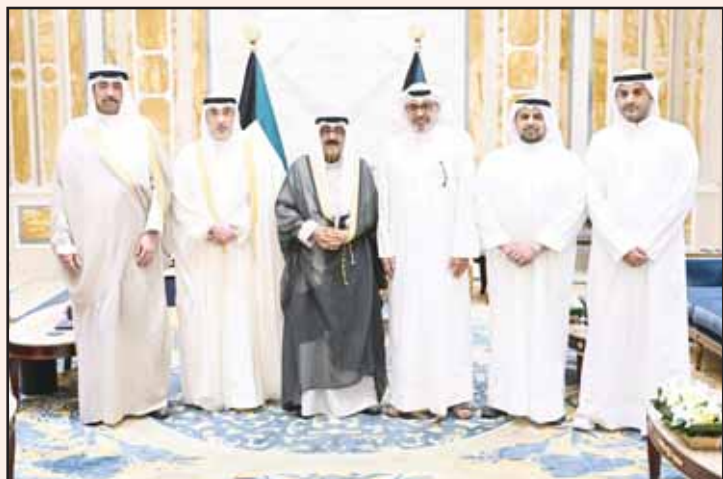




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HH Amir, Crown Prince receive families of fallen heroes, Iranian child victim's family

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Tuesday First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, along with the families of martyrs of duty.

The reception was for the families of Sergeant Waleed Majed Suleiman and Sergeant Abdulaziz Abdulmohsen Dakhel Nasser from the Naval Forces of Kuwait Army, as well as Lieutenant Colonel Staff Abdullah Emad Al-Sharrah and Major Fahad Abdulaziz Al-Mejmed of the Ministry of Interior, who were killed while carrying out their national duties in confronting and deterring the Iranian aggression against Kuwait.

His Highness also received the family of the Iranian child victim, Elna Abdullah Hussain, who was killed when her family home was struck during the attacks carried out by Iranian missiles targeting civilian sites in Kuwait.

During the meeting, His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere condolences and heartfelt sympathies, recalling the bravery, sacrifices and national contributions of the martyrs, who performed their duties with dedication and loyalty to their homeland.

He prayed Allah Almighty to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon the deceased and grant their families patience and solace.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and the families of the martyrs.

The reception similarly included the families of the fallen servicemen and the young Iranian victim, Elna Abdullah Hussain, who perished during the recent Iranian missile attacks.

His Highness the Crown Prince expressed his sincere condolences, commending the courage and devotion of those who gave their lives in defense of Kuwait. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to bless their souls and comfort their bereaved families.

Head of the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meeting.



Amiri Diwan photos
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives families of those killed in the line of duty, along with the family of an Iranian child victim.



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

Iran ... 'broken, yet cooling'

"BROKEN, yet cooling" is a Kuwaiti proverb that refers to a broken jar that can still cool water. This proverb aptly describes the Iranian regime, not only today but since 1979.

Despite successive defeats and setbacks, Iran continues to raise slogans of victory, each time claiming the victory as divine.

This alleged divine victory, which the mullahs' regime insists on attributing to itself and its proxies, relies heavily on deception aimed at those who believe everything they hear.

Throughout the ongoing war, Iran has never stopped claiming one divine victory after another, even portraying the United States' success in recovering its pilots stranded in Iranian territory as a defeat for America and a victory for the Iranian regime. This flawed theory of assessing war results has brought widespread devastation upon the Iranian people.

Iran's octopus-like proxies across the region mirror Tehran's narratives, claiming successive divine victories and portraying their enemies as defeated or losers.

On the other hand, the Iranian regime also employs a strategy of feigned intelligence, often accompanied by a subtle admission of defeat.

The article written by Mohammad Javad Zarif and recently published in the Foreign Affairs Magazine offers a realistic portrayal of this admission of defeat and reflects Tehran's plea.

We all know that within the Iranian regime, no one is allowed to speak without the approval of those referred to in Tehran as the "Guardians of the State."

Zarif served as the vice president under Masoud Pezeshkan. His talk of victory is therefore

merely a glittering facade, concealing Iran's acceptance of the 15 American demands.

He spoke of a "comprehensive settlement" and a tactical "declaration of victory" for Iran, while the majority of the article focused on an exchange of concessions. This aligns perfectly with the Gulf proverb, "It's broken, yet cooling."

Reading what former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani wrote about the major reforms Iran urgently needs, even though the war is not yet over, suggests that the Iranian regime has changed. By the end of the war, all facts will be revealed.

It is true that the world is watching the countdown to the deadline set by US President Donald Trump, which expires on Wednesday. However, we must recall what happened in 1988.

Back then, when Khomeini realized the regime was on the verge of collapse, he willingly swallowed the bitter pill by accepting UN Resolution No. 598. Although this acceptance was a tacit admission of defeat, he framed it as a "divine victory."

Today, there is no doubt that not only the Iranian regime but Iran as a whole is under threat. Stubbornness and defiance can no longer transform defeat into victory. It is well known that the outcomes of wars are revealed only after a ceasefire.

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Nerves fray as Trump ticks the clock on Iran

Don't go outside during sirens: KFF

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Ministry of Defense announced on Tuesday that the Kuwait Armed Forces detected 17 hostile drones within the airspace of the country over the past 24 hours, confirming that all were dealt with according to established procedures without causing any material damage or human casualties.

Official spokesperson of the ministry Colonel Staff Saud Al-Atwan made the announcement in the daily media briefing on the latest developments and operational events amid the ongoing Iranian attacks on the State of Kuwait.

According to Al-Atwan, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit at the Land Forces Engineering Department handled 15 reports in line with the approved procedures during the same period.

He stressed that the Armed Forces continue to carry out their duties with efficiency and vigilance, maintaining constant readiness to enhance national security

and guarantee the safety of citizens and residents.

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

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior revealed in the same media briefing that in the last 24 hours, the EOD teams dealt with 59 reports about debris falling from interception operations, raising the total number of such reports since the start of the aggression to 758.

Spokesperson of the ministry Brigadier Nasser Bouslaib made the statement, along with a visual presentation of the field efforts exerted by EOD teams in handling incidents related to falling debris and unidentified objects inside and outside the threat zones, proving the high level of readiness and coordination among the concerned authorities.

He asserted that since the current circumstances require maximum vigilance, State institutions continue to perform their duties with high efficiency and firm determination, supported by ongoing coordination and full preparedness efforts to deal with developments and ensure national security and public safety.

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No room for doubt as DNA, decree-law to settle lineage

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait stated on Tuesday that the issuance of the decree-law regulating procedures for lineage claims and name corrections, and its publication in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm", represents a significant legislative and regulatory step in developing the legal framework for protecting paternity and individual names.



Al-Sumait

Al-Sumait explained that the decree-law strengthens governing controls, thus preserving personal and family identity and supporting social stability. It establishes a clearer and more disciplined legal framework for matters related to lineage and requests to change names. This is achieved by unifying the compe-

tent authority for reviewing requests to confirm or deny lineage and requests to change or correct names, thus ensuring procedural clarity and enhancing the efficiency of handling these requests.

The new decree-law imposes stricter controls on changing names and family names, restricting such changes to specific cases and clearly defined conditions allowed by law, in order to prevent the manipulation of names and lineages. It reinforces the seriousness of these requests and preserves the associated legal and social privacy.

The decree-law allows the use of modern scientific methods, including DNA testing, in matters related to lineage, while providing more precise regulation of procedures and fee assessments. It also criminalizes providing false information to the competent authorities, thus enhancing the accuracy of evidence and limiting misuse of these legal processes.

The decree-law strengthens confidence in the integrity and fairness of the procedures. It is considered a comprehensive legislative approach in addressing a sensitive issue.

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Day by Day

WHEN God judges the oppressor, He does not judge him alone but also everyone who supported, encouraged, or applauded him.

Do not think you are safe from punishment if you participated in injustice, even partially. Divine retribution is precise and effective. The oppressor's punishment can be immediate, no matter how cleverly he planned his wrongdoing.

Such is life and its law. We witness God's mercy and His punishment with our own eyes in this life. ... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

'Watt' a duty

Drain the waste, not the reserves

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The rationalization of energy consumption is now a national duty, in light of the brutal Iranian attacks on the infrastructure of the country, including power and water desalination plants.

The current situation also entails the need to increase the strategic water reserve for emergencies, reduce the electrical grid load and oil consumption, and minimize disruptions in transmission and distribution stations.

In view of the above, the newspaper interviewed several specialists to shed light on the issue.

Official spokesperson of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Eng. Fatima Abbas Hayat asserted that rationalizing electricity and water consumption under all circumstances -- whether in peace or war -- is a civilized behavior that preserves natural resources and assets. She said this move reduces pressure on the infrastructure of the ministry,

Continued on Page 5



9 Zain Group holds AGM with quorum of 77.7%

National Bank of Kuwait concludes all deferred AI

10 Jawhara draws in full alignment with the highest standards of transparency & integrity

Media ban on 28 terror cases

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The State Security and Terrorism Crimes Court issued a decision banning the publication and circulation of stories related to the 28 State Security cases currently being heard by the court, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The decision was made during a session chaired by Judge Nasser Al-Badr, with Judges Omar Al-Mulaifi, Abdullah Al-Faleh, and Salem Al-Zayed as members, in accordance with the provisions of the new law establishing specialized courts to handle state security and terrorism cases.

Kuwait, Turkiye explore defense cooperation boost



Ministry of Defense photo
Kuwait's Ministry of Defense Undersecretary receives the Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait.

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ministry of Defense Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah discussed on Monday with Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Tuba Nur Sonmez ways of enhancing cooperation, especially in the field of defense.

The Ministry of Defense said in a press release that this came during the reception of the Turkish ambassador in the ministry's headquarters.

The Undersecretary affirmed Kuwait's keenness to consolidate its strategic partnership with Turkiye, praising the level of cooperation between the two sides and stressing the importance of continuing coordination and consultation on various issues of common interest, it added.

Egypt's Al-Azhar reiterates condemnation of Iranian attacks on Gulf countries



KUNA photo
Grand Imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayeb welcomes Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem.

CAIRO, April 7, (KUNA): Grand Imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayeb on Monday restated condemnation of Iranian aggression on Gulf countries, Jordan and Iraq, which target civilian facilities and endanger civilians.

He made the statement while welcoming Kuwaiti Ambassador to Egypt Ghanem Al-Ghanem, underlining the necessity of safeguarding peoples' security and stability and promoting regional security and stability.

Speaking to KUNA, the Kuwaiti ambassador spoke highly of the role of the world's largest Islamic religious academic institution in disseminating correct religious teachings, deepening moderation and cementing world peace and human fraternity.

He underlined Kuwait's commit-

ment to promoting cooperation with Al-Azhar and making use of its scientific status and moderate approach in a way that contributes to beefing up the values of coexistence and peace and addressing regional challenges.

Meanwhile, the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO) also strongly condemned the continued 'blatant Iranian aggression' targeting vital facilities in Kuwait, particularly power generation and water desalination plants.

In a statement to KUNA, the organization said that the ongoing attacks on energy, water, and other critical infrastructure for over a month, despite international condemnation, constitute a serious escalation and unjustified crimes against GCC states.

The statement stressed that the continued aggression represents a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of these countries, international law principles, and good neighborliness, as well as a breach of UN Security Council Resolution 2817, which condemns such attacks and calls for their immediate cessation.

AIDSMO affirmed its commitment to providing all forms of technical and advisory support within its fields of expertise to Kuwait and other affected Arab countries during these exceptional circumstances, as part of its role in supporting joint Arab action.

The organization also urged the international community to activate necessary mechanisms to ensure the immediate halt of these "treacherous Iranian military operations."

No escape, illegal weapons holders to be tracked down

Mol warns legal action as deadline ends Wednesday

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Director of the Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the Ministry of Interior Colonel Othman Al-Mansouri confirmed that finding abandoned weapons or ammunition could lead to tracking down and holding the owner accountable, once the voluntary weapons and ammunition surrender deadline ends Wednesday.

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Al-Mansouri disclosed that the campaign witnessed a huge turnout of citizens and residents who surrendered unlicensed weapons and ammunition at the police stations without legal repercussions or investigation. He said such a turnout reflects a strong sense of national awareness and commitment to maintain national security and stability. He emphasized that everyone who surrendered their unlicensed weapons and ammunition set a commendable example of responsibility and contributed to reducing crime and enhancing societal safety.

He indicated that Undersecretary of the ministry Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wahib

visited several police stations to review the operations and monitor the weapons surrender procedures. He affirmed that these visits proved the commitment of the security leadership to support the law enforcement personnel, and ease procedures for citizens and residents.

He added that the police stations play a vital role, extending beyond security to include social and humanitarian roles in resolving many issues amicably and providing assistance. He pointed out that this is a manifestation of the high level of professionalism and respectful handling of various situations, as well as the immediate response to different reports -- traffic, security or humanitarian.

He emphasized that the directives of the security leadership -- headed by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and Al-Wahib -- include raising the level of preparedness and improving field operations.

He stressed the importance of taking advantage of the final hours of the grace period, urging anyone with an unlicensed weapon to surrender it immediately to the nearest police station and not to leave or dispose it haphazardly, as this poses a danger to society.

He said "do not expose yourselves to legal consequences. This is an opportunity to rectify the situation by surrendering the unlicensed

weapons and ammunition safely and legally. The security authorities have enough experience in dealing with such cases."

Penalty withheld: The Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of the Criminal Court in the case of manipulating electricity and water bills and harming public funds, as it refrained from punishing several citizens, but ordered them to collectively pay about KD907,000, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

It also suspended the trial of two Egyptian fugitives who were sentenced in absentia to seven years in prison.

The case involved an employee of the Ministry of Electricity and Water who manipulated the automated system. Exploiting his authority, he created a fictitious account and transferred electricity, water and municipal fees to it, totaling around KD465,000. This was done to make certain consumers' accounts appear debt-free.

The investigation revealed that the other defendants colluded with him by providing the account data for which debts were to be written off, thus, harming public funds.

The court charged them with unauthorized access to the system, data falsification and obtaining illicit gain.

Previously, the Criminal Court sentenced three Egyptians to seven years in prison followed by deportation and fined the remaining defendants varying amounts. The Court of Appeals later upheld the ruling with some modifications to the fines, increasing the total to KD907,000.



Col Al-Mansouri



Ministry of Foreign Affairs photo
Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman receives Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Sultan of Oman, Kuwait's FM discuss regional developments

MUSCAT, April 7, (KUNA): Sultan Haitham bin Tariq of Oman discussed with Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the latest regional developments and ongoing efforts in this regard.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the talks took place during the Sultan's reception of Sheikh Jarrah on his official visit to the Sultanate, in the presence of Omani Foreign Minister Bader Al-Busaidi.

The meeting touched on the strong and

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

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

MPW budget rises to more than KD1 billion in latest fiscal report

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The latest state budget report for the current fiscal year shows an allocation of approximately KD 1.281 billion for the Ministry of Public Works, an increase of KD 342 million compared to last year's budget.

According to the report, the budget allocations are as follows:

- KD 320.263 million for employee compensation, including salaries, cash bonuses, and in-kind benefits for Ministry of Public Works' employees
- KD 852.5 million for capital expenditures, covering projects and works implemented by the ministry
- KD 90.199 million for operational expenses necessary to run the ministry's op-

erations and provide required goods and services

- KD 18.237 million for other expenses and transfers, including rentals for natural assets and miscellaneous costs.

