mn shares and 260.0 Mn traded shares, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, QNB topped with shares worth QAR 1.2 Bn traded during the month followed by Qatar Navigation and Industries Qatar with value traded at QAR 722.3 Mn and QAR 702.4 Mn, respectively.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse All Share Index recorded a sharp monthly decline of 7.8% during March-2026, the third-biggest in the GCC, to close the month at 1,899.1 points. In terms of monthly sectoral performance, the trend was predominantly negative, as seven out of the seven sectors recorded declines during March-2026. The Materials Sector recorded the largest decline among the sectors during the month at (-19.9%), closing at 4,038.3 points, followed by the Real Estate Sector (-7.6%) and the Financial Sector (-5.4%).

The fall in the Materials sector was solely attributed to the share price decline of Aluminum Bahrain, the sole constituent in the index, which witnessed 19.9% share price decline during the month mainly led by the recent attacks on the company's infrastructure. On the other hand, there were several significantly weighted companies in the Financial Sector, including GFH Financial Group that recorded a share price decline of 19.0% during March-2026 contributing to the overall fall of the Financial Index during the month.

In terms of share price performance, according to Bloomberg data, Esterad Investment topped the gainers' list with a 4.0% increase during the month, followed by Bahrain National Holding and Arab Banking Corp BSC, which recorded gains of 2.0% and 1.3%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Aluminum Bahrain led the list with a 19.9% share price decline during the month, followed by GFH Financial Group and Bahrain Duty Free Complex, which posted declines of 19.0% and 16.3%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed sharp declines during March-2026. Total volume of shares traded during the month declined by 66.9% to 19.0 Bn shares, compared to 57.0 Bn shares in February-2026. In contrast, total value traded on the exchange also witnessed a similar decline, reaching BHD 6.9 Bn in March-2026, down from BHD 18.5 Bn during the previous month. Al Salam Bank-Bahrain BSC topped the monthly volumes chart with 7.2 Bn shares traded, followed by Aluminum Bahrain with 2.4 Mn and 2.3 Mn shares exchanged, respectively. On the monthly value traded chart, Aluminum Bahrain led with BHD 2.1 Bn worth of shares exchanged, followed by Al Salam Bank-Bahrain BSC and Bahrain Telecommunications Co., which recorded BHD 1.5 Bn and BHD 1.1 Bn in value traded, respectively.

In economic news, Bahrain's economy was heavily disrupted by the Iran war. Bapco Energies, Bahrain's state-owned energy company, was forced to declare force majeure on its group operations in March-2026 as a result of an attack on its refinery complex. As per reports, the attacks on facilities in Bahrain could put the country's finances into severe strain as the country recorded one of the weakest fiscal balances in the region with rising public debt as well as recent downgrades from rating agencies. The Kingdom had recently announced several fiscal measures to improve its fiscal position and these measures and if the conflict drags on, it may imperil these efforts.

Muscat Stock Exchange

The MSX 30 Index recorded the biggest gain among GCC indices for the second consecutive month at 10.5% during March-2026, closing the month at 8,168.4 points. The Index maintained its upward trajectory in 2026, recording its ninth consecutive monthly gain shrugging off instability caused by the Iran war. Sectoral performance was entirely positive, with all three sector indices on the exchange recording gains, including double-digit gain of 10.0% for the Services index during the month, closing the month at 3,170.69 points. This gain was largely driven by share price increases in major companies within the sector, including Phoenix Power (+19.5%) and Salalah Port Services Co. (+45.0%). The Financial Index rose moderately during the month by 3.6%, closing at 12,849.9 points. Similarly, the Industrial Index posted a monthly gain of 2.4%, closing March-2026 at 9,876.83 points.

In terms of company performance, Financial Services Co. topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 71.8%, followed by Salalah Mills and Salalah Port Services Co., which recorded monthly share gains of 66.3% and 45.0%, respectively. On the decliner's side, Raysut Cement Co. led the chart with a 15.2% share price decline, followed by Muscat Insurance Co. and Oman Fisheries Co., which witnessed share price drops of 14.7% and 13.8%, respectively.

Trading activity on the exchange witnessed mixed performance during March-2026. The total volume of shares traded declined by 3.1% to 4.5 Bn shares in March-2026, compared to 4.7 Bn shares in February-2026. On the other hand, the total value traded on the exchange rose by 10.4% to OMR 1.4 Bn, up from OMR 1.3 Bn in the previous month. Sohar Bank topped the monthly value traded chart with transactions totaling OMR 271.7 Mn, followed by Bank Muscat and OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ), with total values traded of OMR 242.0 Mn and OMR 210.8 Mn, respectively. In terms of monthly volume traded, Sohar Bank again led the list with 1.2 Bn shares, followed by OQ BASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ) and OQ Gas Networks with volumes of 797.3 Mn shares and 654.1 Bn shares, respectively.

On the economic front, S&P recently affirmed Oman's 'BBB-' long-term and 'A-3' short-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings on Oman with a Stable outlook. The outlook reflects the agency's opinion that Oman's fiscal and external buffers, which include liquid government assets in excess of 40% of GDP and gross foreign currency reserves of close to 20% of GDP, are adequate to preserve its creditworthiness against adverse geopolitical developments, except under a scenario of a prolonged escalation of attacks by Iran on its energy and civilian infrastructure. It is noteworthy to point out that Oman is the only GCC country whose hydrocarbon exports do not depend on the Strait of Hormuz, significantly reducing its vulnerability to maritime disruption. Moreover, the ratings agency opined that non-oil growth is likely to moderate in 2026 due to the evolving geopolitical situation. Heightened regional uncertainty will likely dampen tourism and slow private investment this year, while activity in import-dependent sectors such as manufacturing, construction, and retail is likely to temporarily slow due to ongoing trade route disruptions and higher shipping and insurance costs.

On World Health Day, Weyay Bank collaborates with Nafas Center to promote well-being

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: In recognition of World Health Day, Weyay Bank, Kuwait's first digital bank and a pioneer in innovative financial solutions, has announced a new collaboration with Nafas Wellness Center. Established in 2018, Nafas specializes in empowering individuals through various programs designed to improve breathing techniques. Through this collaboration, Weyay aims to support the mental and physical health of its customers across all age groups, providing them with practical tools to navigate daily pressures with clarity and calm, particularly during the current period.

This collaboration includes the production of an educational awareness content series, featuring informative videos shared across the Bank's social media channels. The content focuses on proper breathing techniques and practical methods to help customers, including children, manage stress and regulate their emotions.

Commenting on the collaboration, Fawaz Al-Nakib, Loyalty and Partnership Manager at Weyay Bank, said: "At Weyay, we see our role as more than just offering digital banking services. We strive to support our customers in all aspects of their lives. Given the challenges many people are experi-



Fawaz Al-Nakib



Nadia Al-Marzouq

encing today, we are committed to helping them find the peace of mind they need to progress personally and professionally."

Nadia Al-Marzouq, Co founder of Nafas Center, a licensed specialist, and a transformational breathwork group facilitator, added: "We are delighted to partner with Weyay Bank to promote the importance of proper breathing techniques. Our aim is to reach a broad audience, especially young people, and equip them with healthy ways to manage everyday stress."

Weyay Bank's commitment to well-being goes beyond mental health, extending into physical fitness and lifestyle awareness. The Bank continues to offer exclusive discounts on memberships at leading fitness centers in Kuwait such as Flare Fitness and The Burrow. It has also recently supported the launch of The Burrow Sidra, a new women-only gym, encouraging women to invest in their health and benefit from special offers available to all Weyay customers.

Whether through mindful breathing or staying active and fit, Weyay Bank remains dedicated to empowering its customers and supporting their journey toward a healthier, more balanced life.

The Conversation

SpaceX and OpenAI IPOs seen as insider cash-out

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

By Brad Badertscher
University of Notre Dame

Expected to soon become a public company in what may be the biggest initial public offering in history. But my new research suggests that investors who buy shares of the company are unlikely to see the explosive growth that past IPOs had.

The rocket and satellite maker, which confidentially filed to go public on April 1, 2026, is reportedly planning to raise as much as US\$75 billion in the offering, which would give it a valuation of \$1.75 trillion.

SpaceX isn't the only high-profile company expected to sell shares to the public for the first time this year. Artificial intelligence companies OpenAI and Anthropic are also expected to list in the coming months in massive IPOs.

For Wall Street, that means blockbuster deals with hefty fees for the banks involved. For early investors and executives, it could mean enormous payday. For everyday investors, meanwhile, the question is whether a hot company "going public" today represents a good investment opportunity.

What does it really mean when a company "goes public"?

For decades, an IPO marked the moment when ordinary investors could buy into a fast-growing company and share in its future expansion. Today, that moment often comes much later in a company's life - after much of the dramatic growth has already taken place behind closed doors.

I study financial reporting, executive compensation and initial public offerings. In a recent study of nearly 1,000 U.S. IPOs conducted from 2007 to 2022, my co-authors and I examined what happens in the critical period just before and after companies go public. Our research suggests that the modern IPO increasingly represents a chance for insiders and executives to cash out - not the start of value creation for public investors.

An IPO is when a private company sells shares to the public for the first time. Traditionally, IPOs helped young, cash-strapped companies raise money to grow. Investors supplied capital and shared in future success.

Many iconic businesses - including Amazon and Apple - went public early in their life cycles. Much of their dramatic growth happened after they were already public.

That pattern has changed. Research shows the number of publicly traded U.S. companies has fallen sharply since the late 1990s. At the same time, private capital from venture capital and private equity firms has expanded. In our research, we document that the average age of a company when it goes public has more than doubled from four years in the early 2000s to nearly 10 years by 2025.

Companies can now raise billions privately. They do not need public markets as early as they once did.

Our research focuses on what regulators and practitioners call "cheap stock."

This refers to stock options granted to executives before an

IPO at a share price far below the eventual IPO price. Stock options give executives the right to buy shares later at a fixed price. If the IPO price is much higher than that exercise price, the options are immediately very valuable.

For example, say you're a CEO of a company going public. You received stock options that give you the right to buy 10,000 shares of your company's stock at a price of \$2. The IPO price is set at \$20. After the IPO, you could exercise your right to buy the company's shares at \$2 and then immediately sell those shares for around \$20, for a gain of \$180,000.

We examined nearly 1,000 IPOs between 2007 and 2022. On average, the IPO price was 5.7 times higher than the exercise price of options granted in the year before the IPO.

In simple terms, executives often held options that surged in value the moment the company went public. Some of this difference may reflect real growth or the fact that private shares are less liquid - that is, less easy to sell - than public ones. But even after adjusting for those factors, the gap remained large.

This matters for future shareholders, namely those buying shares after the IPO, as substantial value has already been transferred to insiders before public investors bought shares. We also found patterns in which companies granted more deeply discounted options.

Companies backed by venture capital and private institutional investors were more likely to show significant gaps between option prices and IPO prices. This supports a straightforward incentive story.

Some early investors want liquidity, or investments that are easy to turn into cash. Granting executives options that become highly valuable at the IPO can help motivate managers to complete the offering. In that sense, the IPO often serves as a liquidity event - a way for insiders to cash out.

That does not necessarily imply wrongdoing, but it does suggest the IPO now frequently reflects insiders' exit timing rather than simply public investors' growth opportunity.

The story does not end on IPO day.

Our research shows that companies with more cheap stock options invested less in capital expenditures and research and development after going public. Cheap stock options provide less incentives for the company to take risks. And that in turn can affect a company's future financial prospects.

Executives who already hold valuable stock options may prefer stable growth over aggressive expansion of the company. Since risk and reward are linked, companies that take fewer risks tend to grow at a slower pace, meaning future shareholders may see smaller gains.

Our research supports this conjecture, as we found that companies with more cheap stock experienced lower stock returns over longer horizons after going public. That matters for new investors who are not only expecting exponential growth after the IPO but also longer-run stock performance.

For public investors, the takeaway is simple: Much of the explosive growth in corporate value now occurs while companies are still private. (AP)

Buyers gain leverage as home listings rise, prices ease

Iran war lifts mortgage rates, hurts buyers

LOS ANGELES, April 6, (AP) - The economic fallout from the war with Iran is driving up the cost of buying a home, even as other housing market trends in many parts of the country favor home shoppers this spring.

Mortgage rates have been rising since the war began, as surging energy prices heighten worries about higher inflation, pushing up the yield on U.S. 10-year Treasury bonds, which lenders use as a guide to pricing home loans.

As recently as the last week of February, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage dropped to just under 6%, its lowest level in more than three and a half years. It climbed this week to 6.46%, its highest level in nearly seven months.

The conflict is also injecting more uncertainty into the U.S. economic outlook at a time when the job market is sputtering.

While rates are still down from a year ago, their recent upward trend has already led to a slowdown in mortgage applications. Further increases threaten to put a damper on home sales during what's traditionally the busiest time of the year for the housing market.

"The war in Iran has seriously complicated the spring buying season," said Joel Berner, senior economist at Realtor.com. "I expect that many buyers will be put off by rising rates and mounting economic uncertainty, choosing to bide their time rather than jumping on board for a purchase before rates go up."

Home shoppers who can afford to buy at current mortgage rates this spring are likely to find a more buyer-friendly housing market than this time last year. That means they'll have more leverage when negotiating with sellers, who in many cases are watching their property go unsold for weeks, potentially making them more willing to lower their initial asking price or offer buyers money for closing costs, repairs or other concessions in order to get a deal done, real estate agents say.

In the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area, lower listing prices and more homes on the market are forcing many sellers to price their home more competitively or consider offering some incentives to land a buyer, said Matthew Crites, an agent with Coldwell Banker Realty.

"It's been a really good buyer's market to kind of start the year off with," he said.

The trends helped give home shopper Anne King a strong hand when she set her sights on a three-bedroom, two-bath ranch-style house in Fort Worth listed at \$275,000.

The contract administrator offered \$10,000 below the listing price. She also asked that the seller kick in \$5,000 toward closing costs. The seller accepted, and later agreed to throw in another \$12,000 for repairs after a home inspection revealed roof damage.

"Fortunately for me, the seller was in a position they needed to sell," said King, 57. The purchase was finalized in late February, just before the start of the conflict in the Middle East.

King had hoped mortgage rates would ease further before she bought the home, but decided it made sense to buy sooner, rather than risk having to compete this spring against more homebuyers who could potentially trigger a bidding war -- something she experienced last May when she bought a two-bedroom, two-bath townhouse in Arlington, Texas.

She locked in a 6% rate on her mortgage and plans to refinance to a lower rate whenever rates drop.

"I feel like I got a good deal on this property, and that's all that matters," she said.

While the inventory of homes for sale nationally is still low by historical standards, active listings - a tally that encompasses all homes on the market except those pending a finalized sale - jumped nearly 8% in February from a year earlier, according to data from Realtor.com.

The increase varies across the U.S., with the West, Midwest and South far outpacing the Northeast. Still, some 43 of the 50 largest metro areas had more homes for sale in February than a year earlier, with listings up between 10% and 38.5% in many markets, including Seattle, Indianapolis, Las Vegas and Houston and Denver.

As homes take longer to sell, prices have started falling. The median listing price was down in February from a year earlier in just over half of the nation's biggest 50 metro areas, including a nearly 9% drop in Austin and Memphis, and declines of more than 5% in Washington D.C., San Diego and Los Angeles.

In another sign that buyers may have the edge negotiating with sellers this spring, an analysis by Redfin estimates that there were about 46% more sellers than prospective buyers in the market nationally in February. That's up from about 30% a year earlier and represents the largest gap between buyers and sellers on records going back to 2013, according to Redfin.

Miami, Nashville and Austin are among the metro areas where sellers most outnumber buyers, Redfin found.

The U.S. housing market has been in a sales slump since 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes were essentially flat last year, stuck at a 30-year low. They have remained sluggish so far this year, declining in January and February versus a year earlier.

While the pace of home price growth has slowed or fallen in many metro areas, affordability hurdles remain daunting for many aspiring homebuyers because wage growth has not kept up with home prices.

UN expert urges early action to avert global food crisis

ROME, April 6, (Xinhua) - The ongoing conflict in the Middle East could heighten risks to global food security, particularly for countries heavily dependent on imported food, fertilizer and fuel, Maximo Torero, chief economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has said.

In a recent interview with Xinhua, Torero said the crisis is exposing the vulnerability of countries with limited domestic production and a heavy reliance on external supply routes.

"The real dividing line is not simply between rich and poor countries," he said. "It is between those with domestic buffers and those without."

The FAO warned in a recent report that disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, a key route for global oil, gas and fertilizer trade, could drive up costs across the agrifood system and put additional pressure on vulnerable economies.

Torero noted that some Gulf countries are highly exposed despite their wealth, as they rely heavily on food imports and seaborne trade. Financial resources may provide short-term relief, he said, but cannot replace disrupted supply routes.

He also pointed to South Asia and parts of sub-Saharan Africa as areas of concern. In these regions, shocks to fertilizer and energy supplies could quickly affect agricultural production, particularly during planting seasons.

Countries with limited fiscal space would face greater difficulty absorbing higher import costs or making emergency purchases, he said.

"For low-income countries already using very limited agricultural inputs, even small supply cuts can cause disproportionately large production losses," Torero said.

The warning comes as the FAO continues to monitor global food markets. Torero said governments should not rely solely on food prices as an early signal of stress, but also monitor fertilizer prices, gas supplies to fertilizer plants, shipping flows and maritime insurance costs.

He highlighted sulfur as a critical but often overlooked factor. Though less discussed than oil or gas, sulfur is essential for producing phosphate fertilizers, and supply disruptions could have far-reaching effects beyond the conflict zone.

"Agriculture runs on biological deadlines," Torero said. "If key planting windows are missed, later interventions cannot fully reverse the damage."

He also warned that reduced fertilizer use does not necessarily lead to a proportionate decline in output, noting that in fragile farming systems even modest cuts can result in much sharper yield losses.

As the conflict continues to affect energy, fertilizer and shipping markets, early action will be needed to mitigate the risk of broader stress on global food systems, he said.

Mogadishu protests over rising fuel prices

Somalia's young drivers struggle amid skyrocketing fuel costs

MOGADISHU, April 6, (Xinhua) - Abdulkadir Sharif pulled his tuk-tuk to the curb and scanned the street, where two similar three-wheelers sat nearby, out of fuel, their drivers leaning against the frames with nowhere to go.

"I see two to three tuk-tuks every day that have run out of fuel and are parked along the roadside. Drivers tell me that due to the lack of fuel, they cannot continue their journeys," Sharif said.

Since the United States and Israel launched airstrikes against Iran on Feb. 28, the conflict has pushed up international oil prices. As a result, fuel prices across Somalia have more than doubled.

According to Save the Children, an international aid organization, fuel prices in Mogadishu, the capital of the East African country, surged by 150 percent in March, rising from 0.6 to 1.5 U.S. dollars per liter. The spike is squeezing an industry on which tens of thousands of young Somalis depend to support their families.

With youth unemployment hovering at around 34 percent, according to the World Bank estimates, tuk-tuks have become one of the few available sources of livelihood in the Somali capital.

Many drivers do not even own their vehicles. Instead, they rent them from owners for about 15 dollars a day and keep whatever remains after covering fuel costs. That math no longer works.

Ahmed Mohamad, a tuk-tuk driver who rents his vehicle, said his daily fuel bill has doubled while his earnings have fallen sharply.

"I used to earn 15 to 20 dollars after paying fuel and rental fees, but now I make only seven to 10 dollars. I also used to spend about eight dollars on fuel for the whole day, but now it has doubled to 16 dollars for fuel alone," Mohamad said. "If this continues, I don't think I will be able to carry on."

He is not alone. Sharif said some of his fellow drivers have already left the business.

"Some of my friends who used to drive rented tuk-tuks have now quit. Fewer people are using our services, and this has affected us, but we have no choice but to be patient," he said.

The crisis has rippled beyond the drivers. Residents who once relied on tuk-tuks for daily transport said they can no longer afford the higher fares.

"I have stopped using tuk-tuks because they have become too expensive. A trip that used to cost one dollar now costs two to three dollars, and this is because of the war in the Middle East," said Hassan Mohamed, a Mogadishu resident and former regular user.

Fuel sellers, caught between frustrated drivers and a global market beyond their control, have also borne the brunt of the anger.

"Drivers complain about the prices all the time, but we do not control them. They depend on market changes," said Malin Hassan, a fuel dealer in Mogadishu.

The frustration boiled over on March 11, when hundreds of tuk-tuk

drivers blocked Maka Al-Mukarama Road, a major artery leading to the presidential palace, demanding government intervention.

The protest led to the arrest of Saadia Moalim Ali, a female driver and university graduate who had turned to driving tuk-tuks after failing to secure formal employment. The case drew national attention and underscored the desperation of Somalia's young transport workers.

Somalia imports most of its food, and about 6.5 million people, nearly a third of the population, face acute food insecurity amid drought and economic strain, according to the United Nations. Rising transport costs are now feeding into food prices, further limiting access to basic goods for already struggling families.

For young Somalis like Mohamad, the tuk-tuk is more than just a job. It is proof that hard work could still put food on the table. But as fuel costs rise and passenger numbers decline, that reality is becoming increasingly harsh for many drivers.

TV host admits she is a changed person

Guthrie resumes 'Today' role after mother's disappearance

NEW YORK, April 6, (AP) — Savannah Guthrie was back and almost all business at NBC's "Today" show anchor desk on Monday, marking a return for the first time in more than two months since her mother's disappearance.

"Here we go, ready or not," Guthrie said as the show opened. "Let's do the news." After running through a series of news headlines, Guthrie said that "we are so glad that you started our week with us and it's good to be home." Her co-host, Craig Melvin said that "it's good to have you back at home."

At the end of the first 25-minute portion of the show, she offered Melvin a high-five. Guthrie, one of morning television's most recognizable faces, has been a "Today" host since 2012. She has acknowledged that she's a changed person and that it's hard to go forward not knowing what happened to Nancy Guthrie, who authorities believe was taken against her will from her Arizona home.

Despite an intense search involving thousands of federal and local officers and volunteers, there has been no sign of the 84-year-old mother of three since she was reported missing Feb. 1.

The "Today" show has followed the story closely the last two months but it wasn't mentioned during the first hour of her return on Monday. Bringing things back to normal was clearly intentional: her return wasn't referenced during interviews with NBC's Gabe Gutierrez at the White House and military analyst Steve Warren on the show's set.

Hoda Kotb, the former anchor who had filled in for Guthrie for much of the past two months and interviewed her former colleague, wasn't on set Monday.

"Today" has seen a ratings boost over the past two months, and has even eclipsed ABC's "Good Morning America" as the leader in the morning show ratings. The shows aren't the profit generators they once were for the networks, but the rivalry is still intense.



Savannah Guthrie visits the 'Today' show at Rockefeller Plaza in New York, March 5, 2026. (AP)

"Today" averaged 3.1 million viewers for the first three months of the year, up nearly 9% in an era most broadcast programs lose viewers. It's hard to tell how much the Guthrie story had to do with that: NBC also aired the Super Bowl and

the Winter Olympics in February, and both events tend to help a morning show's ratings.

"Good Morning America" averaged 2.93 million viewers, up 2% over 2025 while "CBS Mornings" plunged 17% to 1.76 million, according to the Nielsen company.

As part of a video message released by her New York church on Easter Sunday, Guthrie spoke about feeling "moments of deep disappointment with God, the feeling of utter abandonment." But she said the resurrection is not fully celebrated "if we do not acknowledge the feelings of loss, pain, and yes, death."

In announcing her return to NBC's flagship morning show, Guthrie said she was uncertain whether she'll feel like she still belongs.

"It's hard to imagine doing it because it's such a place of joy and lightness," she said just over a week ago on "Today" during her first interview since the disappearance. "I can't come back and try to be something that I'm not. But I can't not come back because it's my family."

She didn't anticipate faking her way through the show, which is normally light-hearted with a mix of serious, breaking news.

There had been a great deal of speculation about whether she would return. "I want to smile, and when I do it will be real," she told Hoda Kotb, who came back to "Today" to fill in while Guthrie focused on the search. "Being there is joyful, and when it's not I'll say so."

Nancy Guthrie made occasional appearances on "Today" over the years, once taking part in a cooking demonstration and surprising her daughter on set.

When Savannah Guthrie returned to her hometown of Tucson in 2025 for a segment recorded for the show, the two visited one of their favorite restaurants and talked about their love of Arizona.

People

PM slams slot

'Drop Kanye West from UK festival'

LONDON, April 6, (AP) — Pressure was mounting Sunday on the American rapper Kanye West to be pulled from his headline role at a London music festival this summer, after criticism from UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Pepsi already has withdrawn its lead sponsorship role of the Wireless Festival at Finsbury Park in north London between July 10-12. Other sponsors of the event, including Budweiser and PayPal, are being urged to follow suit.

Pepsi didn't provide an explicit reason for its decision to pull out of the event, even though publicity for the festival promoted the event under the branding "Pepsi presents Wireless."

"Pepsi has decided to withdraw its sponsorship of Wireless Festival," the company said in a statement Sunday.

Kanye West was booked to perform in front of around 150,000 revellers over the course of the festival's three nights.

He changed his name to Ye in 2021, and he has drawn widespread controversy in recent years for a series of antisemitic remarks, and has voiced admiration for Adolf Hitler. Last year, he released a song called "Heil Hitler" - a few months after advertising a swastika T-shirt for sale on his website.