Meanwhile, the board of directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has set April 14 as the date for opening bids for the project to construct and maintain roads and stormwater drainage systems in northwest Jahra.

The project aims to provide infrastructure services and an internal road network, connecting it to the main network by creating roads capable of accommodating future traffic volumes in light of anticipated urban expansion.

The project is expected to reduce traffic congestion, facilitate movement to and from the area, and improve road efficiency.

No shortage, ample food supply in Kuwait markets

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: While global markets face severe shortages of goods, from oil to food and manufacturing supplies, due to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the resulting slowdown in supply chains, Kuwait defies this bleak trend by appearing abundant with goods and products, reports Al-Rai daily.

Anyone observing the markets and cooperative societies will notice that their shelves are full, with no shortages. The situation applies not only to long-life goods, some of which are stored for up to a year, but also to perishable products like fruits and vegetables, which have a shelf life of only one to two days, indicating a smooth flow of supply.

Notably, several fruit and vegetable markets have organized extensive promotions and discounts on their products, which reflects the government's ability to maintain a steady supply of goods and stabilize prices under challenging circumstances, especially given the surge in global shipping and transportation costs.

Local markets appear to be operating normally, with numerous signs advertising special offers on most products, which reinforces consumer confidence that there are no shortages as refrigerated trucks continue delivering food supplies.

Imported

Official data indicates a steady flow of imported land shipments of food. Since February 28, 25,000 trucks have crossed from Saudi Arabia into Kuwait, in addition to local production in Wafra, Abdali, Kabd, and Sulaibiya. This has strengthened the Kuwaiti market's ability to maintain an uninterrupted supply of various goods, despite the war entering its sixth week.

It is clear that the government is following a comprehensive logistics plan, supported by regional measures implemented by Saudi Arabia, which established land transport routes to secure supplies for the Gulf states through a network linking Red Sea ports and border crossings.

During a field tour, which included several wholesale and central markets, officials confirmed that the current price increases are not due to weak demand but result from competition amid a stable supply.

In this regard, an official at a retail outlet in Hawally stated that the markets are experiencing a normal daily flow of fruits and vegetables, whether from local production in Wafra, Abdali, Kabd, and Sulaibiya, or from imports arriving from Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Egypt. The current price increases aim to stimulate sales given the ample supply.

Furthermore, an official at a central market in Salmiya said the market is witnessing noticeable stability in stocks, with sufficient quantities of various items available.

He explained that prices are currently competitive, with some even lower than in previous periods due to abundant production and multiple import sources. The market is operating normally, with trucks entering daily and regularly through land border crossings, which supports price stability and prevents any shortages.

In addition, an official at the wholesale market in Dajeej confirmed that traders are offering discounts and direct deals to consumers and cooperative societies, due to the abundant supply and the increased number of suppliers.

He noted that competition among suppliers has positively affected prices, especially for perishable products such as fruits and vegetables.

Decree appoints Amiri Diwan officials

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): An Amiri Decree issued on Tuesday appointing Tamam Meshal Mubarak

Al-Sabah and Salman Abdullah Al-Ghanem as Amiri Diwan Undersecretaries.

Ban on more than KD10 cash transactions; use e-payment

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Al-Boodai issued a decision on Monday prohibiting cash transactions worth over KD 10 in several activities and forcing relevant entities to use banking channels and e-payment methods.

This Ministerial Decision No. 32 of 2026 applies to institutions and companies operating in the areas of health institutes, salons for men, women and children, sports clubs, medical pest and rodent control firms, and public health pesticide import, export and storage, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement to KUNA.



Osama Boodai

Elaborating, the ministry explained that Article I of the Ministerial Decision stipulates that no cash transactions valued at over KD 10 may be conducted when concluding contracts, selling commodities or offering services.

Article II states that penalties enshrined in the Decree-Law 10/1979 shall be applied to lawbreakers, it said, citing shutdown and legal action as penalties.

UAE envoy hails Kuwait forces, says we will thwart aggressor

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Matar Al-Neyadi affirmed that Emirati-Kuwaiti relations represent an exceptional and deeply rooted model of genuine brotherhood, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He emphasized that the two brotherly countries have always stood, and will continue to stand, united in all circumstances, particularly during times of challenge, which only strengthen their bonds and unity.

In a press statement issued recently, the UAE Ambassador reiterated the UAE's strong condemnation of the ongoing Iranian aggression against Kuwait and its vital infrastructure, stressing

that these heinous attacks will not undermine Kuwait's resilience and security.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi expressed his appreciation and pride in the Kuwaiti Army, Police, National Guard, and Kuwait Fire Force, saying, "You are the loyal men we are proud of. Your high level of preparedness and your ability to professionally counter attacks reflect your competence in defending the nation and its resources."

He praised the combined efforts of the Kuwaiti Army, the National Guard, the Ministry of Interior, and the Kuwait Fire Force.

Ambassador Al-Neyadi said, "We are certain that we will defeat the brutal Iranian aggression, and we will soon celebrate our victory."

He prayed that God protect the UAE, Kuwait, and all the Gulf states from all harm and evil.



Al-Neyadi



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah is presented a plaque by Eng. Mohammad Al-Jalawi.

Farwaniya Governor commends efforts of Bachelors Committee

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received Rapporteur of the Bachelors Committee and member of the Central Operations Team at the Farwaniya Governorate Municipality, Eng. Mohammad Al-Jalawi, at his office in the governorate headquarters on Tuesday morning.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, Eng. Al-Jalawi reviewed during the meeting the prominent efforts and activities of the Bachelors Committee, as well as the role of the Central Operations Team in following up on field complaints and addressing violations.

He highlighted the major challenges facing work in some areas, especially

those experiencing a high volume of reports and complaints.

Meanwhile, the governor commended the efforts of the Bachelors Committee and the Central Operations Team, praising their role in enhancing oversight and improving services.

He emphasized the importance of continuing and intensifying their work, particularly in areas with a high number of complaints, to help improve service quality and achieve an organized and safe environment.

At the end of the meeting, Eng. Al-Jalawi presented a commemorative plaque to the governor in appreciation of his ongoing support and follow-up on the work of the committee and the team.

US threats, Iranian win? ... Baffled globe on brink

"U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump threatened to escalate American attacks on Iran if the Strait of Hormuz was not reopened by Tuesday. Tehran responded by warning both the United States and Israel that it would turn the region into "hell" for their forces if those threats were carried out," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"European officials and analysts say reopening the strait by military force is unrealistic, arguing it is more likely to happen through international pressure, such as coordinated political and diplomatic measures against Iran, potentially backed by a United Nations resolution and the imposition of sanctions.

"As for the war in the region, questions have been raised about why the Iranian Air Force has not put up any major resistance against U.S. forces. One explanation is that Iran's air force, once among the strongest in the Middle East before 1979, declined after the revolution. Western restrictions limited Iran's ability to acquire new aircraft, leaving it reliant on aging American-made planes, some around 50 years old, and a smaller number of Soviet-era aircraft.

"Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote an article published in the American magazine "Foreign Affairs," possibly at the behest of his government. His words reflect a mix of arrogance and hope for a peace agreement. He stated, "Iran has emerged victorious from the war waged against it by the United States and Israel. Despite the assassination of its top officials, Iranians have achieved a historic victory in resisting their adversaries. The axis of resistance has not collapsed; rather, it has been revitalized. The time has come to reach an agreement with the United States that would lift American sanctions on Iran and open the door to economic cooperation between the two countries. This opportunity should be seized to end 47 years of hostility. Iran, the United States, and the Gulf states can cooperate on energy projects, and Washington should commit to funding the reconstruction of areas damaged in the 2025 and 2026 wars in Iran, compensate civilians for their losses, and declare a permanent non-aggression pact between Iran and the United States."

"One might ask why Iran doesn't surrender despite its significant military losses? Analysts suggest that Tehran is not fighting to achieve victory, but to prevent its adversary from realizing its political objectives. Iran understands that any major disruption to oil markets or threat to vital maritime routes could quickly affect the global economy, thereby creating international pressure to halt or de-escalate the war. From this perspective, Tehran does not need decisive military victories as much as it needs to sustain a level of tension that makes the continuation of the war costly for all parties.

"In my opinion, this is flawed thinking. The priority should be to focus on Iran as a country, develop it, protect it from risks, and open a new chapter with the world, rather than allow its destruction or risk its annihilation.

"We hope to strengthen the regional security system of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and we strongly support the formation of a confederation of GCC states, similar to the European Union, to coordinate defense and economic policies while each state retains its internal and external sovereignty. We urge that no additional Arab countries be admitted to the GCC or the proposed confederation, as this could undermine the Council, a concern we have previously raised."

Also:

"The League of Arab States is one of the oldest regional organizations. It was established in 1945 to promote political and economic cooperation among Arab states. However, its role in addressing escalating regional crises has often been questionable, particularly in light of Iran's repeated attacks on some member states," Kuwaiti writer **Emad Khamis Al-Aqab** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The League suffers from limitations that make it appear incapable of taking decisive action against these attacks, raising doubts about its ability to fulfill its founding objectives amid regional and international changes. Its limited effectiveness stems largely from its organizational structure, which requires consensus among all member states.

"This means that every member state must agree before a decision can be adopted, making it difficult to act when political and economic interests diverge. For instance, differing positions on Iranian policy among member states hinder the adoption of firm and unified measures.

"The League of Arab States lacks the executive mechanisms needed to enforce its decisions. While it can issue statements of condemnation or calls for negotiations, it does not have the military or economic power to implement them effectively.

"This weakness is especially evident

regarding Iranian aggression, where the League limits itself to issuing condemnations without translating them into concrete action. The international relations and external alliances of member states heavily influence their positions within the League.

"Some Arab states share strong economic or political ties with Iran, making them reluctant to take firm stances against it. This conflict of interests further complicates the political landscape and deepens the League's ineffectiveness. Its ability to act is also affected by changes in the international system and the declining global attention to Arab issues.

"Major powers, such as the United States and Russia, have their own interests in the region, creating overlaps that limit the League's ability to act independently. Consequently, the Arab League faces organizational and political constraints that hinder its capacity to address Iranian aggression effectively.

"However, opportunities exist to improve this situation by reforming the League's organizational structure and enhancing cooperation among member states to achieve its objectives more efficiently. While Arab states have differences, shared threats turn slogans into reality and reveal true positions.

"May God protect the people of the Gulf from all harm."

□ □ □

"As a Kuwaiti citizen, I feel proud and honored to belong to this blessed land and to be part of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which over the decades has proven to be a safety valve for the peoples of the region and a pillar of stability at a time when crises and wars are devastating many countries worldwide," Kuwaiti lawyer **Dr. Abdullah Al-Turajji** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"We in the Gulf states, thank God, enjoy a great blessing, the value of which is only truly appreciated by those who have lost it - the blessing of security and safety.

"Amid escalating tensions and attacks, and despite the increasing rhetoric of threats, the Gulf states remain a model of wisdom, prudence, and the prioritization of reason over violence.

"The balanced stances we witness today from the leaders of the GCC states confirm that this region is guided by statesmen who fully understand the weight of the historical responsibility entrusted to them. These leaders have neither rushed into war despite provocations nor succumbed to empty slogans. Instead, they placed the interests of their people and the stability of their nations above all else.

"Our leaders have chosen the path of wisdom and restraint, recognizing that wars do not build homelands, nor do they secure a sustainable future.

"The leaders of the GCC countries understand that a nation's true strength lies in its stability, its ability to protect its people, preserve its resources, and maintain constant readiness to defend its sovereignty and dignity.

"As GCC citizens, we take pride in belonging to countries led by wise leaders who look beyond immediate emotional reactions and understand that development and stability are the true foundations for building the future.

"Thanks to this vision, the Gulf states have been able to continue their path of development and progress despite several challenges.

"In light of these complex regional circumstances, we are increasingly convinced that wise leadership is one of God's greatest blessings upon our homelands.

"Our pride in belonging to Kuwait and the Gulf is therefore not a fleeting sentiment, but a deep-rooted belief that this land is guided by statesmen who know when to act decisively and when to exercise wisdom to safeguard their nations and their people.

"In times of Dr. Abdullah Al-Turajji major crises and critical junctures, true leadership is revealed, and the character of those entrusted with the responsibility of their homelands comes to light.

"God has blessed the Arabian Gulf states with wise leaders who, in every circumstance, prove their ability to make sound decisions and uphold the security of their people and the stability of their nations.

"Experience has shown that the strength of the Gulf states lies not only in their material resources but also in their leadership. They manage crises with prudence and foresight, combining firmness with wisdom to safeguard their nations and preserve the dignity of their people.

"We have full confidence that, with God's guidance, these leaders will overcome challenges and safeguard the future of the region.

"We, the citizens of the GCC, take pride in you and value your leadership.

"I pray that God protects the Gulf states, maintains their blessings of security and stability, and preserves their leaders as a source of strength for their people and a pillar of unity and stability for the region."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photo
KNG Chief Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends oath-taking ceremony of Qatar's Military College graduates.

KNG Chief tells new graduates to contribute to Guard success

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Mubarak Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the oath-taking ceremony of a number of officers graduating from Ahmad bin Mohammad Military College in Qatar.

In a press statement on Tuesday, the National Guard said Sheikh Mubarak congratulated the officers on their graduation, urging them to commence their duties and contribute to the Guard's ongoing success.

He affirmed that the officers' attainment of advanced ranks reflects their excellence and distinction, noting that the National Guard spares no effort in academically qualifying its personnel by sending them to leading military academic institutions.

MoHE efficient crisis tackling

All-out help for students

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education Dr. Bader Al-Busairi said the ministry dealt with the repercussions of the current crisis from the outset through a professional approach, which includes rapid response and meticulous follow-up.



Dr. Al-Busairi

In a statement to Kuwait TV on Monday, Al-Busairi affirmed this was achieved by mobilizing national staff to quickly determine the number of Kuwaitis studying abroad and in the country, their locations and academic circumstances. He said this led to the creation of an accurate database that served as the basis for immediate action and overcoming challenges.

He cited the differences in academic calendars and systems among the countries hosting Kuwait students as one of the difficult chal-

lenges. "The start dates of semesters and attendance requirements vary from one country to another. The ministry, in cooperation with the cultural attachés, managed this discrepancy with flexibility by distributing efforts according to regions and countries and communicating directly with universities through official channels to ensure studies without interruption," he revealed.

He stressed that the cultural attachés played a vital role during this period, not only in monitoring academic matters but also in conveying a comprehensive picture of students' situations to the ministry and coordinating with universities to obtain exceptions under emergency circumstances. He said many universities agreed to postpone attendance, waive attendance requirements, and provide access to recorded lectures. He was quick to add that other universities adhered to attendance requirements due to visa procedures and immigration regulations. He added that the ministry dealt with each case, given the varying circumstances of students and differences between universities and academic programs. He stated that this approach resulted in the development of customized solutions for each student.

Regarding students who are currently in Kuwait and were unable to travel, he said the ministry advised those who could return to their place of study to do so as soon as possible, particularly in countries where in-person classes were still being held.

MoJ real estate auctions see 11.4% rise in Q1 '26

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: During the first quarter of 2026, the Ministry of Justice conducted several real estate auctions to resolve outstanding legal disputes. Although a number of properties were offered, most auctions were postponed for various reasons, reports Al-Jarida daily.

A total of 41 properties in different sectors were sold for KD 34.5 million, compared to KD 31 million in the same period last year, marking an 11.4 percent increase.

In March, several auctions were held, but most were delayed due to factors such as the regional situation and uncertainty surrounding the ongoing military conflict. During the month, seven residential properties and two investment properties were sold for a total of KD 5.4 million, up 8.4 percent from the initial price of KD 5.01 million. Residential properties alone accounted for KD 3.09 million, a 3.2 percent rise over the initial price of KD 2.99 million.

Regarding the most prominent sales in the residential sector during March, a 500-square-meter house in Al-Masayel was sold for KD 425,000, marking a 14.8 percent increase over the initial price of KD 370,000. Another 500-square-meter house in Sabah Al-Nasser sold for KD 303,000, up 3.7 percent from its initial price of KD 292,000.

Two investment properties in Mahboula were sold for a combined total of KD 2.34 million. The first building, measuring 840 square meters, sold for KD 1.19 million, an 18.55 percent increase from KD 1.008 million. The second building, measuring 807 square meters, sold for KD 1.15 million, up 14.08 percent from KD 1.008 million.

The Ministry of Justice's real estate auctions attract a diverse group of interested parties, including investors and buyers seeking properties at reasonable prices. These auctions feature a selection of distinguished real estate assets offered as part of the enforcement of court-ordered judgments.

Participants are required to pay at least one-fifth of the property's price via a certified cheque or bank letter made payable to the ministry's Execution Department. Successful bidders must then deposit the full approved amount, along with any associated expenses and registration fees, at the time of the auction.

3 MEWRE tenders on hold

By **Mohammad Ghanem**
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has suspended the procedures for three tenders issued by the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy.

The decision was taken on April 1, after the Grievance Committee asked CAPT to submit copies of all documents and information related to the tenders, based on appeals submitted by other bidders.

The committee stated that it is currently reviewing the appeals to reach a decision, which necessitates suspending the procedures related to the appealed decision until the matter is resolved.

Other Voices

The Shahbandar, the Qubanchi and Tehran

HE was asked to prove his patriotism, and when he inquired how, they told him to burn his fingers. He burned nine, and the fire went out. He asked if that was enough, and they replied, "No," because he had not burned the tenth finger.

This illustrates that those with ill intentions cannot be satisfied with proof of patriotism, whether one is Sunni, Shia, or communist.

Treason knows no sect. We witnessed acts of treason during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, committed by traitors from various affiliations. This can occur in any society.

Those who demand that members of a particular group prove their loyalty to their homeland, rather than to Iran, fail to understand that such a demand is unrealistic.

Nothing is easier than declaring loyalty to one's homeland and hostility toward others. The truth, however, lies hidden in the heart.

Logic allows a person to lie if telling the truth would endanger their life. Thus, the silent one may be more loyal to their homeland than the one who writes articles or composes poems in praise.

Moreover, no segment of society should be exempt from proving its patriotism, even if such a demand is unreasonable. Belonging to a sect, tribe, gender, or ethnicity does not guarantee absolute loyalty to the homeland, nor does its absence imply disloyalty. It is best to avoid such unreasonable demands and assume that everyone is loyal to their homeland unless proven otherwise, in which case they should be condemned and held accountable.

Kuwait has previously witnessed several cases of political allegiance to foreign powers, which were handled wisely, with some individuals deported to the countries they had pledged loyalty to. These individuals later realized that their allegiance was misguided and made significant efforts to return to their homeland.

Historically, those loyal to Iran solely as a religious authority have been a minority. The Najaf religious establishment traditionally held the greatest influence and received the Khums (religious tax). Iran's influence grew after the Khomeini revolution, blurring the lines between political and sectarian loyalties. This caused confusion, increased controversy, and a higher likelihood of mistakes, along with the mistaken belief that Iran was the motherland that would elevate the status of Shiites in their own countries and protect them in times of need. In reality, this was entirely wrong, leading to the exposure of cells, gangs, and groups that intended harm.

The dilemma these individuals refuse to acknowledge is that Kuwait, as a homeland and a nation, is like health. We only appreciate its value after losing it. Many experienced this during the months of the Iraqi occupation.

A homeland is like a mother; its worth becomes clear only when it is lost. Those who declared, openly or secretly, their allegiance to Iran, for any reason, are merely tools used by Iran to betray their own countries.

The well-known Iraqi politician Izzat Shahbandar, a Shiite activist and former leader in the Dawa Party, said he fought with Iranian forces in the 1980-1988 war and lived in Iran for a year and a half. He described the experience as one filled with humiliation and contempt for Iraqis. Shahbandar went to Iran to fight against his own country, but, as he recounted in a YouTube interview, he and his fellow Iraqis were insulted, spat upon, and had their passports thrown in their faces. They were denied services and privileges granted to Iranian citizens, and even their children were refused admission to schools.

The Iraqi Shiite cleric Ahmed al-Qubanchi, from a prominent Najafi family, also fought with Iran against his homeland, Iraq. He emerged from the war paralyzed in one arm. Because of his reformist views, which displeased Iran, he was arrested and imprisoned for years. His past and military service did not protect him; instead, Iran treated him as an act of "betrayal."

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UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Sheikh Jarrah receives letter from Palestine

UAE president, Kuwait FM discuss regional escalation, bilateral ties

ABU DHABI, April 7, (KUNA): UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan discussed Monday with Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the escalating military situation in the region and its serious repercussions on regional and international security and stability.

In a statement, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the talks took place during a meeting held on the occasion of the minister's official visit to the UAE, in the presence of UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

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

During the meeting, the Kuwaiti minister conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Sheikh Mohamed, along with their wishes for his continued health and well-being and for further progress and prosperity for the UAE and its people.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a letter from his Palestinian counterpart, Dr. Farseen Shaheen.

The letter touched on the bilateral ties between the two countries as well as the latest regional developments.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the letter was handed to the Acting Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Aziz Al-Daihani, by Palestine Ambassador to the country, Rami Tahboub.

PAAET, EPA forge lab partnership to boost environmental research

Collaboration strengthens air and water pollution analysis

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam received the acting Director General of Environment Public Authority (EPA) Nouf Behbehani, accompanied by Dr. Lujain Al-Sayegh.

The field visit aimed to explore PAAET's capabilities, particularly its central laboratories, and to discuss potential avenues for joint cooperation between the two entities in light of current circumstances.

The visit included a tour of several laboratories specializing in measuring air and water pollution levels. The delegation was briefed on monitoring and analysis mechanisms and the technologies used to track environmental indicators.

The delegation also discussed the possibility of benefiting from the advanced technical and technological



PAAET photo

capabilities of PAAET's laboratories to support plans for addressing emerging issues and enhancing institutional preparedness.

Director of the Research, Consulting, and Innovation Department Dr. Saleh Al-Hajri, Director of the Public Relations Department Shaikha Al-

Azmi, and Dr. Nabil Al-Khalifi also participated in the tour.

The participants emphasized the importance of integration among government entities through the exchange of expertise and resources, which will enhance institutional performance and unify efforts to address challenges.

Both sides stressed the need to continue strengthening joint cooperation in technical, technological, and training areas and to implement the provisions of the joint agreement in a manner that serves the national interest and aligns with the directives of the Council of Ministers.

Women's Housing Panel accelerates allocations to ensure social security

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Chairperson of the Women's Housing Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), Sheikha Bibi Al-Yousef, affirmed the committee's commitment to its humanitarian and national role by distributing 20 rental housing units weekly, every Wednesday, to eligible women who meet the required

criteria, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Yousef stated that the committee is keen to continue the distribution process despite the exceptional circumstances Kuwait is facing, emphasizing its national and humanitarian responsibility toward Kuwaiti women and its commitment to ensuring their housing to support family stability.

KRCS denies false school donation claims

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) denied claims circulating on some social media platforms about a message allegedly requesting donations for the renovation of schools outside Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In an official statement, KRCS insisted that the message contained inaccurate and misleading information, and expressed strong condemnation of the circulated content, which is offensive to KRCS members.

It categorically denied the message's content, asserting that the details and statements being circulated are false and have no connection to discussions held within KRCS' institutional framework.

It explained that, as a member of the International Red Cross and Red Cres-

cent Movement, it receives numerous appeals and reports from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and its member national societies. These appeals and reports are reviewed solely to stay informed of developments and are received through official channels of the International Movement. They do not, in any way, constitute a decision to respond to, adopt, or approve them.

KRCS urged everyone to be accurate and not be swayed by rumors, stressing the importance of obtaining information from official sources.

It confirmed that it will take legal action against anyone who publishes or promotes these misleading claims that harm the reputation of Kuwaiti humanitarian work and the employees and subsidiaries of KRCS.

US revokes Afshar's residency

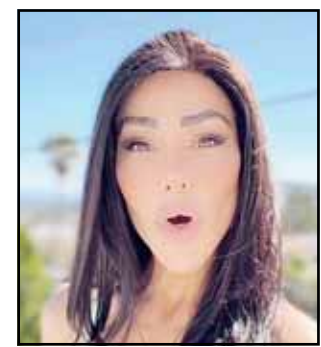
LA luxury ends for Soleimani's niece

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: Hamidah Soleimani Afshar, the niece of Qassem Soleimani – an Iranian military officer who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) – lived "a life of luxury under the lights of Los Angeles", reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Excessive luxury marked the daily lives of Hamidah Soleimani and her daughter. They lived in absolute luxury, combining a lavish lifestyle in America while promoting the policies of the Iranian regime.

Deleted Instagram posts showed a lavish lifestyle that starkly contradicts the political rhetoric of Hamidah, turning this 'American luxury' into a battleground between reality and pretense.

Political agendas were never far from their lives. Hamidah faced accusations of in-



Hamidah Soleimani Afshar, niece of Qassem Soleimani



Fateme Ardeshir-Larjani, daughter of Ali Larjani

citing violence against American military installations and describing Washington as the Great Satan, making their presence a security risk and a blatant challenge to local laws.

A final decision settled the matter on April 2, when US Secretary of State Marco Rubio revoked her permanent residency. This prompted the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to begin proceedings to detain and deport them, permanently barring them from entering the United States of America.

The American actions are not limited to them, as they include a campaign targeting the relatives of Iranian officials, including the daughter of Ali Larjani.



Luxury lifestyle lands Soleimani relative in ICE crosshairs.

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LOCAL

TEC beach project OK'd

KD12m entertainment hub underway

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Technical Committee at the Municipal Council, chaired by Munira Al-Amir, on Tuesday approved the request of the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) to amend the decision of the council regarding the Egaila Beach project (Beach Seven).

This is one of the important projects that the committee is fo-

cus on, as it is a considered a huge leap in waterfront development.

In December last year, TEC launched the project in collaboration with Aayan Real Estate Company, as part of a strategic partnership aimed at revitalizing the site and transforming it into a comprehensive entertainment destination. It covers an area measuring around 60,000 square meters, with a waterfront stretching around 450 meters and an investment of about KD10 million to KD12 million.

It includes a full range of facilities catering to diverse needs: 27 restaurants and cafés with sea

views, a health club, indoor and outdoor recreational areas for children, a water park and a multi-purpose events hall.

It is in line with the commitment of the State to support the tourism and entertainment sectors, and the objectives of the Kuwait Vision 2035.

Moreover, the committee also approved the request of the Ministry of Finance to expand and develop the Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC) bus station along the route next to Al-Adami station.

It agreed as well to rectify the material error in the description of a real estate plot in Hawally.



PM Diwan photo

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday.

Continued from Page 1

Iran ... 'broken,

For a long time, we have witnessed restless protests against the dire conditions in which Iranians live. This will be a primary factor in the regime's collapse, especially given the devastating impact of the current war on state institutions.

I can say with confidence that the Iranian regime is dying.

Considering the social and cultural consequences of the mullahs' rule over the past five decades, and analyzing the results of discriminatory policies targeting ethnic and sectarian groups in Iran, there is no doubt that the new Iran will experience waves of separatism.

Nerves fray

He also reminded the public about the approaching deadline for the exceptional grace period to surrender unlicensed firearms, ammunition and explosives, which ends at the close of business on Wednesday.

He stressed that no legal action will be taken against those who comply within the deadline, while strict enforcement will follow afterward.

He added that the ministry commends all those who have already complied, indicating that such actions reflect responsible public awareness and a shared commitment to maintain security and stability, as well as support national efforts to safeguard the community.

On the other hand, the Public Relations and Media Department at the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) emphasized the importance of not gathering or going out to watch drones when the sirens are activated.

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Al-Mashmoum, an official from the department, called on everyone to adhere to the instructions and guidelines issued by the relevant authorities in dealing with such situations.

He pointed out that some people go outside or the rooftops immediately upon hearing the sirens out of curiosity, reiterating the danger of this behavior and the necessity of ensuring that doors and windows are securely closed, while maintaining a safe distance.

He stated that shrapnel and foreign objects from missile and drone debris may fall while burning or as solid objects, posing a threat to lives and properties.

In another development, Al-Mashmoum disclosed that the department received eight routine reports, all of which were addressed.

He indicated that all centers and sectors are operating according to the approved emergency plans and protocols in coordination with the relevant authorities.

He stressed that the emergency teams are fully prepared to deal with various reports, urging the people to ask for help when needed and to clear the way for emergency vehicles to enable them to perform their tasks efficiently and quickly.

Furthermore, Jahra Hospital Director Dr. Ahmed Khaja affirmed that the hospital is operating at full capacity round the clock, providing healthcare services to patients in all departments.

Khaja revealed to Kuwait TV that the operations of evening clinics resumed this week, after their suspension during Ramadan.

He said the hospital was among the first responders to the recent Jahra incident, fulfilling its role as the first line of defense with efficiency and professionalism. He confirmed that all six patients were discharged in good condition, indicating two were treated at the scene and four at the hospital.

He stressed that operations are running smoothly and normally, with no pressure or surge in the number of patients. He added that all hospital facilities are operating as usual, with morning clinics continuing to deliver full services, alongside the evening clinics.

He stated that medical wards are functioning normally, medications are dispensed without difficulties, and the laboratory, radiology and emergency departments are operating at full capacity as well.

On the other hand, the head of the hospital's medical staff, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Shammari, asserted that the medical and nursing teams are fully capable of meeting demands, emphasizing the Ministry of Health is fully prepared to handle any emergency.

Al-Shammari disclosed that most of the patients received recently suffered minor injuries and cuts, along with some ear-related conditions caused by loud noises, indicating these injuries are expected under the current circumstances. He said these patients were

discharged in good health.

He reassured the citizens and residents that the health situation remains stable, adding that work is proceeding normally in all departments under the continuous monitoring of the ministry.

He urged the public not to be influenced by rumors or inaccurate information circulating on social media, underscoring the importance of relying on official sources for accurate updates.

In latest developments, Iranian officials on Tuesday urged young people to form human chains to protect power plants, as U.S. President Donald Trump warned that a "whole civilization will die tonight" if Tehran does not meet his latest deadline to agree to a deal that includes reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, airstrikes hit two bridges and a train station in Iran, and the U.S. struck military targets on the Iranian oil hub of Kharg Island. The attack marked the second time the island was hit by American forces.

Trump has extended previous deadlines but suggested the one set for 8 p.m. in Washington was final, and the rhetoric on both sides reached a fever pitch, leaving Iranians on edge. Trump threatened to destroy all of Iran's power plants and bridges if Tehran does not allow traffic to fully resume in the strait, through which a fifth of the world's oil transits in peacetime. Iran's president said 14 million people, including himself, have volunteered to fight.