The 48-year-old musician apologized in January for his antisemitic remarks in a letter published as a full-page advert in the Wall Street Journal. He said his bipolar disorder led him to fall into "a four-month long, manic episode of psychotic, paranoid and impulsive behavior that destroyed my life."

Fans of his at a sold-out concert Friday at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, his first major US performance in nearly five years, appeared to separate his personal beliefs and public statements from his music - and were ready to forgive after his January apology letter.

However, Starmer said it was "deeply concerning" that the rapper was booked to perform at the long-established festival.

"Antisemitism in any form is abhorrent and must be confronted clearly and firmly wherever it appears," he said in remarks published by The Sun on Sunday newspaper. "Everyone has a responsibility to ensure Britain is a place where Jewish people feel safe and secure."

Kanye West's scheduled appearance follows signs of growing antisemitism in the UK.

Two men and a 17-year-old boy were ordered to remain in custody on Saturday on charges of torching four ambulances run by a Jewish community service in northwest London. And last October, two men died in an attack on a Manchester synagogue.

Phil Rosenberg, president of the board of deputies of British Jews, said it was "absolutely the wrong decision" to allow Kanye West to play.

Wireless Festival didn't immediately comment when contacted.

Film



These images released by Universal Pictures show Yellow Luma, voiced by Virginia Dare Jelenic (left), and Princess Peach, voiced by Anya Taylor-Joy, (in the left picture), and Bowser Jr., voiced by Benny Safdie, (in the right picture), in scenes from 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.' (AP)



These images released by Universal Pictures show Yoshi, voiced by Donald Glover (left), Mario, voiced by Chris Pratt (center), and Luigi, voiced by Charlie Day, (in the left picture) and Princess Peach, and Mario, (right picture) in scenes from 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.' (AP)



Animated sequel scores biggest Hollywood opening of year

'Super Mario Galaxy' blasts off to \$372m globally

LOS ANGELES, April 6, (AP) — Mixed reviews didn't dissuade mass audiences from buying tickets to the "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," which scored the biggest opening of the year for a Hollywood movie. The Illumination and Nintendo co-production earned \$130.9 million over the weekend and a massive \$190.1 million in its first five days in North American theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Universal Pictures released the sequel globally on Wednesday, capitalizing on kids' spring break vacations in the week leading up to the Easter holiday. With an estimated \$182.4 million from 80 overseas markets, the film is looking at an astronomical \$372.5 million debut - the latest hit for the PG rating. Mexico is leading the international bunch with \$29.1 million from 5,136 screens, followed by the UK and Ireland with \$19.7 million.

The animated sequel, Illumination CEO Christopher Meledandri's 16th movie in 16 years, is the industry's biggest debut since "Avatar: Fire and Ash" launched over Christmas. The Chinese movie "Pegasus 3," which was not a Motion Picture Association release, has the slight edge for the 2026 global record, however.

It's also a dip from the first film, which opened to \$204 million domestically during the same five-day time frame in 2023 (\$147 of that was from Friday, Saturday and Sunday). "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" went on to be the second biggest movie of 2023, with over \$1.3 billion in box office receipts.

"The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," which features returning voice actors Chris Pratt, Jack Black, Anya Taylor-Joy and Charlie Day, had a massive footprint in the US and Canada, where it played

in 4,252 theaters, including 421 IMAX and 1,345 premium large format screens. It made \$15 million from the IMAX screens alone.

"It's exactly the kind of broad, crowd-pleasing release that brings people into theatres," AMC Chairman and CEO Adam Aron said in a statement.

It also cost around \$110 million to make, not including marketing and promotion expenses. But it arrived on a wave of less-than-stellar reviews. Its Rotten Tomatoes score is currently sitting at a lousy 40%. Ticket buyers were more enthusiastic, however.

The family audience gave the movie five out of five stars according to PostTrak exit polls, while general audiences gave it four stars and an A- on CinemaScore. Audiences skewed male (61% overall, although when it came to families attending there were slightly more moms (52%) than dads.

"These kind of audience reaction scores just point to a ridiculously strong run, not only throughout the spring, but likely into the summer as well," said Jim Orr, Universal's president of domestic distribution.

"The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" will open in Japan later this month.

Last year, the first weekend in April hosted the launch of another video game blockbuster, "A Minecraft Movie," which had a bigger three-day debut (\$162.8 million) but didn't have a "Project Hail Mary" in a strong second place, meaning the weekend overall is still up around 5%.

As expected, "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" ended the two-week reign of the Ryan Gosling-led sci-fi hit "Project Hail Mary," which landed in second its third weekend in theaters where it added

\$30.7 million, bringing its running domestic total to \$217.2 million. Worldwide, it's made \$420.7 million to date.

Third place went to A24's provocative new movie "The Drama," starring Zendaya and Robert Pattinson, which made an estimated \$14.4 million from 3,087 theaters. The film's stars have been on a massive and charming press blitz to promote their R-rated movie about an engaged couple grappling with an unnerving revelation, which cost a reported \$28 million to produce. The reveal has drummed up a fair amount of cultural discourse. While reviews have been more positive than not (82% on Rotten Tomatoes), it got a less promising B CinemaScore.

"Hoppers" and "Reminders of Him" rounded out the top five. And the box office outlook looks bright overall, up around 30% from last year.

"There's no better opening act for a great summer than a huge month of April powered by a mega blockbuster like the 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie,'" said Paul Dergarabedian, comscore's head of marketplace trends.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:
1."The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," \$130.9 million; 2."Project Hail Mary," \$30.7 million; 3."The Drama," \$14.4 million; 4."Hoppers," \$5.8 million; 5."Reminders of Him," \$2.2 million; 6."A Great Awakening," \$2.1 million; 7."They Will Kill You," \$1.9 million; 8."Dhurandhar The Revenge," \$1.9 million; 9."Ready or Not 2: Here I Come," \$1.8 million and 10."Scream 7," 915,000.

Agreement includes better health care, AI protections

Screenwriters union and studios reach 4-year tentative deal

LOS ANGELES, April 6, (AP) — The screenwriters union and Hollywood studios reached a surprise four-year tentative agreement after roughly three weeks of negotiation.

The Writers Guild of America West said on X that its negotiating committee unanimously approved a tentative agreement with The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents studios. The alliance confirmed the deal in a separate statement on its website Saturday.

"We look forward to building on this progress as we continue working toward agreements that support long-term industry stability," read the alliance statement.

The precise terms of the deals were not immediately announced, but it is expected to include several writers' priorities such as better health care plans and more protections against artificial intelligence. The union said on X that the deal protects the writers' health

plan builds on gains from 2023 and "helps address free work challenges."

The contract agreement, a year longer than a typical three-year deal, must be approved by the guild's board and members before it is ratified.

The surprise agreement came within weeks of negotiation - a stark contrast to the contentious contract negotiation that partially brought the industry to a standstill.

The screenwriters voted almost unanimously to approve that agreement, which provided them with more compensation, length of employment and control of artificial intelligence. The current contract was set to expire in May.

The studios were also working on new deals with union leaders representing actors and directors, whose contracts are set to expire

at the end of June. Sean Astin, president of the SAG-AFTRA, said in a February interview with The Associated Press that he has seen signs that the studios want "to work as partners again." Hollywood actors also walked out of their jobs for months in 2023 demanding for a better contract.

The writers' tentative deal with studios came as the Writers Guild of America West faces an ongoing strike by its own staff union that started in February. More than 100 people working in legal, events and residuals departments went on strike over allegations of unfair labor practice, according to the Los Angeles Times.

It is not clear how, or whether, the weekslong strike would have an impact on the tentative deal with the studios. The union announced last month it canceled its annual award ceremony because of the staff union strike.

Philanthropy

Hoop project

Curry & Buffett rally for charity

SAN FRANCISCO, April 6. (AP): Warren Buffett wants Stephen Curry to teach him to shoot, and the lesson is already in the works.

Curry isn't sure where to start but plans to acquire some video ahead of time to prepare for training the 95-year-old Buffett, beginning with the basics if necessary.

"If not a permanent basketball hoop I'm pretty sure there's going to be a mobile one out there so I can make good on my promise to teach him some form," the 38-year-old Curry said in a video call Tuesday after he returned to full practice and 5-on-5 scrimmaging earlier in the day as he works back from a lingering right knee injury.

"We'll see how he can do. I haven't seen any video of a Warren Buffett jump shot, but we'll see."

Curry hopes he might play again before the end of the regular season after being sidelined since Jan. 30. There are seven games remaining and he was out Wednesday against San Antonio and likely again for Thursday's back-to-back with Cleveland, according to coach Steve Kerr.

Curry and Buffett are teaming up on far more than basketball, too.

Curry, wife Ayesha, and the billionaire investor and philanthropist Buffett are planning a June 24 lunch together in Omaha, Nebraska, with one high-bidding supporter as they all work to provide resources for families.

The Currys and Buffett will hold a charity auction from May 7-14 with online bidding on eBay to raise money for Buffett's longtime support of San Francisco-based GLIDE - a center for social justice offering daily meals as well as programming for youth and families - and the Currys' Eat.Learn.Play. Foundation.

This marks the latest collaboration for Curry off the court, while the star Golden State guard has missed the past 25 games for the Warriors. In February, the GOAT animation movie Curry worked on with Sony Pictures debuted in theaters.

This is the first time the Currys have participated in Buffett's "A Seat at the Table" charitable lunch, an auction that launched in 2000 as an effort to show the impact a shared meal can have for community building and hope in areas of need.

"Mr. Buffett, his commitment to investing in community service, the heart of service, and at the level that he's at and how much this Seat At The Table auction has raised over the years - I think it's \$55 million-plus - and the fact that he's recognized the work that me and Ayesha and our team at Eat.Learn.Play. has done reaching the community here in Oakland, to have an opportunity to raise more money and awareness and the gesture of opening this platform to me and Ayesha is amazing," Curry said.

"The amount of money that it will raise is amazing but more so it's the awareness of the work that needs to continue to be done and how we are activating in the community to make it happen."

Buffett reached out a couple of months ago about having the Currys join the fundraising lunch he has made a huge success for 2 1/2 decades - raising more than \$50 million for GLIDE. Proceeds will be split between there and the Currys' foundation, which supports children and families in Oakland with healthy meal options, safe play spaces and equipment and learning resources such as tutoring and access to books.

"Sometimes the greatest things in life happen when you don't expect them," Curry said, "you just keep doing the work. An opportunity like this comes up, and it means the world."

Variety

ISTANBUL: As a pivotal bridge for global conservation, the 9th "Heritage Istanbul" fair has become a vibrant platform for Türkiye's cultural heritage sector to seek deeper cooperation with China.

Held between April 1 and 4 at the Yenikapi Eurasia Exhibition and Show Center, the event brought together over 140 local and international companies to explore how shared expertise in restoration, museology, and archaeology can revitalize the ancient bonds of the Silk Road for the modern era.

Turkish heritage experts noted that as Türkiye and China strengthen their ties through bilateral agreements, merging Chinese expertise in museology with Turkish restoration skills is the next frontier for the industry.

The dialogue at the fair reached back to the dawn of civilization. Renowned Turkish archaeologist Nezhil Basgelen proposed a bold vision: creating a "Heritage Silk Road" to mirror the ancient economic route with a modern cultural one.

"Türkiye and China represent two of the world's three great 'Neolithic cores,' where unique developments in agriculture, ceramics, and architecture first emerged," Basgelen told Xinhua. "From the earliest travel of rice and millet to the preservation of Silk Road caravanserais, our shared history demands that we act together to protect cultural assets from the threats of modern conflict."

He emphasized that both nations are uniquely positioned to lead global discussions on heritage protection under the UN umbrella. (Xinhua)



The Ganju Opera 'King Li Er' is staged at Poly Theatre in Beijing, capital of China, May 10, 2025. (Xinhua)

Stage

'Pressure to survive became a driving force for innovation'

Centuries-old Ganju Opera finds a modern voice

NANCHANG, April 6. (Xinhua): William Shakespeare's King Lear is often associated with the grand theaters of London's West End or New York's Broadway. But on a winter night in Leping, a county-level city in east China's Jiangxi Province, the tragic king takes an unexpected form as Li Er, brought to life through Ganju, a centuries-old local opera tradition.

Backstage, 51-year-old actor Hu Haidong dabs gold powder across his brow and adjusts his dragon-embroidered robe as he readies for the role. When the first piercing notes of Ganju fill the air, Shakespeare's tragedy unfolds anew through high-pitched singing, stylized gestures and the distinctive rhythms of Chinese regional opera.

Also known as Jiangxi Opera, Ganju dates back more than 500 years and is known for its soaring vocals, martial movements and ornate costumes. In 2011, it was inscribed on China's national intangible cultural heritage list.

Leping is hailed as one of Ganju's cradles. With more than 400 well-preserved ancient opera stages scattered across its villages and towns, the art form has long been woven into local life. At the heart of this tradition stands the Leping Ganju Opera Troupe, which has trained performers and kept the genre alive on both rural and urban stages for decades.

Hu grew up immersed in this world. Born into a family of Ganju performers, he began learning from his father at the age of 13 and later joined the troupe.

Yet his life on stage was not uninterrupted. Like many traditional Chinese operas, Ganju faced mounting pressure in the late 20th century: audiences aged, markets shrank and rigid management left many state-backed troupes struggling to survive.

"I saw no future back then. It felt like the old art was fading away slowly," Hu recalled. "The pay was almost the same whether we performed once or ten times."

In 2005, he left the troupe and headed south to Hainan Province, where he spent years working in banana fields to make a living. He never imagined he would return to the stage one day.

The turning point came around 2012, when local authorities reformed the Leping Ganju Opera Troupe, reshaping it into a more performance-driven and market-oriented organization. Artists gained greater freedom to choose repertoire, adapt scripts and respond directly to audience demand.

"We returned creative initiative to the performers and let the market test their work," said Cheng Hui, the troupe's director. "The pressure to survive became a driving force for innovation."

One of the troupe's most ambitious experiments was adapting Shakespeare's King Lear into a Ganju production.

In the revised version, the story is set in a fictional ancient Chinese dynasty. The central figure is renamed Li Er, a name that evokes Chinese classical culture while echoing Lear. Core themes

-- loyalty, filial duty, betrayal and moral collapse -- remain at the heart of the drama, but they are expressed through Ganju's unique vocal style, musical patterns and symbolic movements.

For Hu, this production was more than just a new role. It reignited his faith in the art form he had once left behind.

"I wanted to see for myself whether our opera could truly carry Shakespeare's story," he said.

It did more than succeed -- it exceeded all expectations. Since premiering in 2024, King Li Er has drawn audiences in rural communities and city theaters alike, proving that a local opera rooted in tradition can still resonate powerfully with contemporary viewers. For performers like Hu, the success has also brought tangible rewards, with income now directly linked to the number of performances and audience response.

The troupe's revival does not rely on a single production. In 2014, it launched a youth training program, nurturing the next generation of performers through years of instruction and stage practice. It has also experimented with new ways to engage younger audiences, from adapting Ganju rhythms for school campus activities to livestreaming performances for students and online viewers.

These efforts appear to be paying off. "I used to think opera was slow and hard to follow," said 17-year-old Peng Xin after watching King Li Er. "But this story really drew me in. The costumes were stunning, and I could feel the king's pain."

The production has also gained attention beyond China. Last October, Leping's King Li Er shared the stage with a British production of King Lear, offering audiences a rare chance to experience the same classic through two distinct theatrical traditions. David Gareth, who played Lear in the British version, described it as his first real encounter with the emotional depth and expressive power of Chinese regional opera.

Ganju's revival has also benefited from stronger policy support. Recently, China has stepped up efforts to revitalize traditional opera through measures focusing on talent training, creative adaptation and integration with modern cultural industries.

Chen Li, a professor at the School of Arts of Nanchang University and a national inheritor of Ganju Opera, said such policies have provided regional operas like Ganju with clearer support and direction.

"Traditional opera can only thrive if it preserves its artistic core and finds ways to connect with modern audiences," she said. "That means nurturing young performers, encouraging innovation and making better use of digital platforms."

For Cheng, that is the path forward. "In the future, we will continue reviving endangered classics, refining innovative productions like King Li Er, and creating new works rooted in contemporary life and tailored to younger audiences," she said.

'AI can't replicate a tailor's handiwork'

From fast fashion to fine fit: Tailoring finds new life

NEW YORK, April 6. (AP): Hunched over a sewing machine, Kil Bae is hemming a dress inside his Manhattan tailor shop when a new customer stops by with a vintage Tommy Hilfinger jacket he wants taken in.

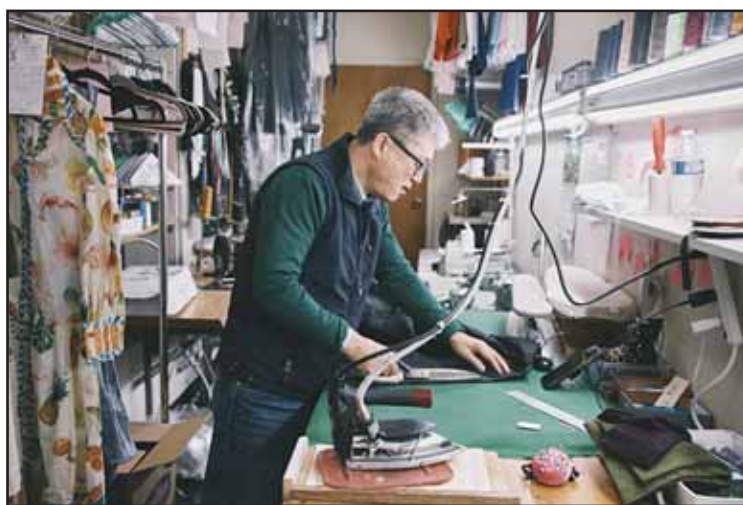
The modeling agent paid \$20 at a thrift store for his reversible bomber style that's plaid on one side and red on the other. He's willing to spend \$280 to have it slimmed down. Alteration requests with such a price disparity would have seemed odd a few years ago, the tailor says, but are helping to keep the bobbins bobbing at his one-man shop, 85 Custom Tailor.

Bae carefully examines the cotton jacket before moving in to pin it, circling the customer like a sculptor with a chisel. He started training as a tailor at age 17, in his native South Korea. Now 63, he's part of a shrinking breed in the US, where professional sewers, dressmakers and tailors are aging out of the workforce as their services find fresh demand.

Shoppers who grew up on disposable fast fashion are enlisting tailors and seamstresses to give off-the-rack purchases a custom fit or personal flair, to revive secondhand finds or to extend the lives of their wardrobes, according to fashion industry experts. Weight-loss drugs like Zepbound and Wegovy mean more Americans are seeking adjusted waistbands, tapered sleeves and other types of resizing, Bae said.

"I recommend this job to young people because this one cannot be AI'd," Bae said, noting artificial intelligence is automating pattern making but so far can't replicate a tailor's handiwork. "Different bodies. Different shape. They cannot copy like this. If I close this door, I can go out and find another one."

But like engraving, repairing musical instruments and many other skilled trades, creating and fitting garments to individual specifications hasn't attracted enough entry-level workers over the years to replace the professionals retiring their pincushions after decades of



Tailor, Kil Bae, works inside his shop on March 27, 2026, in New York. (AP)



Tailor Marco Lema, 35, of Ecuador, works on an embroidered shirt at Nordstrom headquarters in New York, March 23, 2026. (AP)

performing their craft.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated almost two years ago there were fewer than 17,000 tailors, custom

sewers and dressmakers working in business establishments nationwide, a 30% decline from a decade earlier.

Including self-employed individuals

and people working in private households, the median age for all sewers, dressmakers and tailors was 54 last year, 12 years older than the median for the entire employed population, according to the bureau.

The income that a proficiency with needle and thread commands relative to the skills needed and the physical toll of bending over detailed work for hours likely discourages teenagers and young adults from heeding Bae's advice, fashion industry experts said.

The mean annual wage tailors, dressmakers and custom sewers earned as of May 2024 was \$44,050 a year, compared to \$68,000 for all workers, according to BLS calculations.

"Most of fashion training is really aimed at mass production, not spending time in a shop handmaking a garment," said Scott Carnz, the provost of LIM College, a for-profit college that offers degrees in disciplines from the business side of fashion. "The work is also tedious."

Online job postings for tailors, dressmakers and sewers have remained fairly stable, according to Cory Stahle, an economist with the research arm of jobs site Indeed. Between February 2020 and the end of the same month this year, advertised openings decreased by roughly 2%, while postings for both marketing and software jobs declined by nearly 30%, he said.

"There is a kind of a craftsmanship ... that I think is an important piece that we can't ignore," Stahle, who focuses on the US labor market, said.

Immigrants with and without permanent legal status, refugees and naturalized citizens have powered America's garment industry for well over a century. An analysis of recent census data by the Migration Policy Institute found about 40% of tailors, dressmakers and sewers were foreign-born, according to Julia Gelatt, associate director of the nonpartisan think tank's US Immigration Policy Program. The biggest

shares came from Mexico, South Korea, Vietnam and China, she said.

To address a worsening labor shortage, the fashion industry is looking to create a new generation of master tailors.

Nordstrom, North America's largest employer of tailors and alteration specialists, teamed up with New York's Fashion Institute of Technology to launch a nine-week program in advanced sewing and alteration techniques.

"Customarily, tailoring has never been part of the American skill set," said FIT instructor and Broadway costume builder Michael Harrell, who teaches the course.

The fashion institute received 200 applications for the inaugural cohort of 15 students, who started in October and received certificates of completion in February, said Jacqueline Jenkins, the executive director of the school's Center for Continuing and Professional Studies.

The hands-on training was designed to prepare participants to work at Nordstrom. The luxury department store chain employs 1,500 people to provide tailoring and alterations, from hemming jeans and repairing rips to fitting suits and reworking evening gowns.

Ten members of the first class were hired or are in the process of being hired, Marco Esquivel, Nordstrom's director of alterations, said.

"We owe it to the broader industry to ensure that this is an art form that exists for years and years to come and continues to serve customers both within our walls as well as outside," Esquivel said.

Meanwhile, other retailers are expanding their tailoring services because of demand.

Brooks Brothers, a luxury brand that has made custom men's clothes since the 1800s, tested a similar service for women at five stores last year. This year, it expanded bespoke women's tailoring to 40 more stores. Prices start at \$165 for shirts and \$1,398 for suits, the company said.

Occupational therapists empower families, support preemies

Occupational therapy shapes early care for preterm infants

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Physical Therapy Department at the Maternity Hospital, affirmed the vital role of occupational therapists in supporting premature infants and empowering their families, thus, contributing to a healthier start to life.

The department explained that occupational therapy

is the foundation of early care for premature infants, through an integrated medical team, which focuses on the neurological and developmental growth from the earliest days.

It revealed that occupational therapy interventions include enhancing sensory experiences, such as touch, sound and light, tailored to the child's age and needs, along with supporting proper posture and movement patterns to improve responsiveness to the environment.

It commended the role of occupational therapists in enhancing the child's self-regulation like sleep patterns and calmness, which is essential for stabilizing health and normal development.

It explained that developmental care is one of the most important modern approaches in dealing with premature infants, aiming to reduce stress and provide an environment similar to the womb, which supports healthy and balanced brain development and contributes to improved long-term outcomes.

It emphasized the importance of integrated work among different disciplines, along with parent education and the application of developmental care methods, considering their impact on improving long-term developmental outcomes for premature infants.

It added that occupational therapy extends beyond the child, as it includes supporting the family by guiding the parents on proper ways to gently hold and handle the baby as part of their daily routine, confirming that parents are vital in the treatment journey.



In this photo provided by NASA, the Moon is seen in the window of the Orion spacecraft, (photo taken by the Artemis II crew), at the end of day 5 of journey to the Moon on Monday, April 6. (AP)

Historic lunar flyby unveils unseen side of the Moon

Artemis II astronauts race to set new distance record from Earth

HOUSTON, April 6, (AP): With the moon looming ever larger, the Artemis II astronauts raced to set a new distance record Monday from Earth on a lunar fly-around promising magnificent views of the far side never seen before by eye.

The six-hour flyby is the highlight of NASA's first return to the moon since the Apollo era with three Americans and one Canadian - a step toward landing boot prints near the moon's south pole in just two years.

A prize - and bragging rights - awaits Artemis II.

Less than an hour before kicking off the fly-around and intense lunar observations, the four astronauts were set to become the most distant humans in history, surpassing the distance record of 248,655 miles (400,171 kilometers) set by Apollo 13 in April 1970.

Mission Control expected Artemis II to surpass that record by more than 4,100 miles (6,600 kilometers).

Artemis II is using the same maneuver that Apollo 13 did after its "Houston, we've had a problem" oxygen tank explosion wiped out any hope of a moon landing.

Known as a free-return lunar trajectory, this no-stopping-to-land route takes advantage of Earth and the moon's gravity, reducing the need for fuel. It's a celestial figure-eight that will put the astronauts on course for home, once they emerge from behind the moon Monday evening.

Commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canada's Jeremy Hansen were on track to pass as close as 4,070 miles (6,550 kilometers) to the moon, as their Orion capsule whips past it, hangs a U-turn and then heads back toward Earth. It will take them four days to get back, with a splashdown in the Pacific concluding their test flight on Friday.

Wiseman and his crew spent years studying lunar geography to prepare for the big event, adding solar eclipses to their repertoire during the past few weeks. By launching last Wednesday, they ensured themselves of a total solar eclipse from their vantage point behind the moon, courtesy of the cosmos.