It was not clear if the latest airstrikes were linked to Trump's threat to attack bridges. At least two of the targets were connected to Iran's rail network, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israeli warplanes struck bridges and railways in Iran.

Tehran fired on Israel and Saudi Arabia, prompting the temporary closure of a major bridge.

While Iran cannot match the sophistication of U.S. and Israeli weaponry or their dominance in the air, its chokehold on the strait is roiling the world economy and raising the pressure on Trump both at home and abroad to find a way out of the standoff.

Officials involved in diplomatic efforts said talks were ongoing, but Iran has rejected the latest American proposal, and it was unclear if a deal would come in time to head off Trump's threatened attacks. World leaders and experts warned that strikes as destructive as Trump threatened could constitute a war crime.

"A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again," if a deal isn't reached, Trump said in a post Tuesday morning, while keeping open the possibility of an off-ramp, saying that "maybe something revolutionarily wonderful can happen."

Earlier, Iranian official Alireza Rahimi issued a video message calling on "all young people, athletes, artists, students and university students and their professors" to form human chains around power plants.

Iranians have formed human chains in the past around nuclear sites at times of heightened tensions with the West. Some images of people surrounding power plants were posted by local Iranian media Tuesday, though it was unclear how widespread the practice was or if the photos were simply brief shows of government-encouraged defiance.

President Masoud Pezeshkian posted on X that 14 million Iranians had answered campaigns urging people to volunteer to fight - and said he would join them - while a Revolutionary Guard general urged parents to send their children to man checkpoints.

The Guard, meanwhile, warned that Iran would "deprive the U.S. and its allies of the region's oil and gas for years" and expand its attacks across the Gulf region if Trump carries out his threat.

Drain the

particularly the electricity and water networks, while maintaining the stability of both networks.

Hayat told the newspaper "the greater the conservation of fresh water throughout the year, the higher the strategic water reserves. It helps avoid operational measures that could negatively impact some people, especially during crises."

She pointed out that conserving electricity and water reduces the huge budget allocated by the State for subsidies, as electricity and water wastage is tantamount to squandering public funds. "Conservation does not mean deprivation or disregarding the well-being of citizens and residents. It means directing electricity and water services to proper channels according

to the actual needs of consumers. Conservation is a cooperative behavior in society. If every individual commits to conservation in their home, the impact will be clear and significant on a general level," she explained.

She stressed that saving fresh water leads to savings in the electricity used to produce water, hence, the savings are twofold in this case.

The ministry urged citizens and residents to strictly comply with the conservation mechanisms it established and are available on its official social media accounts, particularly regarding water leaks or any form of waste in electricity and water services.

This can be done by contacting the ministry through its hotline number 152, which operates round the clock, to report any instances of water leak or wastage.

The technical teams of the ministry will then address these issues immediately and take the necessary measures to mitigate the negative effects of resource waste and protect public funds.

Meanwhile, economist Hajjaj Boukhdour stated that "when vital sources such as electricity, water and fuel are targeted, conserving energy is not just a commendable individual act, as it is rather the reflection of the very nature of society itself. In times of crisis, a society is not tested by its outward expressions of concern, but by its capacity for self-discipline, which prevents external pressure from escalating into internal instability."

He emphasized that extravagance during times of hardship is not merely a behavioral flaw, but a failure to understand the interconnectedness of individual needs and community welfare and between private consumption and the cost of general scarcity. He asserted that conserving water, electricity and fuel is an act that transcends household management, encompassing a broader meaning: preserving resources, alleviating pressure on infrastructure, and preventing market panic from escalating into a drain that amplifies the economic and social impact of the crisis.

He pointed out that awareness is not about demanding one's full share in times of danger, as it is about recognizing the right of the community to expect moderation in addressing one's needs. "Nations are not only burdened by blows, but also by the mismanagement of their citizens when they exacerbate the effects of imposed hardships," he concluded.

Environmental activist Dr. Funees Al-Ajmi stressed the necessity of conserving electricity and water under all circumstances, especially given the brutal aggression the country is facing against its infrastructure, including power and water stations. "Preserving these resources is a national, religious and societal duty that leads to increased strategic reserves of these resources during the critical circumstances the country is experiencing," he added.

Al-Ajmi called on all segments of society to spread awareness on the importance of rationalizing electricity and water, "because our true religion urges this sound and upright approach. Everyone must play their role in this regard, in addition to the role of government agencies and the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, which is responsible for producing electricity and water. The quantities that are rationalized can undoubtedly be used in times of emergency. From this standpoint, it is imperative for us to rationalize and not to be wasteful and extravagant with the resources of the State, which are the resources of the citizen himself. Hence, every citizen or resident must rationalize the consumption of electricity and water."

No room

The Minister of Justice emphasized that this regulation reflects the state's commitment to managing matters related to names and lineage within a clear legal framework that balances individual rights with the public interest, contributing to the protection of identity, preservation of the family structure, and the strengthening of social stability.

The decree-law gives full jurisdiction to the Lineage and Name Correction Claims Committee. It is the sole authority responsible for reviewing requests related to proving or disproving direct and indirect lineage, correcting or changing names, and adding or removing titles.

Previously, jurisdiction is shared between the courts and the Births and Deaths Registration Committee at the Ministry of Health, leading to overlapping functions and inconsistent decisions.

The decree-law eliminates the courts' jurisdiction over indirect lineage claims and mandates that they refer all pending cases to the relevant committee, depending on the circumstances.

It also obligates the courts to refer appeals against judgments issued in these cases to the committee for investigation. These appeals must be returned to the courts within three months, along with a detailed report on the results of investigations.

It abolishes the jurisdiction of the Births and Deaths Registration Committee, as stipulated in Law No. 36/1969, regarding requests to change or correct the first name of children under six years old. Requests to change or correct names fall under the jurisdiction of the Lineage and Name Correction Claims Committee.

It restructures the committee to ensure expertise and specialization, including the director of the Family Affairs Prosecution Office as a member, along with a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry of Planning representation stipulated in the existing law is removed, which entails strengthening the legal and technical aspects of the committee's work.

The Grievance Committee is restructured, limiting its membership to judges only and eliminating the Ministry of Interior representation.

The decree-law states that the decisions of the committee are final and not subject to appeal once the objection period expires or if the decision is is-

sued on the same objection, in order to ensure legal stability and expedite the resolution of disputes.

For claims on establishing or denying direct lineage to be accepted in court, the application must first be submitted to the Lineage Claims and Name Correction Committee for investigation. This expands the provisions of the previous law, while reinforcing the committee's role as a crucial step before resorting to the courts.

The decree-law authorizes the committee to utilize DNA fingerprinting and other modern scientific methods to verify lineage claims, thereby, contributing to accurate results, which are based on reliable scientific principles.

It introduces detailed controls for changing or correcting names. It prohibits changing a personal name more than once and that the new name must be written in Arabic, should be a single word, not identical to the name of the father, son or paternal brother, not violate public order or morals, not demeaning to the bearer's dignity or cause him embarrassment, and must be socially acceptable.

It includes restrictions on changing or correcting a given name or surname, adding a new surname or deleting an existing one. As a general rule, this is prohibited, but there are certain exceptions as follows:

- If the name or surname is present or absent in official documents,
- A final judgment was issued establishing or denying lineage,
- Official documents proving the name or surname are forged,

■ Applicant's lineage matches that of someone with the same name or surname in their official documents.

Regarding fees, the decree-law stipulates an increase in fees for name correction or change, appeals and objections from KD5 to KD50.

It introduces a fee of KD150 for applications to establish or deny indirect lineage, stipulating that applications will not be registered until the fees are paid, with exemptions granted to those unable to pay according to the regulations.

On the other hand, the decree-law criminalizes the provision of false statements, despite knowing they are false, to the Lineage and Name Correction Claims Committee, Appeals Committee or the competent court when such a dispute is referred to it. This improves the credibility of the procedures and protects the rights of all parties.

It authorizes the electronic notification of the committee's decisions to concerned parties, a step aimed at facilitating and expediting procedures and keeping pace with the digital transformation of government services.

This project is part of the modernization of the legal system for addressing lineage and names issues, as well as problems that emerged due to the implementation of the existing law, by unifying the competent authority and establishing clear rules that guarantee the achievement of justice and the speed of adjudication of applications, while preserving the established legal and social principles.

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INTERNATIONAL



Florida Gov Ron DeSantis is seen before a roundtable discussion on college sports in the East Room of the White House on March 6 in Washington. (AP)

Governor DeSantis signs Florida law to label groups as terrorists

TAMPA, Fla., April 7, (AP): Gov Ron DeSantis signed a measure into law Monday that gives him along with other Florida leaders the ability to label groups as domestic or foreign terrorist organizations and expel state university students who support them.

The law, criticized by free speech advocates, allows a top official at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to designate a group as a domestic or foreign terrorist organization, with the governor and three other members of the Florida Cabinet approving or rejecting the designation. Besides the governor, the Cabinet is made up of the state attorney general, the chief financial officer and the agriculture

commissioner, all of whom are elected separately.

Once designated a terrorist organization, a group can be dissolved and it can no longer receive any state funding through school districts or state agencies. Universities also would have to report the status of expelled students attending on visas to US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"So this will help the state of Florida protect you. It'll help us protect your tax dollars," DeSantis said at a news conference in Tampa. "It'll help us protect things that should not be happening in the United States of America, but certainly shouldn't be happening in the free state of Florida."

Inspection finds dozens of violations of detention standards at major immigration camp in Texas

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): A recent inspection at the nation's largest immigration detention facility found dozens of violations of national standards that potentially exposed detainees to excessive force, disease, and other unsafe conditions.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Detention Oversight performed a congressionally mandated inspection over three days in February at Camp East Montana in El Paso, Texas, according to a report posted online by ICE this week.

The report documents 49 deficiencies, which it defines as violations of detention standards or policies, in areas including the use of force and restraints, security, medical care and more. It was the first inspection released by that office since Camp East Montana was hastily built and opened last summer.

The number of deficiencies at the camp is highly unusual. The most found in any other inspection by the oversight office so far this year was 13.

"This report is scathing. Camp East Montana gets an F," said attorney Randall Kallinen, who represents the family of a 36-year-old detainee who died there in January - one of at least three deaths since its opening. "It's very dangerous. Not only are the detainees in danger of excessive force, they are also in danger of improper or negligent medical care and mental health care, as well as danger from other detainees."

The report comes as ICE's parent agency, the Department of Homeland Security, is pausing the purchase of warehouses intended to house up to



A sign marks the entrance to a series of hardened tents at the Camp East Montana immigrant detention center in the desert at a U.S. Army base on the outskirts of El Paso, Texas on Feb 13. (AP)

7,000 or more immigrants at a single location. ICE data through Feb. 5 shows that Camp East Montana has been the largest detention site, housing nearly 3,000 detainees per day, the majority of whom are men who have not been convicted of crimes.

The inspection was conducted before ICE moved last month to replace the prime contractor, Acquisition Logistics LLC, amid intense scrutiny over conditions at Camp East Montana. The company had been awarded a contract worth up to \$1.3 billion to build and operate the camp, even though it had no experience in the field. The company and its president, Ken Wagner,

didn't respond to messages seeking comment.

A more experienced contractor, Amentum Services, took over operations at Camp East Montana on March 12. A federal database says its nearly \$453 million no-bid contract to provide detention, transportation and medical services runs through Sept. 30.

Detainees usually live at Camp East Montana for several days or weeks while they are awaiting deportation or before they are transferred elsewhere.

U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, an El Paso Democrat who has toured and met with detainees at the facility several times, said the inspection findings

were "a drop in the bucket of what is so profoundly wrong with that facility." She said detainees have consistently complained of medical neglect and other problems.

She said conditions have not improved and wonders whether that is by design to pressure detainees to agree to self-deport.

"ICE is completely uninterested in really creating any change or holding the contractor accountable," she said.

An ICE spokesperson said the new contract will result in improved medical care, more staff on site and stricter oversight by ICE.

The inspection report documented a series of safety lapses found during Acquisition Logistics' tenure. Camp staff didn't document whether they were conducting required checks to prevent self-harm and suicide, which 911 calls show have been a major problem at the facility.

Acquisition Logistics refused to provide information about staffing levels to ICE, which made it impossible to determine whether they were sufficient to maintain security, according to the report. In one instance, a detainee escaped when there was no staff assigned to watch the perimeter fences.

Inspectors found that tools and equipment were "unsecured and unaccounted for throughout the facility" and that staff did not maintain an accurate inventory of its ammunition.

Security guards who used and witnessed the use of force and restraints such as handcuffs failed to file written reports as required in some instances, the report said.

Georgia congressional election pits Fuller against Harris

Trump endorses Republican Hilton for California governor, reordering wide-open race

LOS ANGELES, April 7, (AP): US President Donald Trump has endorsed Republican Steve Hilton for California governor, reordering a crowded, wide-open race to lead the nation's most populous state.

Trump posted late Sunday on his social media platform Truth Social that he has known Hilton for years and called the conservative commentator "a truly fine man" who could turn around a state beset with notoriously high taxes. California, Trump wrote, "has gone to hell."

"With Federal help, and a Great Governor, like Steve Hilton, California can be better than ever before!" Trump added.

The endorsement - coming about a month before mail ballots go to voters in advance of the June 2 primary - will help Hilton coalesce conservative support in a race with no clear leader. However, Trump is widely unpopular in heavily Democratic California outside his conservative base and Trump's backing would become a liability if Hilton faces a Democrat in

the November election.

With a large field, Democrats have been fearful that a quirk in the state's unusual "top two" primary system could allow only two Republicans to reach the November general election ballot - Hilton and GOP rival Chad Bianco, the Riverside County sheriff. Trump's decision - a strong signal to undecided conservative voters - will make that outcome less likely by helping Hilton lure additional support.

Democratic consultant Paul Mitchell called Trump's decision "the safe bet" for Republicans. Rather than cling to a long shot hope that both Republicans reach the November ballot - or risk that both Hilton and Bianco fall short - Trump's blessing should consolidate support behind Hilton and allow him to emerge from a large primary field and reach November.

"Having a Republican on the top of the ticket is essential" to drive turnout in critical down-ballot races, with control of the U.S. House in play," Mitchell added. In an unpredictable, wide-open race, the smart play for the



Steve Hilton speaks during the California gubernatorial candidate debate on Feb 3, 2026, in San Francisco. (AP)

GOP is to "get one Republican on the ballot."

There are more than 50 candidates on the ballot - including eight estab-

lished Democrats and along with Hilton and Bianco, the two leading Republicans. An all-GOP general election is possible in California, which puts all

candidates on one primary ballot and only the top two vote-getters advance to November, regardless of party.

Polling in early February by the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California found the field had broken into two distinct groups, with Bianco, Hilton and three Democrats - U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell, former Rep. Katie Porter and billionaire climate activist Tom Steyer - in close competition, with other candidates trailing.

In a statement, Hilton, who hosted a Fox News show for six years and worked as an adviser to former British prime minister David Cameron, thanked Trump for his support and promised to grow jobs and bring down the state's punishing cost of living. "Together we can turn things around," Hilton said.

Republicans have not won a statewide election in California in two decades. Registered Democratic voters outnumber Republicans in the state by nearly 2-to-1.

Bianco - Hilton's chief GOP rival - said in a video posted on X that "This

race is about the future of California, not any one endorsement." He also posted a photo of Hilton hugging outgoing Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom at a 2016 charity event.

"I have repeatedly said that a Fox News host courting a president's endorsement will never win in California," Bianco said in the video.

Also:

ATLANTA: Republican Clay Fuller will try to close the deal with Georgia voters on Tuesday to succeed Marjorie Taylor Greene in Congress, while Democrat Shawn Harris seeks an upset.

Harris led a first round of voting on March 10 with 37% in the district that stretches across 10 counties from suburban Atlanta to Tennessee. While Fuller came in second in the 17-candidate all-party special election with 35%, the Republican candidates combined won nearly 60% of the vote. The 14th District is rated as the most Republican-leaning district in Georgia by the Cook Political Report.

Zelensky offers Easter pause on energy strikes as Russia drone kills 4

KYIV, Ukraine, April 7, (AP): Ukraine is proposing to Russia a pause in attacks on each other's energy infrastructure over the Orthodox Easter holiday, which will be observed this coming weekend, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

The offer was made through the United States, which has been mediating talks between delegations from Moscow and Kyiv, Zelensky said, as Russia's invasion stretches into a fifth year.

"If Russia is ready to stop strikes on our energy infrastructure, we will be ready to respond in kind," the Ukrainian leader said in a public address late Monday. "This proposal, conveyed through the Americans, has already been presented to the Russian side."

There was no immediate comment from Moscow about the proposal. Previous attempts to secure ceasefires have had little or no impact. Russian President Vladimir Putin unilaterally declared a 30-hour ceasefire last Easter, but each side accused the other of breaking it.

Russia effectively rejected a 30-day unconditional truce proposed last year by the US and Ukraine as a step toward peace, insisting instead on a compre-



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Services on April 7, a building is seen on fire after a Russian strike on Novhorod-Siverskyi, Chernihiv region, Ukraine. (AP)

hensive settlement, but Moscow has announced several short, unilateral ceasefires.

Zelensky said he doubted the Kremlin would take up his offer for the April 12 holiday pause as Russia is currently benefiting from higher oil prices

driven by the Iran war.

Zelensky is concerned that a prolonged US-Israeli war on Iran could erode America's support for Ukraine.

The US-led talks have made no progress on key issues, as Washington's attention is held by the Middle East conflict, and the Russian and Ukrainian armies remain locked in battle on the roughly 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line.

At the same time, Russia has pounded Ukraine's power grid in an effort to demoralize civilians while Kyiv's domestically produced long-range drones have repeatedly hit Russian oil infrastructure in a bid to dent Moscow's main export revenue.

"Ukraine's expanding long-range strike campaign against Russian oil infrastructure is exploiting overstretched Russian air defenses and significantly damaging Russian oil export capabilities," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said in an assessment late Monday.

"Russia's geographical size poses an enormous challenge to defend, especially with traditional air defense systems on which the Russians reportedly still rely to protect against Ukraine drone salvos," it added.



Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto, (front right), welcomes US Vice President JD Vance, (center), and second lady Usha Vance, (front left), as they arrive at Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport in Budapest, Hungary on April 7. (AP)

JD Vance arrives in Hungary days before election, hoping to boost Orbán's campaign

BUDAPEST, Hungary, April 7, (AP): US Vice President JD Vance arrived in Hungary's capital Tuesday in a bid to turn the tide of an election campaign where long-serving Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a close ally of President Donald Trump, is trailing in the polls.

Vance's two-day trip, where he is scheduled to hold an official visit with Orbán and later appear at one of his campaign rallies, was the clearest sign yet that the Trump administration was going all-in for an Orbán victory when Hungarians go to the polls on Sunday.

In power since 2010, Orbán is running for his fifth-straight term as prime minister. He and his nationalist-populist Fidesz party are facing their toughest race in two decades against a center-right challenger, the Tiszta party led by Péter Magyar, that could bring an end to Orbán's 16 years in power.

Long accused by critics of taking over Hungary's institutions, clamping down on press freedom and overseeing entrenched political corruption - charges he denies - Orbán has become an icon in the global far-right movement.

Trump has repeatedly endorsed Orbán's candidacy for reelection, and many in the Make America Great Again movement approve of the Hungarian leader's opposition to immigration, and

capture of the media and academia.

But with most independent polls showing a double-digit deficit for Fidesz among decided voters ahead of the April 12 vote, Orbán has sought to boost his profile by appearing publicly with his international admirers.

Vance and his wife Usha were greeted at the Budapest airport on Tuesday by Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó. The two men greeted one another warmly, and Szijjártó presented Usha Vance with a bouquet of flowers.

The vice president's visit wasn't the first sign of US support for Orbán.

Hungary, which has broken with most European Union countries by refusing to assist Ukraine with financial assistance or weapons to ward off Russia's full-scale invasion, has remained firmly committed to purchasing Russian energy despite EU efforts to wean off such supplies.

In November, Hungary received an exemption from US sanctions on Russian oil and gas after a White House meeting between Orbán and Trump.

In February, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited Budapest where he enthusiastically praised Orbán and the "person-to-person connection" he'd established with the president, telling Orbán: "President Trump is deeply

committed to your success because your success is our success."

Late last month, Orbán hosted dozens of allies from around Europe and beyond at the Hungarian iteration of the Conservative Political Action Conference, and at a meeting of the far-right Patriots for Europe party family, the third-largest group in the European Parliament.

Trump sent a video message to CPAC Hungary, saying Orbán had his "complete and total endorsement" and was a "fantastic guy."

The Trump administration's embrace of Orbán reflects its affinity for European far-right parties broadly, and the admiration, from Spain to France to Germany and the Netherlands, has been mutual.

Still, Trump's recent approach to foreign affairs has reverberated in Europe, with his actions over Greenland, Venezuela and Iran straining those relationships.

Orbán, however, has remained deferential, and has echoed Trump's false claims that he won the 2020 election. In comments to state radio just before Trump began his second term, Orbán said Democrats "took the presidency away from Donald Trump through fraud."

Sarkozy challenges conviction over alleged Libya funding

PARIS, April 7, (AP): France's former president Nicolas Sarkozy maintained his innocence on Tuesday, telling an appeal hearing in Paris that not a single cent from Libya helped fund his 2007 presidential campaign.

"I owe the truth to French people," Sarkozy told a three-judges panel during a hearing in the case that led him to spend 20 days in prison before being granted release pending appeal. "I'm innocent," he said.

Sarkozy, 71, is challenging his conviction after being found guilty in September of "criminal conspiracy." He was sentenced to five years in prison for his alleged part in a scheme to obtain funds from the government of late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in exchange for political and diplomatic favors.

Sarkozy has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and claims the allegations were politically motivated.

Tuesday's hearing focused on his role as a conservative presidential candidate and then president from 2007 to 2012. The 12-week appeal trial, which began last month, will re-examine all of the evidence and testimony related to him and nine co-defendants - including three former ministers.

Sarkozy stressed he championed Western military intervention in Libya in 2011 after Gadhafi's regime violently cracked down on anti-government protesters, when Arab Spring pro-democracy protests swept the region.

"I took the initiative, France took the initiative. Why? Because Gaddafi had no hold over me - financially, politically, or personally," Sarkozy said.



Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy and his wife Carla Bruni-Sarkozy leave the appeals court house in Paris, France on April 7 during his trial appealing a conviction involving illegal campaign funds from Libya. (AP)

Lam faces political hurdles

Vietnam elects Communist Party chief as president, echoing China's power structure

HANOI, Vietnam, April 7, (AP): Vietnam unanimously elected Communist Party General Secretary To Lam as president for a five-year term, consolidating his control over both the party and the state.

The move departs from Vietnam's tradition of shared leadership, in which the jobs have typically been held by different people, and echoes power structures in China under Xi Jinping and neighboring Laos.

It has been widely expected since Lam's reelection as Communist Party head in January, when observers noted that his consolidation of party authority positioned him to assume the presidency as well.

Former central bank governor Le Minh Hung was elected as the country's prime minister for the next five years.

After being sworn in, the 69-year-old told the National Assembly that his top priority was to maintain peace and stability, which were the foundation for fast and sustainable growth.

"We aim to improve people's livelihoods so all can share the benefits of development," he said.

This is To Lam's second time holding both jobs, after briefly doing so in 2024 when his predecessor as party chief, Nguyen Phu Trong, died.

The concentration of power was significant since it meant that Lam had a "stronger mandate and far more political room to push through his agenda than any leaders" since the 1980s, when Hanoi launched reforms to shed a state-run economy in favor of a market-oriented one open to foreigners, said Nguyen Khac Giang, of Singapore's ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute research center.

"The opportunity is obvious. Faster decision-making, greater policy coherence, and a better chance of pushing difficult reforms at a pivotal moment. But the risk is that concentration of power can move faster than insti-



Vietnam's top leader To Lam swears in as the country's president in Hanoi, Vietnam on April 7. (AP)

tutional reform," he said.

Lam's rise to the top caps the ascent of a career policeman who advanced from Vietnam's security services to the top of the political system. This was aided by a sweeping anti-corruption campaign launched

by his predecessor, which he oversaw as head of the Ministry of Public Security.

As party chief, Lam has led Vietnam's biggest bureaucratic overhaul since the 1980s, cutting jobs, merging ministries, redrawing provincial boundaries and advancing major infrastructure projects.

He has focused on economic performance and private-sector growth, aiming to move Vietnam beyond the labor- and export-driven model that has helped lift millions from poverty and build a manufacturing-based middle class. The country is targeting 10% or higher annual economic growth over each of the next five years.

Hung, the new prime minister, said that the 10% growth target is meant to help achieve the country's strategic goals and that the government had identified "strengthening science, technology, innovation and digital transformation as top priorities."

But challenges remain, especially the immediate task of turning this ambitious vision into reality with the world economy upended by the energy shock from the war in Iran. Vietnam's economy expanded at an annualized rate of 7.8% in the first three months of the year, up from 7.1% last year but below the 9.1% target and slower than in late 2025.

Giang said that Lam also faces political hurdles for reform buy-in and the challenge of maintaining Vietnam's pragmatic approach to foreign policy.

Vietnam is facing US pressure over its trade surplus but also has to balance ties with China, its largest trading partner and rival claimant in the South China Sea.

"It has benefited from a careful balancing strategy in foreign policy, but maintaining that position will become harder in a more turbulent world," he said.

Seoul spy agency says it's fair to view daughter of N.Korean leader as heir

SEOUL, South Korea, April 7, (AP):

South Korea's spy agency says it's now fair to view the teenage daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as his heir, its strongest assessment yet on the rising political status of the girl who it believes could extend her family's rule into a fourth generation.

The girl, dubbed by state media as Kim's "most beloved" or "respected" child, has accompanied her father to numerous high-profile events since late 2022, sparking outside speculation that she's being groomed as the North's future leader.

In a closed-door briefing at the National Assembly Monday, South Korea's National Intelligence Service director Lee Jong-seok said the girl could be considered Kim's successor, in response to questions by lawmakers about her political standing, according to Lee Seong Kweun, one of the lawmakers who attended the meeting.

Asked about possible protests by Kim's sister Kim Yo Jong, who has been long regarded as the North's No. 2 figure, the NIS director responded that she has no substantial powers, lawmaker Lee told a briefing. He cited the NIS as citing unspecified "reliable intelligence."

It was a stronger assessment by the NIS on the girl's status. In early 2024, it described the girl as her father's likely heir, its first official assessment on



In this photo provided by the North Korean government, its leader Kim Jong Un attends a parade with his daughter in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Feb 25, as the North wrapped up the Workers' Party congress. (AP)

her possible grooming as the North's next leader. In February this year, the agency said it believed she was close to being designated as the country's future leader.

Some observers disagree with the NIS' assessment, saying North Korea's extremely male-centered society won't likely embrace a woman leader. They also said Kim, 42, is too young

to name his successor, a development that could weaken his grip on power.

The girl is reportedly named Kim Ju Ae and aged about 13, but North Korea's state media hasn't released such personal details. Her reported name is based on an account by former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who recalled holding Kim Jong Un's baby daughter during a trip to Pyongyang in 2013.

Asia

Japanese nat'l detained in Iran freed on bail:

Japan's top government spokesperson said Tuesday a Japanese national who had been detained in Iran since January has been released on bail.

Chief Cabinet Secretary **Minoru Kihara** told reporters in Tokyo that the release was confirmed Monday and that Japan is demanding a full release from Iranian authorities.

He said the Japanese ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, met the person released and confirmed that he was in good health without providing further details.

The person is believed to be a journalist at Japan's NHK public television. Another Japanese national, who was detained in Iran last June, was released and returned to Japan in March.

Tuesday's announcement came a day after phone talks between Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, to discuss Iran's war with the United States and Israel.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry statement released just after the talks said Motegi reiterated his demand for the release of the remaining detainee, with Araghchi saying he took the request seriously.

The Committee to Protect Journalists has named the person detained in Iran in January as a journalist at Japan's public broadcaster NHK. The CPJ said the NHK journalist was arrested Jan. 20 by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and was transferred Feb. 23 to Evin Prison, quoting unidentified sources citing fear of persecution. (Xinhua)

Cooling halted at Fukushima N-plant: The operator

of the Fukushima Daini Nuclear Power Plant, a facility currently being decommissioned, said Sunday it suspended cooling of a spent fuel pool after a pump malfunction triggered an alert.

Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO) said an alarm for the spent fuel pool of the plant's No. 1 reactor went off at around 2:45 p.m. local time on Sunday. Workers shut down the pump after smoke was detected at the site, halting the pool's cooling system.

Radiation levels around the nuclear plant have shown no change, and no injuries have been reported so far, TEPCO said, adding that it was investigating the cause of the malfunction and working to repair the pump as quickly as possible to restore cooling.

According to public broadcaster NHK, the pool water temperature stood at 26.5 degrees Celsius when the cooling system was halted, leaving about 8 days before it would exceed the 65-degree Celsius threshold set for safe operation.

The four-reactor Fukushima Daini plant sits about 12 km south of the Fukushima Daiichi plant, both of which were crippled by a massive earthquake and an ensuing tsunami in March 2011, prompting TEPCO to decommission both facilities. (Xinhua)

China chemical plant fire kills 3: A fire that broke out at a chemical plant in northwest China's Gansu Province on Monday morning has left three people dead and two others slightly injured, local authorities said on Tuesday.

The fire started at around 10:40 a.m. on Monday at a three-story reinforced concrete structure of the company named Jinte, located in a chemical industrial park in the city of Yumen.

The blaze was extinguished at 12:14 p.m., while search and rescue efforts concluded at 12:57 p.m. The two injured individuals, who suffered minor injuries, are currently receiving medical treatment.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. (Xinhua)

Ex-Australian soldier charged with war crime murders

Afghanistan's extreme weather death toll increases to 110

KABUL, Afghanistan, April 7, (AP):

The death toll from extreme weather that has triggered widespread flooding and landslides in many parts of Afghanistan has increased to at least 110, authorities said Monday, with another seven people missing and more heavy rain forecast.

Storms and heavy rainfall began across Afghanistan about 12 days ago, affecting most of the country's 34 provinces. Over the past 24 hours alone, 11 people have died and six have been injured, the Disaster Management Authority said. Seven people were reported missing in separate incidents, all believed to have been carried away by floodwater.

Overall, the flooding, landslides and lightning strikes have killed 110 people and injured 160 in the past 12 days, the authority said, while 958 homes have been completely destroyed and another 4,155 have suffered partial damage.

The Defense Ministry said Monday that it had used a helicopter to airlift two people to safety after they became stranded by floodwater in the western province of Herat.