Topping their science target list: Orientale Basin, a sprawling impact basin with three concentric rings, the outermost of which stretches nearly 600 miles (950 kilometers) across.

Other sightseeing goals: the Apollo 12 and 14 landing sites from 1969 and 1971, respectively, as well as fringes of the south polar region, the preferred locale for future touchdowns. Farther afield, Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn - not to mention Earth - will be visible.

Their moon mentor, NASA geologist Kelsey Young, expects thousands of pictures.

"People all over the world connect with the moon. This is something that every single person on this planet can understand and connect with," she said on the eve of the flyby, wearing eclipse earrings.

Landing

Artemis II is NASA's first astronaut moonshot since Apollo 17 in 1972. It sets the stage for next year's Artemis III, which will see another Orion crew practice docking with lunar landers in orbit around Earth. The culminating moon landing by two astronauts near the moon's south pole will follow on Artemis IV in 2028.

While Artemis II may be taking Apollo 13's path, it's most reminiscent of Apollo 8 and humanity's first lunar visitors who orbited the moon on Christmas Eve 1968 and read from the Book of Genesis.

Glover said flying to the moon during Christianity's Holy Week brought home for him "the beauty of creation." Earth is an oasis amid "a whole bunch of nothing, this thing we call the universe" where humanity exists as one, he observed over the weekend.

"This is an opportunity for us to remember where we are, who we are, and that we are the same thing and that we've got to get through this together," Glover said, clasping hands with his crewmates.

A look at Artemis II's up-close and personal brush with another world - our constant companion, the moon.

Apollo 13's astronauts missed out on a moon landing when one of their

oxygen tanks ruptured on the way there in 1970.

With the three lives in jeopardy, Mission Control pivoted to a free-return lunar trajectory to get them home as fast and efficiently as possible. This routing relies on the gravity of Earth and the moon, and minimal fuel.

It worked for Apollo 13, turning it into NASA's greatest "successful failure." (For the record, flight director Gene Kranz never uttered "Failure is not an option." The line is pure Hollywood, originating with the 1995 biopic starring Tom Hanks.)

Commander Jim Lovell, Fred Haise and Jack Swigert reached a maximum 248,655 miles (400,171 kilometers) from Earth before making their life-saving U-turn on Apollo 13.

Artemis II's astronauts are following the same figure-eight path since they are neither orbiting the moon nor landing on it. But their distance from Earth should exceed Apollo 13's by more than 4,100 miles (6,600 kilometers).

Artemis II's Christina Koch said late last week that she and her crewmates don't live on superlatives, but it's an important milestone "that people can understand and wrap their heads around," merging the past with the present and even the future when new records are set.

During the flyby, the astronauts will split into pairs and take turns capturing the lunar views out their windows with cameras. At closest approach, they will come within 4,070 miles (6,550 kilometers) of the moon.

Because they launched on April 1, the rendezvous won't have as much of the far lunar side illuminated as other dates would have. But the crew still will be able to make out "definite chunks of the far side that have never been seen" by humans, said NASA geologist Kelsey Young, including a good portion of Orientale Basin.

They'll call down their observations as they photograph the gray, pockmarked scenes. There's a suite of professional-quality cameras on board, and each astronaut also has an iPhone for more informal, spur-of-the-minute picture-taking.

Experts advise evidence-based solutions

Doctors urge care amid growing hype over menopause products

DALLAS, April 6, (AP): Women suffering through the hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes and sleep problems that can come with menopause - all while looking in the mirror and noticing signs of aging - are being bombarded with products.

More open conversations about menopause and the period leading up to it - called perimenopause - are happening at the same time that marketing has been supercharged by social media. Women are being confronted by lotions and serums and light masks that promise to rejuvenate their faces and necks, dietary supplements claiming to do everything from boost moods to ease hot flashes and gadgets promising to help with symptoms.

"The marketing has gotten very, very aggressive. It's pervasive," said Dr. Nanette Santoro, an OB-GYN professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz.

Santoro and other physicians say that before spending lots of money on products that make big promises, it's important for women to talk to their doctors about what has actually been proven to help - and what could be harmful.

"It really pays to be very, very, very skeptical," Santoro said.

As menstruation winds down, women's levels of estrogen and progesterone drop. In some women, the symptoms can include hot flashes, night sweats, mood changes, vaginal dryness and sleep problems.

Dr. Angela Angel, an OB-GYN with Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, said that in the past, doctors would ask women around the age of 50 during their yearly exam if they were noticing any symptoms. But now, she said, patients are making separate appointments and initiating the conversations.

And at those appointments, she said, many patients tell her they've already tried something. "They're coming to see me because it's not effective or because it's caused some other side effect," Angel said.

Her hospital has recently started a menopause support group led by doctors and, at the request of participants, an upcoming session will focus on helping women navigate through the marketing onslaught.

Products aimed at women in that stage of life include everything from bracelets and rings claiming to help ease hot flashes to cooling blankets and bedding.

Santoro said her advice to patients is to "balance what you're going to spend

over whether this might help you."

"If it's a bracelet that's going to cost you \$20, it's not a big expenditure. It might provide some improvement," Santoro said. "Things that are not well tested might still work but if you want something that works - come back, I'm not going anywhere and I'll give you evidence based treatment."

Santoro said dietary supplements have not been proven in multiple, well-done studies to alleviate hot flashes, but many are low cost with a low potential for harm. She said if a patient wants to try something they see online, it's important to at least tell their doctor so they can be monitored while taking it - or warned off.

Doctors note that most of the time over-the-counter products like dietary supplements, shampoos or skin care that are advertised for menopausal women aren't different from regular products for that purpose ingredient-wise.

And some products could have side effects.

Dr. Monica Christmas, director of the menopause program at the University of Chicago Medicine, said there's not one symptom everyone gets. Some women get few or none, she said, while others are extremely impacted by a variety of symptoms. What's most important, she said, is seeking medical help.

Doctors say that hormone therapy prescribed by a doctor can help with symptoms, as can prescriptions for nonhormonal medication. Some women are advised to avoid hormone therapy because they have had certain medical issues.

"Not everybody needs hormone therapy, not everyone is a candidate for hormone therapy, not everybody should be on hormone therapy," Angel said.

Regular exercise and a healthy diet can help a lot, doctors say. That can help with weight loss, which is associated with reducing hot flashes and night sweats.

And Santoro notes that avoiding alcohol is a good step for someone with hot flashes since it can make them worse.

"Many of the symptoms actually get better over time, so sometimes it really is just a matter of lifestyle modifications and self-care and getting through this most tumultuous time frame," Christmas said.

For Brandi McGruder, a 49-year-old school librarian from Dallas, it clicked that she was in perimenopause last year when she went out to dinner for her

birthday. When she and her friends entered the steakhouse, she was freezing cold. About 20 minutes later, she was burning up.

She said she made an appointment with her doctor, who prescribed an estrogen patch, which helped. McGruder said she's seen the advertisements for products aimed at women her age, but her first stop was her doctor.

McGruder said that while she doesn't like the way the symptoms have driven home that she's getting older, she's also embracing this time in her life. Her advice: "Laugh. It's OK. Reach out to others experiencing what you are going through, don't take it so serious."

There are changes with skin that come both with time as one ages, and during menopause as skin gets less thick because of a loss of collagen and some of the hyaluronic acid that supports skin, said Dr. Melissa Mauskar, a dermatologist and associate professor at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Mauskar said using a prescribed retinoid or an over-the-counter retinoid can help. Both assist with the production of collagen and reduce the appearance of wrinkles.

She said good over-the-counter moisturizers can be found at drugstores. Her advice is to look for ones with ceramides, which help keep skin hydrated.

"But you don't want to have anything that has too many additive ingredients - just because it's natural and a botanical does not mean it's better," Mauskar said. "A lot of those actually are contact allergens that can make people more sensitive."

Ingestible collagen is among the products being marketed to women, but she warns that studies are mixed and ingesting it "doesn't mean that it's going to make its way to your skin and plump up your face" - even though products claim it will. Light masks, she said, won't hurt and some studies show they could help, but they won't make a difference overnight. She said seeing any improvements from them would likely take daily use for many years.

She said sun damage is one of the biggest reasons patients have more wrinkles, so consistent use of sunscreen is a must for all ages.

"I think there's a lot of new fancy things coming out and targeted to perimenopause, menopause patients," Mauskar said, "but sometimes the tried and true things that we at least have the science for I think still are my kind of gold standard for my patients."

Emergency campaign

Bangladesh starts measles vaccination as deaths rise

DHAKA, April 6, (Agencies): The Bangladeshi government Sunday launched an emergency measles-rubella vaccination campaign targeting more than 1.3 million children in areas with high infection rates, as the death toll from suspected cases continued to rise.

Bangladeshi Health and Family Welfare Minister Sardar Md Sakhawat Hossain inaugurated the drive at a health complex near the capital Dhaka on Sunday morning.

According to the minister, the campaign covers children aged between six months and five years in the country's 18 districts, where the infection rate is relatively high.

The health minister also announced that a nationwide measles-rubella vaccination campaign will begin on May 3, covering all remaining districts across Bangladesh.

Hossain said the emergency campaign was designed following experts' recommendations to quickly control the spread of the disease and ensure protection for children at risk.

The move comes amid a recent surge in measles cases and related deaths. According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), four more deaths from suspected measles were recorded in the 24 hours by 8 a.m. Saturday, raising the total deaths to 98.

Cholera: Burundian Minister of Public Health Lydwine Baradahana on Thursday announced a resurgence of cholera, with 18 new cases recorded on Wednesday alone, despite recent progress in combating the disease.

Speaking at a press briefing in the commercial capital Bujumbura on the country's cholera situation, which also included the handover

of medical supplies donated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Baradahana described the situation as "worrying."

"Today, two cholera treatment centers host 34 patients. Just yesterday (Wednesday), we had 18 patients admitted to the Prince Regent Charles Hospital (which has a cholera treatment center)," she said, adding that "this is the first time since the beginning of this year (2026) that we've had a situation like this."

She attributed the resurgence partly to poor hygiene practices and inadequate sanitation measures in some communities. The minister also highlighted the financial burden of the outbreak, saying government spending on cholera response reached three billion Burundian francs (nearly 1 million U.S. dollars) in the first quarter of 2026.

Mpox: Congo on Thursday declared the end of a two-year outbreak of the mpox disease that's believed to have caused more than 2,200 deaths in the country.

Health Minister Roger Kamba told journalists that the government had made the determination that the outbreak was over and no longer a national emergency.

Congo, a vast country in central Africa, was at the center of an outbreak of the infectious viral disease that spread to neighboring countries in 2024 and prompted the World Health Organization to declare it a global health emergency as it spilled over borders. WHO ended the global health emergency declaration in September.

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said there were more than 161,000 suspected cases of mpox in Congo during the outbreak between 2024 and this

No black holes

Scientists find exploding star

a rare form of exploding star, shed-MELBOURNE, April 6. (Xinhua): An Australian-led study has uncovered evidence of g light on one of the most cataclysmic events in the universe.

The study, published in Nature, uses gravitational wave observations to probe how the most massive stars end their lives, strengthening the case for a long-predicted "forbidden gap" in black-hole masses, according to a statement from Australia's Monash University.

At the end of their lives, most massive stars collapse into black holes -- objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape. However, extremely massive stars are thought to become so hot that they are blown apart in a "pair-instability supernova," an explosion so violent that the star is completely destroyed and leaves no black hole behind, it said.

Researchers identified a "forbidden range" of black-hole masses more than 45 times the Sun's mass, where stellar-origin black holes are rare. The gap aligns with models in which such stars explode via pair-instability and leave no remnant.

Project lead Tong Hui, a PhD candidate from Monash University, said the study found a forbidden mass range where stars seemingly don't make black holes.

"The only black holes in this mass range are made from merging smaller black holes, rather than directly from stars," Tong said.

Confirming the existence of this gap would help settle a major question about how the most massive stars live and die, and the origin of black holes, the researchers said.

Conflict deprives children of vital services

Kids with autism in Gaza face challenges

GAZA, April 6, (Xinhua): Sitting on the floor of her damaged home in Gaza City, Lian Abu Qousa sketches a small house on the beach, surrounded by trees and birds, filling it with shades of blue, green and yellow.

"This is how life is still etched in her mind," said Hammad Abu Qousa, her father.

"Lian loves to draw. She often draws houses, gardens, the sea, and birds, but sometimes she also draws missiles, planes, and shells, as if the war has seeped into her drawings," he added.

Sixteen-year-old Lian was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by varying degrees of difficulty with social interaction and communication.

"We noticed she was different from other children when she was three. She was shy, withdrawn, and did not interact like her peers," her father recalled.