More than 325 kilometers (200 miles) of roads have been destroyed, while businesses, agricultural land, irrigation canals and fresh-water wells have also been damaged, affecting 6,122 families, the authority said. It said the figures are preliminary.

Authorities issued weather warnings for Tuesday for nearly the entire country, warning people to stay away from rivers and areas prone to flooding.

Earlier this year, heavy snowfall and



Ben Roberts-Smith arrives at the Federal Court in Sydney, Australia, on June 9, 2021. (AP)

flash floods left dozens of people dead across the country.

Two major highways have been closed for days due to landslides and floods, forcing travelers to take long, circuitous routes to reach their destinations. The Kabul to Jalalabad highway - the main route linking the capital to the Pakistani border and eastern Afghan provinces - has been shut since last Thursday, while the road from Jalalabad, the main city in eastern Afghanistan, heading northeast to Kunar and Nuristan provinces has been closed since Sunday by falling rocks.

Snow and heavy rain often trigger flash floods that kill scores, or even hundreds, of people at a time in

Afghanistan. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

Also:

MELBOURNE: Australia's most decorated living veteran, **Ben Roberts-Smith**, faces war crime charges on allegations that he killed five unarmed Afghans while serving in Afghanistan from 2009 and 2012, police and media reported on Tuesday.

Police have not confirmed the name of the 47-year-old former soldier who was arrested Tuesday. But he has been widely reported in the media to be Roberts-Smith, a former Special Air Service Regiment corporal who was awarded both the Victoria Cross and

Medal of Gallantry for his service in Afghanistan.

Police charged him Tuesday with five counts of war crime murder. He will remain in custody overnight and make his first court appearance on Wednesday, a police statement said.

He will potentially apply for release on bail Wednesday.

Roberts-Smith is only the second Australian veteran of the Afghanistan campaign to be charged with a war crime.

Former SAS soldier **Oliver Schulz**, 44, has pleaded not guilty to a charge of war crime murder. He is accused of shooting Afghan man **Dad Mohammad** three times in the head in an **Uruzgan** province wheat field in May 2012.

War crime murder carries a potential sentence of life in prison. It's a federal crime in Australia, defined as the intentional killing in the context of armed conflict of a person who is not taking an active part in hostilities, such as civilians, prisoners of war or wounded soldiers.

Police arrested Roberts-Smith at Sydney Airport on Tuesday after he arrived on a flight from Brisbane, Australian Federal Police Commissioner **Krispy Barrett** said.

"It will be alleged that the victims were not taking part in hostilities at the time of their alleged murder in Afghanistan. It will be alleged the victims were detained, unarmed and were under the control of ADF members when they were killed," Barrett told reporters, referring to the Australian Defense Force.



Residents inspect a building that partially collapsed due to heavy flooding in Jalalabad, Afghanistan on April 4. (AP)

Africa

26 dead in Nigeria's 3 separate attacks: At least 26 people have been killed in three separate Easter attacks in northern Nigeria, according to the Nigerian military and local officials. At least 17 were killed on Saturday when armed men attacked the Mbalom community in the Gwer West area of Nigeria's north-central Benue State.

Benue State Gov Hyacinth Alia confirmed the attacks on Sunday, but did not specify how many people were killed in the attack. Residents gave the figure of 17.

Attacks like these are part of a long-running cycle of violence in north-central Nigeria, where disputes over land and grazing between mostly Muslim Fulani herders and largely Christian farming communities frequently escalate into deadly clashes. Criminal gangs are also active. (AP)

Somali army kills 12 al-Shabaab militants: The Somali National Army, backed by international partners, killed 12 al-Shabaab militants and wounded several others in an operation at the Daynunya area of southwestern Somalia, the Ministry of Defense confirmed on Monday.

The ministry said the operation was carried out early Monday and forms part of ongoing efforts to degrade al-Shabaab's operational capabilities and enhance overall security in the country.

"The Somali Armed Forces and international partners remain committed to continuing such operations to eliminate the threat of terrorism and ensure lasting peace and stability



Armed al-Shabab fighters ride on pickup trucks as they prepare to travel into the city, just outside the capital Mogadishu, in Somalia on Dec. 8, 2008. (AP)

across Somalia," the ministry said in a statement issued in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. (Xinhua)

Algeria sets July 2 for parliamentary polls: Algeria's legislative elections will be held on July 2, the National Independent Election Authority announced Monday as it published the regulatory framework for candidate lists.

According to the election authority, at least one-third of candidates must be women, half must be under 40 years of age, and one-third must hold a university degree. (Xinhua)

Initial 90-day appointment expired

Venezuela's Rodríguez remains acting prez

CARACAS, Venezuela, April 7, (AP): Delcy Rodríguez remained Venezuela's acting president on Monday, exceeding the 90-day limit on her temporary role set by the country's high court following the US capture of Nicolás Maduro in January.

However, it's unclear how much longer she will keep the post as lawmakers have not taken a public vote to extend her term past last Friday's deadline.

According to the court order, Maduro is still officially Venezuela's president and his "forced" absence resulting from a "kidnapping" makes it temporarily impossible for him to fulfill his duties.

Under Venezuela's constitution, according to an article referenced by the court, temporary absences are to be filled by the vice president - which was Rodríguez's former role - for up to 90 days. These interim appointments can



Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez smiles during a meeting with a delegation led by US Energy Secretary Chris Wright at Miraflores Palace in Caracas, Venezuela on Feb 11. (AP)

be extended by the national assembly for an additional 90 days.

The National Assembly, controlled

by Rodríguez's party, can trigger a snap election if lawmakers declare the post permanently vacant.

Kuwait oil prices up to \$119.96 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Kuwait oil prices went up USD 3.16 per barrel to reach USD 119.96 pb in Monday's trading, compared with USD 116.80 pb on Thursday's trading, according to Kuwait Petro-

leum Corporation (KPC) on Tuesday. Globally, Brent Crude rose by 74 cents to reach USD 109.77 pb, US West Texas Intermediate crude went up 87 cents to USD 112.40 pb.

Refinery expands vision to 2030

Hormuz closure fears fail to slow Nghi Son refinery

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: While the Nghi Son refinery in Vietnam remains one of the most important international marketing arms of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), with a refining capacity of 200,000 barrels per day, and aims to increase this by 120 percent this year, everyone is wondering about its operational conditions, considering the disruption of Kuwaiti oil supplies due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the current geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

The newspaper obtained official data from Nghi Son Refining and Petrochemical Company, affirming the continuation of its operations despite the geopolitical conditions hindering the delivery of crude oil supplies from Kuwait through the Strait of Hormuz. It disclosed that the last crude oil shipment from Kuwait was in mid-March, indicating that the company continues its efforts to ensure a secure and stable supply of crude oil during a period of significant fluctuations in the global market.

Reports indicate that Nghi Son Refinery secured alternative crude oil supplies to ensure operational continuity and stability in case the Strait of Hormuz remains closed for a long period. It obtained the necessary crude oil quantities to guarantee uninterrupted operations at full capacity until the end of May despite the current supply constraints.

The reports also stated that Nghi Son Refinery received and processed 45 crude oil shipments in 2025. It processed around 12 million tons of crude oil last year, contributing to a stable supply of petroleum products that covers roughly 35-40 percent of Vietnam's domestic demand. It achieved consistent and safe success throughout 2025, exceeding its design capacity with a high utilization rate. This underscores the technical efficiency, operational management excellence, and organizational maturity of the refinery.

Regarding safety and security, reports indicate that by the end of 2025, the refinery recorded more than 24 million safe work hours without any lost-time injuries, confirming the consistent application of stringent safety standards in all operations.

In addition to production activities, the refinery continued to

strengthen its internal structure to better support its long-term business operations. It implemented a range of operational initiatives and technological improvements, contributing to reduced internal energy consumption, lower fuel losses, and improved overall efficiency.

The official production capacity of the refinery is 200,000 barrels per day of crude oil imported from Kuwait, equivalent to 10 million tons annually.

The annual production of premium diesel is 2,204,000 tons -- the most widely used fuel type produced, followed by regular diesel at 1,470,000 tons annually and 92 and 95 octane gasoline at 1,153,000 tons annually.

The remaining production consists of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), jet fuel and various petrochemical products.

The refinery will continue its efforts in 2026 to enhance reliability and energy efficiency as part of its 2030 development plan, a long-term roadmap for achieving growth and desired goals in the coming years. This is especially important given its commitment to ensuring a reliable energy supply and promoting sustainable practices that support economic development in Vietnam.

It set diversifying its crude oil sources as a goal, having received its first shipment of non-Kuwaiti crude on Dec 23, 2025, thereby, proving its readiness and technical capability to diversify its feedstock.

As part of its social services initiatives, the refinery implemented a range of social programs totaling \$570,000 (equivalent to 14.6 billion Vietnamese dong). These initiatives included providing clean water to around 1,300 families, offering scholarships to 1,400 students, conducting medical examinations and consultations for more than 1,000 local residents, and supporting local infrastructure and other services.

It is worth noting that the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex (NSRP) in Vietnam is a joint venture between Kuwait, represented by Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) with 35.1 percent stake in the project, Japan, represented by Idemitsu Kosan (IKC) and Mitsui Chemicals (MCI) with 35.1 percent and 4.7 percent stake respectively, and Vietnam, represented by the state-owned PetroVietnam (PVN) with 25.1 percent stake.

Iran faces power, export disruptions

Strike on Iran's biggest gas hub amplifies stakes

FRANKFURT, April 7, (AP): For the second time, Israel has attacked Iran's South Pars natural gas and its associated petrochemical complex - an energy lifeline for Iran that both helps keep the lights on for civilians and provides a key source of export earnings.

Israel's Defense Minister Israel Katz said Monday that Israel attacked a key petrochemical plant at Asaluyeh, the onshore industrial aspect of the gas field, which lies under the Persian Gulf.

Katz said the "powerful strike" hit what he called "the largest petrochemical facility in Iran ... responsible for about 50% of the country's petrochemical production." Combined with an earlier attack, two facilities responsible for 85% of Iran's petrochemical exports have been taken out of service, he said.

Attacks on South Pars are sufficiently provocative to Iran that an earlier Israeli attack on March 18 prompted Iran to target energy infrastructure in other Middle East countries in response, an escalation of the war that sent new shockwaves across the region and beyond.

After the March attack, U.S. President Donald Trump said that Israel would not attack South Pars again, but warned on social media that if Iran continued attacking key energy infrastructure in Qatar, the United States would retaliate and "massively blow up the entirety" of the field.

Here are things to know about the South Pars natural gas field and its associated industries making chemicals using gas as a raw material:

South Pars is Iran's biggest source of domestic energy in a country that sometimes struggles to produce enough electricity. The gas field under the Persian Gulf - the world's largest - is shared by Iran and Qatar. It's called South Pars on the Iranian side and the North Field on the Qatari side.

Iran relies heavily on gas to produce electricity and heat homes. It is the fourth-largest consumer of natural gas in the world, behind the U.S., China and Russia, according to the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, even though its economy is much smaller. In contrast to other Middle East countries, it uses gas for heating due to its cold climate and much of that use is subsidized, which discourages efficient use.

While the South Pars gas is important at home, the petrochemical plant is a source of export earnings. The gas

is used to make basic chemical building blocks like ethylene, propylene, methanol, ammonia and urea used to make other products such as plastic pipe, packaging, clothing, household products or fertilizer. Among the largest importers are Turkey, China, India and Southeast Asian countries, according to Iranian mining and petrochemical export company Irminex. Iran's petrochemical industry gets a competitive advantage from low raw material costs due to its access to South Pars gas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says those earnings benefited Iran's paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. "Today we destroyed the largest petrochemical plant in Iran," Netanyahu said. "In other words, we are systematically destroying the money machine of the Revolutionary Guards."

Iran has suffered power shortages because of interruptions to gas supplies, even though on paper it has huge energy reserves. In July, public buildings had to shut down when a heat wave strained the power grid.

So an attack on South Pars could potentially target both civilian welfare and export earnings.

Qatar, with only 3 million people, has invested billions in developing the field as a source of liquefied natural gas, which before the war it exported from its Ras Laffan facility. It's a lucrative business and made Qatar the supplier of about a fifth of the world's LNG before the war forced it to shut down Ras Laffan.

Iran, with 93 million people, is another story. Sanctions and lack of investment have blocked the development of LNG export terminals. Instead, Iran feeds its gas into its own pipeline system and uses it domestically for cooking, heating homes, generating electricity, and as a raw material for industry. Iran exports relatively little, about 9 billion cubic meters, compared to Qatar's more than 120 billion cubic meters.

So the South Pars petrochemical industries are one way Iran can get export earnings from its massive gas reserves.

Iran once planned three LNG export projects on its Arabian Gulf coastline, one with Total Energies and another with Shell. But sanctions over its nuclear program have blocked the projects by barring the import of the needed technology and investment. A third site at Asaluyeh is reportedly near completion after starting construction almost 20 years ago.

Business

Analysts caution end of Iran war may not restore global oil prices to normal

WASHINGTON, April 7, (Xinhua): International experts said that even if the Iran war ends, global oil prices might not return to pre-conflict levels.

U.S. President Donald Trump threatened on Monday to take out the entire country of Iran "in one night" if it failed to make a deal before the Tuesday night deadline he set for Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

"Tuesday will be Power Plant Day, and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran. There will be nothing like it!!! Open the Strait, you crazy or you'll be living in Hell -- JUST WATCH! Praise be to Allah," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Experts suggested that even if Iran agrees, the damage to energy infrastructure could take time to fully repair, with some experts estimating a length of three to five years.

Over 40 energy assets region-wide have been "severely or very severely damaged", and it could take weeks to clear the backlog of ships and for global energy exports to recover, according to the International Energy Agency.

Even with logistics facilities running at peak levels, "it would take time to clear the backlog of oil, gas and other goods unloaded from vessels," reported Al Jazeera, quoting Svein Ringbakken, managing director of the Norwegian Shipowners' Mutual War Risks Association.

Ringbakken added that this has been made "even more difficult" by attacks that have damaged energy and transport infrastructure across the Middle East.

If hostilities fail to resolve and the maritime route continues to be blocked, the global oil market could be left in a fragile state, experts said. If shipping remains disrupted, that could force a structural shift in shipping and lead to higher long-term energy prices, reported the BBC.

"Even if the war ended tomorrow, it would probably take a year or so for all the production and shipping facilities to be fully restored," Dean Baker, co-founder of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, told Xinhua.

Others have echoed such statements, estimating that the price of oil will remain high due to the conflict in Iran.

"My guess is that prices will not come back towards 60 (U.S. dollars per barrel) for several months after the war ends," Gary Hufbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, told Xinhua, noting that the price of Brent crude has hovered over the mark of 100 U.S. dollars per barrel.

At the same time, Iran has started charging oil tankers for passage through the strait -- in some cases as much as 2 million dollars per vessel -- and its par-



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a press conference at the White House in Washington, D.C., April 6, 2026. Trump said Monday that Iran could be 'taken out' in one night and that night 'might' be Tuesday evening, the deadline Trump set for Iran to make a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. (Xinhua)

liament has approved legislation to formalize tolls on ships transiting the waterway.

The bill to impose fees for ships traversing the key waterway was approved by the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, the country's state media reported Monday.

The move is a bid to assert what Iran believes is its "sovereign role" in the waterway, according to the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

Trump said Monday that the United States, not Iran, should charge tolls on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that reopening the Strait must be part of any deal to end the war with Iran.