However, he said, "We discovered her talent for drawing, and we encouraged her to express her feelings through art whenever possible, which helped her a lot."

therapy are crucial for children with ASD. Lian's family did its utmost to support her development through basic rehabilitation programs before the latest chapter of the Israeli-Hamas conflict erupted on Oct. 7, 2023. After the conflict, however, maintaining the routines became nearly impossible.

"At the beginning of the war, she would scream with every explosion and cry hysterically. Then she would sit in a corner, hugging her knees, trembling with fear," her father said. "We tried to protect her, but the attacks continued."

Yet, amid the traumatic experiences, some children with ASD display remarkable skills that stand out even during the conflict. Some, like Lian, excel in drawing, while others demonstrate strong memory skills or advanced learning capabilities.

Yahya Shamali, a 13-year-old boy from Gaza City with ASD, is recognized for his exceptional memory and aptitude in mathematics.

"He can memorize information quickly and is interested in studying and solving complex problems. We worked to develop his skills," his mother told Xinhua.

Shamali had received behavioral and medical treatments in Gaza and traveled to Egypt to further improve his condition. However, his treatment stopped when he returned to Gaza shortly before the conflict.

"Children with autism spectrum need consistent routines and a stable environment, but displacement and daily pressures made this extremely difficult," his mother said.

In fact, the conflict has intensified challenges for children with ASD and increased pressures on their families, according to Reem Jaarour, head of autism programs at the Dolphin Association for Education and Community Development in Gaza.

"The challenges for children with autism existed before the war due to limited specialized staff and rehabilitation programs. The war led to the closure of many centers, depriving children of essential support," she said.

Jaarour added that families are now largely managing their children's conditions without professional assistance. "Children with autism depend on stability and routine. The war, displacement, and loss of services have made their lives much more difficult."

SPORTS

KD, Rockets spoil Curry's return from injury

Mavs end longest home losing streak in 32 years

SAN FRANCISCO, April 6, (AP): Alperen Sengun made the go-ahead layup with 11 seconds left on a pass from Kevin Durant and the Houston Rockets held off Stephen Curry in his return after being sidelined more than two months for a 117-116 victory.

Curry missed a long, straight-away 3-pointer in the final seconds.

Gary Payton II scored the go-ahead basket on a goaltend by Amen Thompson with 20 seconds left, but Durant took charge on the other end. He finished with 31 points, eight rebounds and eight assists against his former team, making a crucial 3-pointer with 2:10 remaining.

But he missed with 38 seconds left, and Draymond Green found a cutting Payton in the key.

Curry dazzled down the stretch to score 29 points on 11-for-21 shooting in 26 minutes after missing 27 straight games because of a right knee injury - his first action since Jan. 30 against Detroit.

Curry's driving layup made it a one-point game with 1:27 left then Sengun converted a three-point play moments later only for Curry to hit a 3 on the other end.

Curry entered to a warm standing ovation and greetings on the big screen - he also expressed his gratitude on video - when he entered with 4:54 left in the opening quarter. It marked the first time he has come off the bench in a regular-season game since March 7, 2012, against Memphis. He last was a reserve in Game 4 of the first round of the 2022 playoffs during the Warriors' last championship run.

Mavericks 134, Lakers 128

In Dallas, Cooper Flagg scored 45 points and the Dallas Mavericks ended their longest home losing streak in 32 years at 14 games with victory over the depleted Los Angeles Lakers.

LeBron James had 30 points and 15 assists for the playoff-bound Lakers, who led for just 13 seconds in the opening minutes of their first game since injuries sidelined Luka Doncic and Austin Reaves for the rest of the regular season.

Doncic, the NBA scoring leader, has a left hamstring strain, and Reaves, LA's No. 2 scorer, is out with a left oblique strain. Both were injured in a blowout loss at Oklahoma City on Thursday.



Houston Rockets forward Jabari Smith Jr. (10) shoots a 3-point basket over Golden State Warriors guard Brandin Podziemski (2) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco. (AP)

Clippers 138, Kings 109

In Sacramento, Kawhi Leonard scored 26 points and the Los Angeles Clippers snapped a two-game skid by beating the Sacramento Kings to improve their playoff positioning.

Leonard scored 13 points in the first quarter as the Clippers raced out to a double-digit lead and coasted against a Kings team playing out the string of a lost season.

John Collins added 25 points, and Darius Garland and Kobe Sanders each had 17 for Los Angeles.

The Clippers moved into a tie for eighth place in the Western Conference with Portland with four games to play. The eighth-place team will have two shots to get into the playoffs through the play-in tournament.

Magic 112, Pelicans 108

In New Orleans, Desmond Bane scored 27 points and the Orlando Magic overcame a 15-point deficit in the second half in victory over the New Orleans Pelicans.

The Magic extended their winning

streak against the Pelicans to nine games, and Orlando won in New Orleans for the ninth straight time. The Magic's last loss to the Pelicans was on Dec. 23, 2021, in Orlando, and they last lost in New Orleans on Jan. 18, 2017.

Thunder 146, Jazz 111

In Oklahoma City, Chet Holmgren scored 21 points, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 20 and the Oklahoma City Thunder had a season-high point total to rout the Utah Jazz.

Gilgeous-Alexander sat out the fourth quarter with the Thunder in firm control. He extended his record streak of games with at least 20 points to 138.

Cason Wallace scored 16 points and Jalen Williams added 15 for the Thunder, who increased their lead over the San Antonio Spurs to three games with four remaining in the race for the top seed in the playoffs. Oklahoma City has won five straight and 17 of 18.

The Thunder shot 58.1% from the field overall and made 24 of 45

3-pointers. This shooting spree came three nights after Oklahoma City blew out the Los Angeles Lakers 139-96.

Cavaliers 117, Pacers 108

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 23 of his 38 points in the second half, James Harden had 28 points and seven assists and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the injury-plagued Indiana Pacers.

Thomas Bryant added 14 points and 10 rebounds in his first start of the season for Cleveland, which didn't take its initial lead until the third quarter. It went ahead for good early in the fourth at 99-96 on Nae'Qwan Tomlin's 3-pointer, eventually going up by 15.

The playoff-bound Cavaliers (49-29) reduced their magic number for home-court advantage in the first round to one, despite resting their starting frontcourt of Jarrett Allen, Evan Mobley and Sam Merrill. Mitchell made 16 of 27 shots and had six rebounds and six assists in 33 minutes.

Hornets 122, Timberwolves 108

In Minneapolis, LaMelo Ball scored 35 points and Miles Bridges added 25 points, eight rebounds and seven assists for the surging Charlotte Hornets in a 122-108 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Coby White had 17 points for the Hornets (43-36), who shot 48.9% from the floor (45 for 92) on the way to their fourth straight win. They're a half-game out of sixth place in the Eastern Conference.

Ball was 7 for 14 from deep, his league-leading eighth game this season with at least seven 3-pointers. This was also Ball's 20th game with five-plus 3s.

Charlotte, which is 9-2 since mid-March and 39-22 since Thanksgiving Day, has not made the playoffs in 10 years. At this rate, the Hornets might even be able to skip the play-in games and secure a first round spot.

Bucks 131, Grizzlies 115

In Milwaukee, Ryan Rollins

scored 24 points and the Milwaukee Bucks withstood a triple-double from Memphis' Ryan Rupert to outlast the Grizzlies 131-115 in a Sunday afternoon matchup of short-handed, lottery-bound teams.

Rupert established new career highs with 33 points and 10 assists, and he matched a career best with 10 rebounds. The 21-year-old Rupert entered Sunday averaging 4.3 points, 2.5 rebounds and 0.8 assists.

Celtics 115, Raptors 101

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored 26 points, Jayson Tatum had 23 points and 13 rebounds and the Boston Celtics beat the Toronto Raptors.

Neemias Queta had 18 points and seven rebounds, and Payton Pritchard scored 17 points for the Celtics, who won their third straight to move closer to clinching second place in the Eastern Conference.

Ja'Kobe Walter led Toronto with 16 points, and Brandon Ingram and RJ Barrett each had 15.

Celtics center Nikola Vucevic returned after missing a month following surgery for a broken right ring finger. He looked a bit rusty, scoring just four points in 13 minutes with four rebounds.

Suns 120, Bulls 110

In Chicago, Devin Booker scored 30 points, Jalen Green added 25 and the Phoenix Suns ended the game on an 11-2 run to top the Chicago Bulls.

Dillon Brooks scored 15 points. He hit a fadeaway jumper and a 3 and blocked a shot during the decisive run, helping the Suns shake off back-to-back losses at Orlando and Charlotte.

The Suns led by 13 late in the third quarter before the Bulls went on an 11-0 run. They were clinging to a 109-108 advantage with about three minutes remaining when Brooks hit a turnaround jumper to start the decisive run and added a 3-pointer.

Nets 121, Wizards 115

In New York, Nolan Traore hit five 3-pointers and finished with 23 points and seven assists, Jalen Wilson added 19 points and the Brooklyn Nets beat the Washington Wizards.

The Wizards (17-61) have a two-game on the Nets (19-59) for the best lottery odds. Indiana is 18-58 entering Sunday's game at Cleveland.

Washington has lost six in a row and 22 of its past 23. The Wizards had given up 305 combined points in back-to-back losses to Philadelphia (153-131) and Miami (152-136).

Brooklyn won for just the second time in its past 14 games.

Spaun surges to Texas Open title

Coughlin powers to Aramco Championship win

NORTH LAS VEGAS, Nev., April 6, (AP): After coming oh so close to winning at Shadow Creek last year, Lauren Coughlin made sure victory was never truly in doubt Sunday in the Aramco Championship.

She rolled to a five-shot win over Nelly Korda and the rest of the star-studded field for her first win in two years.

Coughlin shot an even-par 72 for a 7-under total, earning the 33-year-old from Virginia \$600,000. She won her third LPGA Tour title and first in the United States, after winning in Canada and Scotland in 2024.

Korda was runner-up yet again after shooting a 75 and finishing at 2 under. She made her one birdie on the par-5 18th, avoiding going without one in a round for the first time since the first day of The ANNIKA last November in the Tampa Bay area.

This was her third consecutive second-place finish after opening her season by winning in Orlando, Florida, moving Korda up a spot to No. 1 in the world ranking.

"I'm just going to stick to what I'm doing," Korda said. "I'm really happy with the way that my game is trending, and sometimes when you work too hard

Leona Maguire (71) also finished at 2 under, and the only other player with an under-par score was Miyu Yamashita (74) at 1 under.

Korda wasn't the only tough competitor for Coughlin to overcome. The \$4 million prize money in the event organized by Golf Saudi and co-sanctioned by the LPGA and Ladies European Tour drew 38 of the top 40 players. It's the first such event in the United States, and more appear to be coming to North America.

Players compared this tournament to a major because Shadow Creek because birdies were so difficult to come by. Only four players wound up under par for the tournament.

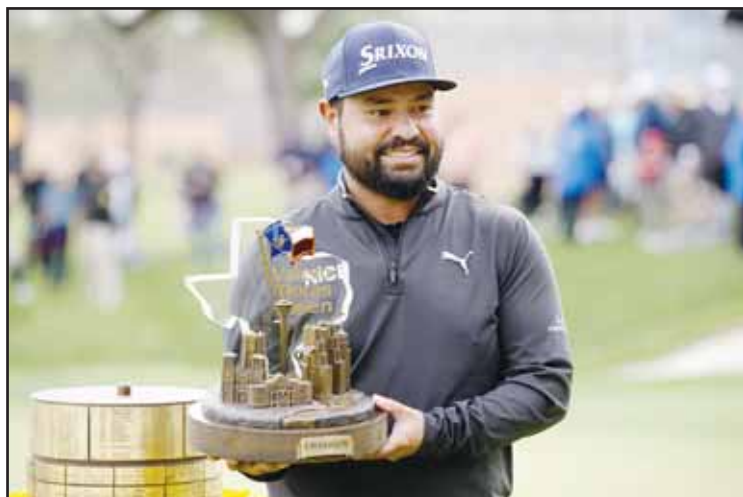
Coughlin, the former two-time Atlantic Coast Conference player of the year at Virginia, showed why she feels comfortable at Shadow Creek, even though the format for this year's tournament switched from match to stroke play. She made the final pairing last year before a 1-up loss to Madeline Sagstrom.

J.J. Spaun came up with two big shots at the end of a long, wet Sunday, one leading to birdie and the other for eagle that carried him to a 5-under 67 and a one-shot victory in the Valero Texas Open for his first title since the U.S. Open last summer.

Spaun won for the second time at the TPC San Antonio, with one big



Lauren Coughlin putts on the second green during the final round of the Aramco Championship golf tournament Sunday, in North Las Vegas, Nev. (AP)



J.J. Spaun holds the championship trophy after winning the Valero Texas Open golf tournament in San Antonio. (AP)

difference. His victory four years ago got him into the Masters. Now he is the U.S. Open champion who already had his spot at Augusta National secured. But this was an important win.