"We have to have a deal that's acceptable to me, and part of that deal is going to be we want free traffic of oil and everything," the U.S. president said.

Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Michael O'Hanlon told Xinhua that he didn't see the chance of the waterway being cleared any time soon.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy has already claimed that the Strait of Hormuz has

entered a "new reality" and will not return to its previous status, particularly for the United States and Israel.

Experts suggested that disrupting shipping through the strait may also hurt Iran, and Tehran will weigh the costs of economic difficulties versus security.

"There will be internal discussions in Tehran about how much economic pain to exchange for how much security leverage," Clay Ramsay, a researcher at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, told Xinhua.

Meanwhile, Tehran is warning of a "more severe and expansive" response if the U.S. president follows through on his vows to attack Iran's bridges and energy infrastructure.

Among the "many things being discussed" is a proposal for a 45-day ceasefire, NBC reported, citing a senior White House official.

This comes after Tehran rejected Washington's proposal, focusing on the need for a definitive end to the conflict, according to news reports.

Trump, allies tap oil reserves to ease market chaos

Global leaders scramble to contain oil price surge

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): Global leaders have been scrambling to contain the rising cost of oil and gasoline since the start of the Iran war, which took a record amount of oil off the market when tankers full of crude were stranded in the Arabian Gulf and military strikes damaged refineries, pipelines and export terminals.

Hoping to ease some pain for consumers, President Donald Trump and other heads of state have been pulling on various levers, launching more oil on the market in a bid to calm the chaos.

A group of 32 nations that are members of the International Energy Agency began releasing the largest volume of emergency oil reserves in its history: 400 million barrels. Trump is tapping into oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve while lifting sanctions on Russian and Iranian crude and temporarily waiving the Jones Act, a maritime law that requires ships carrying goods between U.S. ports to be U.S.-flagged.

But despite those maneuvers, crude oil has soared well past \$100 a barrel and gasoline is selling for \$4.14 a gallon on average in the U.S. While the stopgaps are helping, they're not adding up to enough oil to replace what's stranded, experts say.

"They're all incremental," said Mark Barteau, professor of chemical engineering and chemistry at Texas A&M University. "You're talking about these different patches being at the level of maybe 1 to 2 million barrels a day each, and you've got to get to 20, so it's hard to see those actually adding up to the numbers that are needed. And then the question is, how long can you sustain those?"

Before the war began, roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil and 5 million barrels of oil products passed daily through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Arabian Gulf, amounting to about 20% of global oil consumption, according to the International Energy Agency.

In addition to that loss, some oil producing nations in the Middle East have halted oil production because they can't ship fuel out of the Gulf and their storage tanks are full. That's taken about 10 million barrels per day off the market, the IEA said.

Then there are the eight countries around the Arabian Gulf that together hold about 50% of global oil reserves. Under normal circumstances, they coordinate closely to raise or lower their output to keep prices steady, said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. Usually Saudi Arabia steps in to bring spare oil to market and calm things down, he said.

"But all of that spare capacity is also bottled up inside the Arabian Gulf right now and it can't get to market either," Krane said. "So the main emergency response system that we have is also blocked."

The IEA said in its recent report that "the resumption of transit through the Strait of Hormuz is the single most important action to return to stable oil and gas flows and reduce the strains on markets and prices." Barring that, world leaders are grasping for ways to free up more oil.

Some nations have found workarounds to move oil



Gas prices displayed at a Chevron station, Friday, April 3, 2026, in Marietta, Ga. (AP)

out of the Gulf. Saudi Arabia is using its East-West pipeline, which stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, to transfer about 5 million barrels per day out of the Gulf, said Michael Lynch, distinguished fellow at Energy Policy Research Foundation, a non-partisan institution focused on energy and economics. But the nation was already using that pipeline to transport oil, so it doesn't have a lot of spare room to move oil from stranded tankers.

Trump also temporarily lifted sanctions on approximately 140 million barrels of Iranian oil that was already in transit. But that didn't add oil to the market - it just widened the pool of potential buyers, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy.

Typically, most Iranian oil was bought by private refiners in China, who purchased it at a steep discount, Sternoff said. But with sanctions lifted, others could scramble to buy the oil, which in turn raises its price to the benefit of Iran, he said.

"As soon as you are moving to waive sanctions on your adversary with whom you're fighting a military conflict, to do something in their benefit, it just shows you that you are running out of options to try to prevent a rise in the price of oil," Sternoff said.

The decision to lift sanctions on Russian oil could have more impact, because Russia had been storing unpurchased oil in tankers, Sternoff said. "By waiving sanctions, it will allow those barrels to clear."

Trump's temporary waiver of the Jones Act to allow foreign ships to temporarily transport goods between U.S. ports could potentially help ease natural gas prices by enabling companies to more efficiently ship liquefied natural gas from the Gulf Coast to New

England.

But experts don't expect the waiver to significantly impact the price of oil or gasoline. "It's helpful, but not a game changer," Lynch said.

The U.S. is a major oil producer, and exports more oil than it imports. But like any other oil producing nation, it can't just ramp up production instantly to fill the void.

"If the U.S. were to try to make up the global shortfall, we would need to nearly double our production," Barteau said. "We couldn't drill wells that fast even if we wanted to." Increasing domestic production by even 1 million barrels per day, a feat the U.S. accomplished during the shale boom, would be hard to duplicate, Lynch said.

"If we run every drilling rig right now, what happens a week from now when the war is over and the price goes back down \$20?" Lynch asked. "People don't want to develop long-term production based on a short-term price spike."

Halting exports and using that oil within the U.S. wouldn't bring down gasoline prices either, experts say.

For one, oil is traded on a global market, so events happening halfway around the globe impact prices for everyone.

In addition, the U.S. doesn't produce enough of the type of oil its refineries process. It produced about 13.7 million barrels per day of oil at the end of 2025, according to the Energy Information Administration. And refineries processed about 16.3 million barrels per day that year, relying on imports to fill in the gaps, according to the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), a trade association.

General index declines 36.16 points

Boursa Kuwait closes trading lower

KUWAIT CITY, April 7, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait closed trading on Tuesday with its general index declining by 36.16 points, or 0.46 percent, to reach 8,501.55 points, with 204.4 million shares traded through 17,122 cash deals, valued at KD 56.4 million (about USD 184 million).

The Main Market Index declined by 67.60 points, or 0.86 percent, to reach 7,761.17 points, through trading of 111.5 million shares across 7,838 cash deals, valued at KD

16.7 million (about USD 54.5 million). The Premier Market Index also declined by 35.12 points, or 0.38 percent, to reach 9,100.28 points, through trading of 92.9 million shares across 9,284 deals, valued at KD 39.6 million (about USD 129.2 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index was lowered by 90.27 points, or 1.10 percent, to reach 8,137.99 points, through trading of 100.6 million shares across 6,310 cash deals, valued at KD 14.3 million (about USD 46.6 million).

Assembly approves all items on agenda and elects new Board of Directors for three years

Zain Group holds AGM with quorum of 77.7%

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: The Zain Group Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at the Zain Group's headquarters in Kuwait, attended with a quorum of 77.67% of shareholders whereby they were presented with the Zain Group's 2025 annual report which highlights the financial statements, Governance and Auditors reports and the major achievements of Zain Group and its operations and subsidiaries across Middle East and Africa, for the year ended December 31, 2025. Additionally, Zain Group released its 2025 Sustainability Report. Notably, the shareholders approved all 12 items on the AGM agenda.



Bader Al-Kharafi at the Annual General Meeting.

- The new Board of Directors meet and elected Mrs Nour Nael Ahmed Al-Jassim as Chair of the Board for next three years and Bader Al-Kharafi as Vice-Chairman and Group CEO
- Zain Group Chairman, Osamah Al Furaih: "Over the past three years the Board has created enormous shareholder value by building one of the region's largest TechCo conglomerates"
- Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al Kharafi: "The Board and management have worked closely to execute the '4WARD' strategy and fully capture the opportunities in our markets"
- 2025 annual cash dividend totaled 35 fils, representing a 63% payout ratio; total dividends distributed during 2025 amounted to 60 fils
- Brand valuation rose 16.1% reaching a record high milestone of USD 4.04 billion
- Zain invested USD 1.5 billion in CAPEX in 2025, a 39% increase, representing 20% of revenue
- Focus on network expansion and modernization, digital innovation and comprehensive ESG programs driving sustainable value creation for all stakeholders
- Zain publishes 2025 Annual Report and 2025 Sustainability Report available in digital format

regulatory posture, balancing robust compliance with strategic advocacy to enable innovation while mitigating regulatory risk. Our Regulatory Compliance Program (RCP) has now been successfully implemented across our footprint, further strengthening our regulatory frameworks and operational efficiency. We continue to engage with regulators through structured consultations, industry forums, targeted advocacy, and collaborative policy development, positioning Zain as a constructive partner in shaping forward-looking regulatory ecosystems.

New Board elected for three years

Furthermore, the AGM elected the Zain Group Board of Directors for the next three years. The incoming Board members now constitute the following: Mrs Nour Nael Ahmed Al-Jassim (appointed by the KIA);

Mr Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi; Mr Mishari Asi Al-Hajri; Mr Atef bin Saeed bin Rashid Al Siyabi; Mr Nasser bin Sulaiman bin Hamad Al-Harthi; Mr Alaa El-Din bin Abdallah Bait Fadel; Mr Ghassan Khamees Ali-Hashar; Mr Ibrahim Said Al-Eisri; Mr Abdulrahman Mohammad Al-Asfour; and Dr Saad Ahmed Alnahedh. The Board meet immediately after the AGM and elected Mrs Nour Nael Ahmed Al-Jassim as Chair of the Board of Directors and Mr Bader Al-Kharafi as Vice-Chairman and Group CEO.



Osamah Al Furaih, Bader Al-Kharafi, Ossama Matta during the Annual General Meeting.



Zain HQ Building

Investing in venture capital funds and the startup ecosystem

Our venture investment arm, Zain Ventures, continues to deliver strong strategic and financial contributions. By end of 2025, Zain Ventures had invested approximately USD 156 million directly into startups at various growth stages and through leading venture capital funds. The portfolio includes high-profile, high-growth companies such as Revolut, SpaceX, xAI, and others that are contributing to long-term shareholder value.

We are equally focused on nurturing internal innovation. Through our internal innovation

platform, ZAINIAC, employees are encouraged to submit, share, and collaborate on new ideas, fostering intrapreneurship and creativity within the company. We provide mentoring, workshops, and funding for selected initiatives to turn ideas into viable businesses.

Advancing our ESG leadership

Zain achieved significant progress across its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda in 2025. We recorded upgrades in multiple global ESG indices, highlighted by an improvement in our MSCI ESG rating from 'BBB' to 'A' in September 2025. We also performed above the global telecom sector average in the S&P Global ESG Index and surpassed the global average in the FTSE-4Good Index.

Major milestones were the A' score from CDP and the approval of Zain's Net-Zero targets by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), validating our Group-wide commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across our value chain by 2050.

On the social dimension, ESG translates into competitive advantage through talent, inclusion, and gender diversity at scale. Building an inclusive culture and a future-ready workforce enhances execution and customer experience. Initiatives such as our WE ABLE 2030 disability inclusion program, BE WELL mental wellbeing initiative, IDE University, and our Gender Diversity vision illustrate our deliberate approach to supporting our people and ensuring that digital progress leaves no one behind. These milestones reinforce Zain's commitment to sustainability and robust governance and have taken our ESG leadership agenda to new levels.

Employer of choice and people-first culture

In 2025, Zain was ranked the number one telecommunications company in the MENA region on Forbes' annual "World's Best Employers" list, while also being ranked first in Kuwait and among the top three employers region-wide. This recognition reflects the seriousness of our commitment to responsible business conduct and building a thriving, diverse, and inclusive workplace.

Brand strength and customer engagement

The strength of the Zain brand continues to grow. According to Brand Finance's 2026 rankings, Zain's brand value increased 16.1% YoY to USD 4.04 billion, placing us among the top 25 strongest telecom brands and the top 35 most valuable telecom brands globally. Nineteen years after the Zain brand was launched in September 2007, this sustained growth reflects the success of our 4WARD strategy, our investment in compelling marketing and customer experiences, and the quality of our networks and services.

Today, we serve 50.9 million customers across our eight-country footprint and have more than 35.5 million social media followers. In 2025, our creative content generated over 4 billion views and around 1.5 billion interactions, making Zain one of the most appealing, inspirational, and recognized corporate brands in the region and internationally, and the ICT provider of choice for individuals, businesses, and governments.

Thank you

I would like to close by expressing my sincere appreciation, on behalf of the executive management team, to the people who power our progress. To our 9,000 colleagues across the Group, thank you for the discipline, creativity, and commitment you bring to our purpose every day. To our individual and corporate customers, government partners, and shareholders, thank you for the trust you place in Zain and for the role we all play together in strengthening an ecosystem that delivers meaningful connectivity to the communities we serve.

Looking ahead to 2026, our priority is to build on the strong first-year momentum of 4WARD and accelerate its execution across the Group. We will continue advancing our evolution into a TechCo by scaling network investments, strengthening digital platforms and capabilities, pursuing strategic growth opportunities, and developing the talent and operating model required to deliver at speed. Through deeper collaboration across our markets and with our partners, we aim to convert early momentum into sustainable, measurable progress, keeping Zain at the forefront of digital transformation in a fast-evolving mobile and ICT landscape and creating lasting value for all stakeholders.

enues and reinforcing our market leadership across an increasingly competitive landscape.

With 4WARD now completing its first year, we are confident that it has already generated the momentum needed to accelerate Zain's evolution into an impactful, leading regional TechCo. This strategy is strengthening our growth, deepening our relevance in shaping societies, and continuing to elevate the Zain brand to new heights.

Robust growth across our markets and 5G leadership

All our main operations recorded solid financial results in 2025, giving us confidence in our ability to sustain growth in 2026 and beyond. Zain Kuwait, the Group's flagship operator, maintained its market leadership with revenue growth of 4%, supported by expansion in the government and enterprise segments and the launch of 5G-Advanced services that are enhancing the customer experience.

Zain KSA recorded its highest-ever revenue, driven by its 5G network, B2B growth, and the success of its digital operator, Yaqoot, and micro-finance fintech platform, Tamam. Zain Iraq's revenue grew 20%, fueled by sustained commercial momentum, continued network deployment of nearly 1,000 new sites.

In Sudan, the gradual restoration of the network, which saw 814 sites return to operation and brought 90% of the network in safe areas back online, drove exceptional customer and revenue growth, making it Zain's most profitable operation in 2025. In Jordan and Bahrain, 5G expansion supported healthy revenue and customer growth, with their respective fintech platforms also delivering strong performance.

As a 5G leader across four markets – Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan – underpinned by our fiber-to-the-home and subsea cable infrastructure, we will continue to invest at scale to maintain technology leadership, support customer growth, and capture new revenue opportunities.

Executing our 4WARD strategy: Tech platforms and growth verticals

The '4WARD – Progress with Purpose' strategy sets Zain's strategic direction from 2025 through 2030. Just over one year since launch, we have achieved meaningful progress across our technology platforms and priority growth verticals, demonstrating strong execution momentum and validating the strategy's foundations.

In June 2025, Zain Kuwait's launch of 5G-Advanced unlocked new horizons for Kuwait's digital economy and innovation landscape, positioning the country as one of the first worldwide to deploy 5G-Advanced commercially. This pioneering move accelerated Kuwait's progress as a regional digital hub and contributed significantly to Zain Kuwait's revenue growth.