He had yet to finish in the top 20 in seven starts this year - his best was a tie for 24th in The Players Championship - and now the 35-year-old Californian has a validating win in tough conditions as he heads into the first major of the year.

Robert MacIntyre, who had led for so much of the tournament, completed 12 holes Sunday morning in the storm-delayed tournament for an even-par 72 to stay ahead by one shot going into the final round. The groups didn't change for the final round in a bid to finish amid more rain - but no lightning that caused any delays.

Spaun was in the mix with a dozen other players when he hit his tee shot to 3 feet on the par-3 16th for birdie, and then drove the green on the 306-yard 17th hole to 10 feet for eagle.

He finished with a par to set the target at 17-under 271, finishing about an hour before MacIntyre and the final group. He was on the range when MacIntyre, three shots behind with two to play, drove the 17th and holed an eagle putt just outside 15 feet to get within one shot.

But the Scot hooked his second shot from a wet fairway on the 609-yard closing hole - a par 5 that yielded only 10 birdies in the final round - and even after getting relief from temporary immovable obstructions, MacIntyre could only hit wedge to 30 feet.

Australia's Komolafe wins men's title

Richardson storms from scratch to stunning Stawell Gift victory

STAWELL, Australia, April 6, (AP): American sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson surged through the field Monday to win the Stawell Gift, an annual race contested on handicap over 120 meters on grass in a small Australian town near Melbourne.

In the 144th edition of the event, Richardson provided one of its most breathtaking finales as she started at scratch and caught the field at the 90-meter mark before pulling away for an astonishing win in 13.15 seconds.

"Just make sure I'm patient that first 10-meters like my coach today told me, and just executing the rest," Richardson told Seven Network television post race. "I think I realized I was gonna win right past 90."

The 26-year-old American, one of the fastest women of all time, is just the third woman to win the race from scratch and claimed a prize of 40,000 Australian dollars (\$27,500).

Richardson won a silver medal in the 100 meters in the 2024 Paris Olympics, and gold in the 4x100 relay that same year. She also claimed the 100-meter title at the 2023 World Championships.

After a near calamity in the semifinals earlier Monday, where Richardson rose too soon and was almost pipped on the line, the American made no errors in the final, chasing down the field early and running through the line powerfully.

She celebrated with fans before embracing boyfriend and former world champion Christian Coleman, who was the marquee name of the men's draw. She and Coleman remain in a relationship despite a domestic violence charge against Richardson last July.

"This is one of the most exciting,



Sha'Carri Richardson of the U.S., holds her trophy as she celebrates winning the women's Stawell Gift in Stawell, Australia. (AP)

fun, and entertaining track meets I've ever ran in, not even just that, but the love, the true love and support for track and field, unbeatable," she said.

Former 100-meter World Champion, Coleman failed to qualify for the men's final after finishing sixth in his semifinal earlier Monday with 12.48 seconds. Only the winners of the six semifinals for both the men's and women's division qualified for the respective finals.

Both Richardson and Coleman raced from "scratch" meaning they were required to run the entire distance and chase down opponents, which proved too much of a gulf to bridge for Coleman, despite him closing the gap appreciably in the latter stages of his heat.

"Yeah, it is what it is, but I mean, I gave it everything I got, like you said,

they're great athletes, so when you're giving up that much of a margin, I mean, it's pretty tough," Coleman said to Seven Network television.

Australian Olufemi Komolafe won the men's Stawell Gift ahead of Jake Ireland and Dutchman Liam van der Schaaf.

Earlier Monday, Richardson powered through the field to win her semifinal by just 0.007 seconds after she leaned back at the finish allowing local Halle Martin to almost steal the race in a photo finish.

"I feel like I am having a great time, but also working on race pattern, me and my coach Dennis Mitchell staying calm, executing, and running through the line," Richardson said after the semifinal.

Celta strengthens push for European qualification

MADRID, April 6, (Xinhua): Celta Vigo strengthened its push for European qualification with a 3-2 away win over Valencia to remain sixth in the standings in La Liga.

Although Guido Rodriguez gave Valencia an early lead after 11 minutes, Celta responded with two goals in four minutes early in the second half through Ilaix Moriba and Fer Lopez. Williot Swedberg added a third with 10 minutes remaining before Rodriguez pulled one back deep into stoppage time.

Getafe also stayed in the hunt for a European place with a 2-0 home win over Athletic Club. Luis Vazquez opened the scoring with a deflection from Martin Satriano's effort, before Satriano sealed the result from close range in the final minute. Athletic's only positives came with the returns

of Nico Williams, Maroan Sannadi and Yeray Alvarez after long absences.

Luis Garcia Plaza's first game in charge of Sevilla ended in a 1-0 defeat away to Oviedo, leaving the club fourth from bottom. Fede Vinas scored the only goal in the 32nd minute, while Tanguy Nianzou was sent off before halftime and will miss next weekend's crucial match at home to Atletico Madrid.

In the Basque derby, Osasuna drew 2-2 away to Deportivo Alaves. Valentin Rosier gave Osasuna an early lead before Toni Martinez equalized before halftime. Ante Budimir restored the visitors' advantage from the penalty spot in the 79th minute, but Lucas Boye rescued a point for Alaves with a last-minute penalty.

Dominant solo effort

Monumental Pogacar wins Tour of Flanders for record-equaling third time

OUDENAARDE, Belgium, April 6, (AP): Tadej Pogacar added another prestigious victory by winning the Tour of Flanders for a record-equaling third time with a dominant solo effort against a world-class field, further cementing his place in cycling lore.

Pogacar, from the UAE Team Emirates-XRG team, and his great one-day classic rival Mathieu van der Poel (Alpecin-Premier Tech) were the strongest in the pack and rode together at the front with about 18 kilometers remaining when the world champion launched an attack in the final ascent of the Oude Kwaremont.

Pogacar's move last year on the same climb had proved decisive, but this time van der Poel was not dropped and managed to limit the gap to just a few seconds at the top of the hill.

Van der Poel, however, could not close the gap and Pogacar gradually extended his lead, redoubling his effort on the Paterberg, a short but brutal cobbled climb with gradients exceeding 20%. That proved too much for van der Poel, a three-time winner of the race, who lagged 15 seconds behind at the summit.

Once he realized he would not be caught, the four-time Tour de France winner sat up, raising his arms in triumph and punching the air as he

crossed the line 33 seconds ahead of van der Poel.

On his Tour of Flanders debut, Remco Evenepoel (Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe) finished third ahead of Wout Van Aert (Visma-Lease a Bike).

Pogacar and van der Poel were mobbed by photographers and warmly hugged each other after the finish.

Also known as De Ronde (The Tour), the Tour of Flanders is one of cycling's most challenging one-day races and was first held in 1913. This year's 278-kilometer (172.7-mile) route featured 16 short but punishing climbs and several cobblestone sections.

The race is one of the "monuments" of cycling - the five most prestigious one-day events in the sport - along with Milan-San Remo, Paris-Roubaix, Liege-Bastogne-Liege and the Giro di Lombardia.

Pogacar triumphed at Milan-San Remo for the first time earlier this year and could win all five this year. The only Monument missing in his impressive trophy cabinet is Paris-Roubaix, which takes place next weekend.

Pogacar has won all three races he competed in this year, also claiming the Strade Bianche last month.



Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar crosses the finish line to win the Tour of Flanders cycling race, in Oudenaarde, Belgium. (AP)

Leeds edges West Ham in shootout to end 36-year wait for FA Cup semis



West Ham United's Jarrod Bowen, right, and Leeds United's Ethan Ampadu in action during the English FA Cup quarterfinal soccer match between West Ham United and Leeds United in London. (AP)

Struijk strikes the winning penalty

LONDON, April 6, (AP): Leeds threw away a two-goal lead in second-half injury time and had a double scare in extra time before going on to beat West Ham in a penalty shootout on Sunday and reach the FA Cup semifinals for the first time since 1987.

Mateus Fernandes and Axel Disasi struck in the 93rd and 96th minutes as West Ham leveled the score at 2-2 at London Stadium and forced extra time - where two goals for West Ham were chalked off for offside - before Leeds won the quarterfinal shootout 4-2. West Ham debutant Finlay Herrick saved a penalty from Joel Piroe but Leeds eventually prevailed with Pascal Struijk scoring the winning penalty.

"At least I'm old enough that I was already born when there was the last semifinal for Leeds United in the FA Cup in the '80s," Leeds manager Daniel Farke said. "It was



Leeds United's Dominic Calvert-Lewin, third right, and teammates celebrate in the penalty shoot-out during the English FA Cup quarterfinal soccer match between West Ham United and Leeds United, in London. (AP)

a crazy game."

The thousands of West Ham fans who had left early were trying, and failing, to get back in when Taty Castellanos thought he had put the Hammers ahead in the opening seconds of extra time after a bad error from Leeds goalkeeper Lucas Perri, only for VAR to rule Castellanos offside.

Then Jarrod Bowen crashed a shot against the crossbar, with

Pablo offside when he rolled in the rebound.

The 20-year-old Herrick came on as a replacement for Alphonse Areola, who left the field to receive treatment with five minutes of extra time remaining.

Ao Tanaka and Dominic Calvert-Lewin's penalty had previously built a 2-0 lead for Leeds in a classic FA Cup game between two relegation-threatened teams in the Premier

League.

Leeds will play Chelsea in the semifinals in a repeat of the 1970 FA Cup final, which Chelsea won after a replay.

Manchester City and second-tier Southampton meet in the other semifinal match with games to be played April 25-26 at Wembley.

The draw was held after Leeds' victory.

West Ham averted some controversy after it backed down on a decision, reportedly taken by the safety officer before the match, that a penalty shootout would not be taken in front of the end housing 9,000 Leeds fans because of "safety concerns."

As it was, the coin toss went West Ham's way.

Farke said: "You could imagine what I think about such a situation."

Stoppage time, extra time and the shootout were played in front of a half-empty stadium after the exodus of home fans.

"What I saw on the pitch was more important than anything," West Ham manager Nuno Espirito Santo said.

"What I saw was a group of players, a group of boys that didn't give up. This is the major lesson that we have to take from today."

Ticket struggles hit Iraqi fans ahead of World Cup

BAGHDAD, April 6: Iraqi fans in North America are facing a ticketing crisis as their national team prepares for its historic return to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The Instagram account "Iraqi Football Photo Exhibition" shared details of an official petition urging the Iraqi Football Association to intervene with FIFA, amid fears many supporters may miss matches due to limited ticket availability.

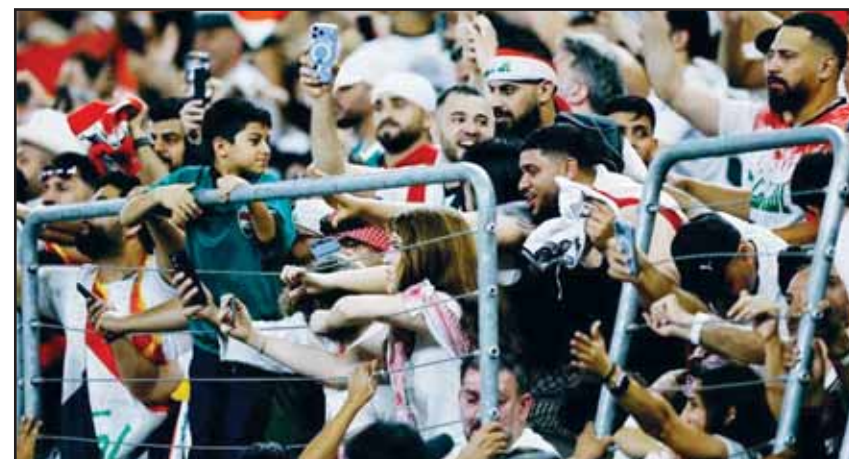
Fans cite the early closure of FIFA's fourth sales phase and the extremely limited ticket allocation, which fails to meet the size of the Iraqi diaspora.

They are calling for activation of the

fan code for Participating Member Associations (PMAs) to ensure a fair share of seats, especially as resale prices continue to soar.

Iraq opens its Group I campaign against Norway on June 17 at Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts, followed by a match against France on June 23 at Lincoln Financial Field in Pennsylvania. The group stage concludes against Senegal on June 26 at BMO Field in Toronto, Canada.

The "Lions of Mesopotamia" have qualified for the World Cup for only the second time in history after a dramatic playoff win over Bolivia (2-1) in Monterrey, Mexico.



Passionate Iraqi fans flood the stands, capturing every moment.

Best of the Rest

Dubois claim WBO lightweight title: Caroline Dubois added the WBO lightweight title to her WBC crown with a unanimous points victory over fellow Briton Terri Harper.

The London-born younger sister of heavyweight Daniel Dubois scored a 98-91, 97-92, 98-91 win to see off Harper, who was bleeding heavily after a clash of heads in the eighth round, at London Olympia on Sunday night.

Dubois had struggled to get to her opponent initially but floored her with a heavy left in the sixth round and never looked back. (AP)

□ □ □

PSV Dutch champion for 3rd straight year: PSV Eindhoven was crowned Eredivisie champion for a third straight year and 27th time overall after its closest rival Feyenoord failed to win its match.

With five rounds of games left, PSV has an unassailable 17-point lead in the Dutch top tier.

It won 4-3 against Utrecht on Saturday, and secured the title after second-placed Feyenoord was held to a 0-0 draw at Volendam. (AP)

□ □ □

Azerbaijani grabs gold at Baku AGF Trophy: Azerbaijani junior rhythmic gymnast Azada Atakishiyeva claimed gold in the ribbon event at the AGF Trophy international tournament underway in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, local media reported.

Atakishiyeva topped the podium in the ribbon apparatus final, adding to her silver medal in the ball event earlier in the competition.

In the senior group competition, the Azerbaijani team took silver, finishing behind Individual Neutral Athletes, while Kyrgyzstan placed third.

Held April 3-5 at the National Gymnastics Arena in Baku, the AGF Trophy brought together rhythmic gymnasts from 15 countries and regions competing in hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon events. (Xinhua)

Monaco boosts Champions League push

Martinez scores a brace as Inter routs Roma to get title pursuit back on track

MILAN, April 6, (AP): Lautaro Martinez is back from injury, and Inter Milan is back looking like the Serie A leader again.

Lautaro scored twice in his first action since February and Inter routed visiting Roma 5-2 to end a four-match winless streak across all competitions.

Lautaro scored in the second and 52nd minutes at the San Siro. Hakan Calhanoglu - fresh off helping Turkey qualify for the World Cup - Marcus Thuram and Nicolò Barella also found the net for Inter.

Gianluca Mancini, along with Barella a member of the Italy team that failed to qualify for the World Cup, scored a momentary equalizer for Roma. Then Lorenzo Pellegrini pulled one back for Roma after the Giallorossi had gone four goals behind.

Inter, which had its advantage sliced from 10 to six points before the international break, moved nine points ahead of city rival AC Milan and 10 ahead of defending champion Napoli, which hosts Milan on Monday.

Earlier, Bologna won 2-1 at relegation-threatened Cremonese to move up to eighth before

hosting Aston Villa in the Europa League quarterfinals on Thursday.

Joao Mario and Jonathan Rowe scored early for Bologna before Federico Bonazzoli pulled one back late for Cremonese by converting a penalty. Yousef Maleh of Cremonese and Lewis Ferguson of Bologna were each sent off in stoppage



Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez makes an attempt to score during the Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Roma in Milan, Italy. (AP)

time. Cremonese was without former Leicester striker Jamie Vardy, who sat out due to a muscle injury.

Also, Torino won 1-0 at last-place Pisa with an 80th-minute goal from Che Adams.

□ □ □

Monaco picked up where it had left off before the international break, beating southern rival Marseille 2-1 in the French league as U.S. striker Folarin Balogun scored a superb goal to strengthen host Monaco's push for a Champions League spot.

The Principality side won a seventh straight Ligue 1 game and increased its unbeaten run to 10 league matches.

The win lifted Monaco level on points with fourth-placed Marseille and just one point behind third-placed Lille.

Balogun, who has scored eight goals in his last eight games for Monaco in all competitions, made it 2-0 in the 74th minute when he finished a move sparked by goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's clearance. The American then dribbled into the box and chipped a subtle lob into the far corner.

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UCLA guard Kiki Rice (1) guards South Carolina guard Raven Johnson (25) during the first half of the women's National Championship Final Four NCAA college basketball tournament game in Phoenix. (AP)

Sports

Domestic competitions continue to evolve

Kuwait Football Association sets sights on Gulf Cup and Asian Cup

KUWAIT CITY, April 6: Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah is moving forward with a strategy of stability and development for the 2026-2030 term. The upcoming board elections, scheduled for May 20, will largely retain the current team, with only minor changes: Majed Awad of Al-Shabab Club replaces Osama Hussein, and Dalal Yousef Al-Mudhaf takes over the women's seat from Hanan Al-Hardan.

This continuity reflects the board's commitment to building on recent achievements, which have elevated Kuwaiti football both organizationally and technically.

Kuwait recently hosted the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup and the first Gulf Veterans Cup, boosting its regional football profile. Internationally, the country also staged the French Super Cup between Paris Saint-Germain and Olympique Marseille, showcasing its capacity for high-profile events.

On the field, the national team impressed in the recent Arab Cup, while



Kuwait Football Association President Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah

The Under-20 League was launched to provide young talents with greater opportunities, and partnerships with private sector sponsors, including Zain for the Premier League, have been

strengthened. Looking ahead, the new board faces key challenges: Competing in the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup in Jeddah this September

Participating in the 19th Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia in January

These tournaments will require continued focus to maintain progress and achieve positive results, reinforcing Kuwait's growing reputation in regional football.

The confirmed list of candidates for the 2026-2030 board includes:

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef (Al-Salmiya Club, President)

Mubarak Abdulaziz (Al-Kuwait Club, Vice President - Financial & Administrative Affairs)

Ayman Al-Husseini (Kazma Club, Vice President - Technical Affairs)

Fahad Al-Hamlan (Al-Fahaheel, Board Member)

Majed Awad (Al-Shabab, Board Member)

Dr. Ahmed Ajab (Al-Sahel, Board Member)

Dalal Yousef Al-Mudhaf (Women's Board Member)

The nomination period for board membership opened recently and will close on April 15, ahead of the May elections.

Petrounias wins as Cairo World Cup finals opens

CAIRO, April 6, (Xinhua): Olympic champion Eleftherios Petrounias bagged a rings gold on the opening day of Artistic Gymnastics Apparatus World Cup finals in Cairo, with five gold medals decided across men's and women's events.

Olympic champion Eleftherios Petrounias showcased his experience on the rings to secure gold, followed by Armenia's Artur Avetisyan, who earned silver, while China's young gymnast Liu Yang took the bronze.

Petrounias said he had overcome a last-minute muscle cramp to compete in Cairo, adding that he was satisfied with his performance but aiming for higher scores in the future.

"For me, this championship means, first of all, points for the qualification to the World Championships in Rotterdam in October. And second of all, I'd like to compete in different countries and tournaments to be able to adapt anytime anywhere very fast," the Greek told Xinhua.

He added that his long-term goal remains the Olympic stage.

"My dream is to reach the LA Olympics and leave with one more medal," he added.

The first day of finals featured five apparatus events, including three for men and two for women.

In the men's floor exercise final, neutral athletes Daniel Marinov and

Arsenii Dukhno took the gold and silver respectively, while the Philippines' Karl Jahrel Eldrew Yulo secured the bronze medal.

Meanwhile, Armenia's Hamlet Manukyan topped the standings in the men's pommel horse final to claim gold, while Kazakhstan's Zeinolla Idrissov and Nariman Kurbanov finished level on points to take silver and bronze.

On the women's side, Spain's Laia Font took gold in the vault final, finishing ahead of Panama's Hillary Heron, while China's Yu Linmin secured the bronze.

Font said she hadn't expected her victory but was proud of her performance, noting that the result would boost her confidence for upcoming competitions in the Olympic cycle.

"We've already had some competitions preparing for these vaults, so I came with a bit of practice -- a little, but not much," she told Xinhua.

In the uneven bars final, Algeria's Kaylia Nemour, one of the discipline's leading performers, edged China's Ji-jang Shuting to win, while Slovenia's Lucija Hribar came third.

The competition will conclude on Monday with five more apparatus finals, including the men's vault, parallel bars and horizontal bar, and the women's balance beam and floor exercise.

Rampant UCLA wins historic NCAA title



UCLA players celebrate after defeating South Carolina in the women's National Championship Final Four NCAA college basketball tournament game in Phoenix. (AP)

South Carolina suffers crushing loss

PHOENIX, April 6, (AP): It's mission accomplished for UCLA.

Gabriela Jaquez, Lauren Betts and the rest of the UCLA seniors secured the first NCAA women's basketball national championship in school history - a goal that was set after losing in the first Final Four last season.

Jaquez scored 21 points, Betts added 16 and UCLA routed South Carolina 79-51 Sunday in the title game.

The near-record lopsided victory completed the Bruins' journey through this year's March Madness. The Bruins ran through their opponents this season with their only loss coming in November, to Texas in a Thanksgiving tournament.

"It's immeasurably more than I could ask or imagine," UCLA coach Cori Close said. "It's beyond my wildest dreams."

UCLA (37-1) was led by Betts and her fellow seniors and graduate students, like Jaquez - who played all four years with the Bruins. She also had 10 rebounds and five assists in front of her brother Jaime, who plays for the Miami Heat and flew in to attend the game to watch his alma mater win.

The group that coach Close put together through a combination of high school commitments and transfer portal players capped off their stellar careers with a championship, scoring all the points in the title game.

The title is UCLA's first since winning the 1978 AIAW championship, which was the postseason tournament for women's basketball before the NCAA took over in 1982.

The championship game loss was the second straight for the Gamecocks, who won the title in 2024. Dawn Staley and her Gamecocks (36-4) will be favored to return to the game's biggest stage with a talented group of expected returnees, led by Joyce Edwards and Agot Makeer.

Like their 51-44 semifinal win over Texas, the Bruins were locked in defensively, anchored by Betts. She finished with 11 rebounds and exited the game with 3:45 left, giving Close a huge hug. The 6-foot-7 senior earned Most Outstanding Player honors of the Final Four.

Offensively, the Bruins had a much easier time than in the semifinal game that saw the team score only 20 points in the first half. The Bruins surpassed that total in the opening 10 minutes against South Carolina. Kiki's Rice 3-pointer just before the first-quarter buzzer made it 21-10 as the Bruins got off to a strong start and South Carolina struggled with 17% shooting, its poorest quarter of the season.

PSG ready for Liverpool test

European heavyweights collide as Real Madrid takes on Bayern

MADRID, April 6, (AP): Football at its very best.

That was Arne Slot's memory of Liverpool's richly entertaining meeting with Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last season.

OK, Liverpool ultimately went out, beaten at Anfield in a round-of-16 penalty shootout by the team that would go on to win the competition for the first time, but Slot loved the way his side played and still maintains it was "the best game I've managed in my career."

They meet again almost 12 months on, with Liverpool - and Slot - in a very different place.

Indeed, the Dutch coach appears to be fighting for his job heading into the upcoming quarterfinal double-header with the European champions that starts with the first leg in Paris on Wednesday.

A 4-0 loss at Manchester City in the FA Cup on Saturday was Liverpool's latest poor result of a season that initially began with so much hope after the club's record summer splurge of \$570 million on new players on the back of cruising to the Premier League title.

With the Reds having long given up hope of retaining their league title, the Champions League is their only remaining chance of a trophy.

On current form, that looks unlikely.

While Liverpool has lost four of its last seven games in all competitions in a run of results that has piled the pressure on Slot, PSG is on a four-match winning run that contains back-to-back

victories over Chelsea in the Champions League's round of 16 (5-2 and 3-0).

Only one team has retained the Champions League since the turn of the century - Real Madrid won it for three straight years from 2016 - but PSG looks in good shape to do so.

Slot and Liverpool might just be happy to get out of the Parc des Princes with a fighting chance of advancing going into the second leg at Anfield.

There are three other quarterfinal matchups: Real Madrid vs. Bayern Munich, Barcelona vs. Atletico Madrid, and Sporting Lisbon vs. Arsenal.

It's one of the more unlikely Champions League facts: Madrid and Munich - winners of the title a combined 21 times - still haven't met in the final. They won't this season, either.

The two European heavyweights are, however, meeting in the knockout stage for the sixth time in the past 14 seasons - and it has been a one-sided rivalry.

Madrid, the record 15-time champion, has won all five of its two-legged matchups with Bayern since the 2011-12 season: once in the last 16, once in the quarterfinals and three times in the semifinals, most recently in 2024.

Bayern might never have a better chance to end that miserable run, given the German champions are unbeaten in 13 games in all competitions. Star striker Harry Kane is expected to be available, despite missing Saturday's win over Freiburg in the Bundesliga with a minor ankle issue sustained in national team training last week.

Madrid is coming off a comfortable round-of-16 win over Man City but, more recently, a 2-1 loss at Mallorca on Saturday that hurt its Spanish league title hopes.

The players of Spanish rivals Barcelona and Atletico might be sick of

the sight of each other by next week's second leg.

That's because their upcoming Champions League doubleheader will complete a barrage of five meetings between the teams in the space of two months, culminating in three matches



Mallorca's David Lopez clears the ball in front of Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe during a La Liga soccer match between Mallorca and Real Madrid in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. (AP)