Through ZainTECH, we have accelerated our B2B digital and AI agenda, reinforcing Zain's position as partner of choice for enterprises and governments. By collaborating with hyperscalers and global technology leaders, ZainTECH is advancing AI adoption, cloud migration, cybersecurity, data analytics, and digital transformation across the region, enabling clients to modernize operations, improve efficiency, and unlock new digital capabilities.

Similarly, Zain Omantel International (ZOI) has made significant strides in strengthening regional digital infrastructure and international connectivity, while playing a central role in expanding data center capacity and AI-ready infrastructure. Leveraging strategic partnerships in subsea cable systems linking Asia, Africa, and Europe, and access to more than 20 international submarine cables, ZOI has positioned Zain as a critical enabler of regional and cross-border digital traffic.

Scaling our fintech footprint remains a strategic priority. Zain now provides digital financial services across Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and Sudan, serving both B2C and SME segments. We continue to broaden our offerings to include payments, remittances, micro-finance, and merchant and SME solutions, strengthening financial inclusion, increasing wallet engagement, and supporting SME digitization across our markets.

The launch and gradual expansion of Zain Insure in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan, alongside strategic partnerships in Saudi Arabia, reflects our ongoing transition into a TechCo delivering customer-first digital solutions that enhance livelihoods and simplify everyday experiences.

Regulatory engagement and compliance

As Zain's footprint extends beyond traditional telecommunications into broader ICT and digital ecosystems, regulatory engagement and compliance have become even more critical to safeguarding operational continuity, investment sustainability, and long-term value creation. In this environment, Zain maintained a proactive

Strong financial performance and shareholder returns

During the AGM, Zain Group presented its financial results for the full-year 2025, whereby the company served 50.9 million customers, an annual increase of 4%.

In 2025, Zain Group delivered a solid financial performance, with consolidated revenue rising 14% year-on-year to KD 2.3 billion (USD 7.44 billion), the highest level in 16 years. Consolidated EBITDA reached KD 780 million (USD 2.54 billion), an increase of 11%, reflecting a healthy 34% EBITDA margin, while consolidated net income soared 103% to KD 239 million (USD 777 million), a 13 year high. Earnings per share amounted to 55 fils (USD 0.18).

These results supported attractive shareholder returns. The 2025 annual cash dividend totaled 35 fils per share, representing a payout ratio of 63%, while total dividends distributed during the 2025 calendar year reached 60 fils per share. This performance underscores the strength of the company's balance sheet and financial position as Zain grows the business and advances its transformation into a TechCo.

Excerpts from the Board of Directors statement at the AGM

The Board of Directors welcomes all shareholders and affiliated parties to the Annual General Assembly of Zain Group. Amid this rapidly changing environment, Zain Group's '4WARD – Progress with Purpose' strategy has remained steadfast in its ambition to build one of the region's largest TechCo conglomerates, ready to power this new digital era. Across our markets, we have continued to align our strategic direction with global and regional trends, investing in advanced digital infrastructure, the latest technologies, and innovative services that support national development visions.

Throughout 2025, Zain strengthened its extensive network of partnerships and enhanced its technological capabilities to keep pace with the fast-evolving ICT sector. This approach has enabled the Group to protect its core business while unlocking new growth avenues in high-potential digital domains, ultimately generating sustainable value for shareholders.

The year 2025 reaffirmed Zain's position as a regional digital powerhouse, diversified, resilient, and purpose-driven. By leading innovation and enabling communities across our markets to embrace digital transformation, Zain continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the region's digital future.

We sincerely value the continued trust of our shareholders, which remains a cornerstone of our success. We are also very grateful to government bodies in Kuwait and across our markets for supporting the ICT sector and empowering Zain to provide meaningful connectivity to the communities, businesses, and governments we wholeheartedly serve.

Excerpts from Zain Group Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al Kharafi's AGM statement

'4WARD – Progress with Purpose': accelerating our TechCo evolution 2025 marked a pivotal first year for our '4WARD – Progress with Purpose' corporate strategy, which is fast-tracking Zain's evolution from a predominantly mobile-centric operator into a purpose-driven, customer-centric, future-ready regional TechCo. Our commitment to sustainable growth that fulfils our purpose of 'Better Lives and Lasting Connections' is reflected in our listing on Boursa Kuwait's Premier Market and local listings in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Bahrain, underlining our core duty to enhance value for all stakeholders.

The Board and executive management have worked closely to execute the 4WARD strategy and fully capture the opportunities in our markets by focusing on four key strategic pillars: Customer Delight, Digital Zain, Purpose & Action, and Collaborative Growth. Throughout 2025, disciplined CAPEX, OPEX and monetization management, combined with the accelerated momentum of our growth verticals – Fintech, ZainTECH and ZOI – drove our key financial indicators to their highest levels in over a decade.

Targeted investments totaling USD 1.5 billion in network expansion, technology upgrades, fiber deployment, subsea cables, and AI and emerging technologies strengthened our capacity to elevate the customer experience and address the growing digital needs of individuals, enterprises and governments. These strategic CAPEX investments were key to driving a 4% increase in our customer base, which now stands at 50.9 million, and a 13% YoY growth in data revenues to USD 2.8 billion, representing 37% of total rev-

Over 60 deferred draws will be conducted over five days, with total prizes exceeding KD 5 million

National Bank of Kuwait concludes all deferred Al Jawhara draws in full alignment with the highest standards of transparency & integrity

Announcement of three winners, each receiving KD 1 million, in the Al Jawhara grand draws



Ali Al-Mulla speaking during the draws.



Part of the withdrawal process.



Hisham Al-Nusif with Sulaiman Hamad Sulaiman Al-Fahaid, winner of the grand prize in the Al-Jawhara draw worth one million Kuwaiti dinars.

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced the completion of all deferred Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior draws, reaffirming its ongoing commitment to rewarding customers and strengthening their trust.

The Bank stated that more than 60 deferred draws, with a total value exceeding KD 5 million, were conducted over five business days during the period from 1 to 7 April 2026. This included the announcement of three winners, each receiving KWD 1 million, in the Al Jawhara grand draws for May 2025, September 2025, and January 2026.

NBK confirmed that customers' chances during the deferral period remained fully preserved, with no impact on their eligibility to win. The Bank noted that it appointed an additional firm, Grant Thornton, to audit and oversee the draw processes—regardless of prize value—alongside its continued engagement with Deloitte to monitor the draws and ensure adherence to the highest standards of transparency and integrity.

It further stated that, as part of enhancing the Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior draw mechanism—the largest draw program in Kuwait—any winning customer will be excluded from participating in subsequent draws for a minimum of 90 business days from the date of winning. Additionally, if the value of a single prize or the aggregate prizes won equals or exceeds KD 50,000, the customer will be excluded from all draws for a period of one year from the date of the last win, ensuring fairness and equal opportunity for all customers.

Upcoming Draws

In line with its ongoing commitment to the highest standards of transparency, NBK confirmed that upcoming Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior draws will be announced on the second Tuesday of each month,

Al-Nusif:

- Al Jawhara draws reinforce NBK's position as a trusted banking partner, placing customers' financial future at the core of its priorities
- "Al Jawhara" is a savings program built on the principle of equal opportunity, with its draws overseen by independent international auditing firms

The winners of the Postponed Al Jawhara Draws (Monthly-Grand) and Al Jawhara Junior Draws (Grand):

Draw Date	Draw Type	Winner Name	Prize Amount
13-May-2025	Junior Grand	Laila Ahmad Hasan Dashti	KD 10,000
09-Sep-2025	Junior Grand	Mariam Mohammad Abdulaziz Alattar	KD 10,000
13-Jan-2026	Junior Grand	Walid Khemane	KD 10,000
08-Apr-2025	Al Jawhara Monthly	Khaledah Hussain Sulaiman Alqattan	KD 125,000
10-Jun-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Samer Assy	KD 125,000
08-Jul-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Abrar Mohammad Thamer Alazmi	KD 125,000
12-Aug-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Ahmad Salem Mohammad Aldosari	KD 125,000
14-Oct-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Salwa Salman Ali Mohammad	KD 125,000
11-Nov-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Harfan Mohammad Harfan Alhajri	KD 125,000
09-Dec-2025	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Hussain Merza Ali Mohammad	KD 125,000
10-Feb-2026	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Waleed Mohammed Matoq Albakhit	KD 125,000
10-Mar-2026	Al Jawhara - Monthly	Ahmed Hussain Hassan Ashkanani	KD 125,000
13-May-2025	Grand	Sulaiman Hamad Sulaiman Alfahaid	KD 1,000,000
09-Sep-2025	Grand	Ahmad Haider Essa Buabbas	KD 1,000,000
13-Jan-2026	Grand	Shareefah Hussain Khaleel Alhashash	KD 1,000,000

inviting customers to follow the Bank's official channels for live coverage and the latest updates. On this occasion, Mr. Hisham Al-Nusif, Chief,

Consumer Banking at NBK, stated: "The completion of all deferred Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior draws in accordance with a clear and trans-

parent timeline reflects NBK's full commitment to fulfilling its responsibilities towards customers, and its unwavering dedication to upholding the highest standards of integrity and transparency. We ensured that these draws were conducted with the utmost fairness, safeguarding customers' rights and fully preserving their chances of winning throughout the deferral period."

"Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior draws represent a well-established model for fair savings programs, built on the principles of equal opportunity and absolute credibility. This is reinforced through the oversight of independent international auditing firms across all draw processes, underscoring the program's transparency and the continued trust of our customers," Al-Nusif added.

"As we move into a new phase with a consistent and clearly defined draw schedule, NBK remains committed to delivering an exceptional savings experience through Al Jawhara and Al Jawhara Junior—the largest program of its kind in Kuwait. Beyond promoting a culture of saving, the program continues to create new millionaires, reinforcing NBK's position as a trusted banking partner that places customers' aspirations and financial future at the heart of its priorities," he concluded.

Al Jawhara prize draws offer a total annual prize pool of KD 5 million, featuring weekly prizes of KD 20,000, monthly prizes of KD 125,000, and a grand prize of KD 1 million awarded three times annually.

As for Al Jawhara Junior draws, dedicated to customers under the age of 21, monthly draws offer seven cash prizes (KD 1,000 for three winners and KD 500 for four winners), in addition to one winner receiving a KD 10,000 cash prize with every Al Jawhara grand draw.

Expanding employee wellbeing initiatives

ALSAYER marks World Health Day with free employee health checks

KUWAIT CITY, April 7: In recognition of World Health Day on the 7th of April, ALSAYER Group has reaffirmed its dedication to employee wellbeing by providing staff and their immediate families with medical checkups and with exclusive access to comprehensive healthcare services.

Medical center staff visited the ALSAYER Group Toyota and Lexus showrooms and service facilities. Over 2,000 employees utilized this opportunity to benefit from free health check-up packages, routine blood tests, inquire about medical benefits, and schedule future appointments with a specialized doctor consultation. This initiative reflects the Group's ongoing commitment to fostering a healthy, supportive, and productive workplace environment.

Through ALSAYER Group's sponsorship with such healthcare programs, employees and their families can benefit from a wide range of medical services, including doctor consultations, laboratory services, inpatient and outpatient medical procedures, blood pressure & sugar checks, liver and kidney enzymes checks, cholesterol and triglycerides checks, radiology services, as well as pharmacy support. By making these essential services more accessible, ALSAYER Group underscores the importance of preventive care and early diagnosis in maintaining long-term health.

Group Manager of the Corporate Excellence Department Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali noted that, "employee wellbeing is a cornerstone of our values at ALSAYER Group. We believe that by investing in the health

of our people, we are investing in the strength and sustainability of our organization. This partnership ensures that our employees and their families have access to trusted medical care when they need it most."

Beyond the immediate health benefits, this initiative also reinforces ALSAYER Group's broader vision of cultivating a culture of care and responsibility within the organization. By prioritizing employee wellbeing through proactive healthcare partnerships, the Group not only enhances staff morale and engagement but also contributes to improved productivity and long-term organizational resilience. This holistic approach ensures that employees feel valued and supported, fostering loyalty and a stronger sense of community across all departments, branches and centers.



Photos during the initiatives.

Federal official flags rate hike if inflation stays high

Gas price surge puts rate strategy in spotlight

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): A top Federal Reserve official said Monday that an interest rate hike could be appropriate if inflation remains persistently above the central bank's 2% target, the latest sign that some policymakers are moving away from a bias toward reducing borrowing costs.

Beth Hammack, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, said in an interview with The Associated Press that her general preference is for the Fed keep its benchmark interest rate unchanged "for quite some time."

And she also said the Fed might have to cut its rate if higher gas prices caused the economy to slow and unemployment to rise. But if inflation remained elevated, a rate hike could be needed, she said.

"I can foresee scenarios where we would need to reduce rates ... if the labor market deteriorates significantly," Hammack said. "Or I could see where we might need to raise rates if inflation stays persistently above our target."

Hammack's comments suggest a growing concern among at least some policymakers that inflation, which was elevated before the Iran war, may require rate hikes to tame further. Rate increases by the Fed would be a sharp shift from late last year, when the central bank cut its key rate three times. Rate hikes could lift borrowing costs for consumers

and businesses, including for mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards.

Other Fed officials have recently opened the door to rate hikes, including Austan Goolsbee, president of the Chicago Fed. And minutes of the Fed's meeting in late January said that several of the 19 officials on the rate-setting committee supported altering the post-meeting statement to reflect the possibility of "upward adjustments" to rates.

A rate hike would almost certainly prompt President Donald Trump to lash out at the Fed, which he has harshly criticized for not cutting rates further. He has called for the central bank's key rate to be lowered to 1%, down from its current level of about 3.6%.

The government will update two inflation measures this week, though only one will likely reflect the impact of the jump in gas prices since the Iran war began Feb. 28. Gas prices averaged \$4.12 a gallon nationwide Monday, according to AAA, up 80 cents from a month earlier.

On Friday, the government will issue the March inflation report, providing a first read on the impact of higher gas and energy prices. Economists forecast that annual inflation will worsen significantly, jumping to 3.1% from 2.4% in February, according to a survey by data provider FactSet. On a monthly basis, they expect consumer prices rose 0.8% in March from February, which would be the biggest increase in almost four years.

The Commerce Department will report the Fed's preferred inflation gauge for February on Thursday, though that won't incorporate any

impact from the Iran conflict.

Hammack said that the Cleveland Fed's own estimates show inflation could reach 3.5% in April, which would be the highest since 2024. Inflation spiked to 9.1% in June 2022 before slowly declining.

"Inflation has been running above our target for more than five years now," Hammack said, and a further increase would mean it is "moving in the wrong direction, away from our 2% objective."

The Federal Reserve is required by Congress to seek low inflation and maximum employment, and higher gas prices could threaten both those mandates, creating a challenging situation for Fed officials.

Consumers may react to higher gas prices by cutting back on their spending elsewhere in the economy, Hammack said, which could lead to weaker growth and layoffs, which the Fed would need to respond to with rate cuts.

How the war impacts the economy will depend on how long it lasts and how high it lifts gas prices and other costs, Hammack said. Now in its sixth week, the conflict has already lasted longer than she expected when the Fed last met March 17-18, Hammack said.

Hammack said rising gas prices stemming from the Iran war are "the No. 1 thing" she hears about from people in her district, which covers Ohio and parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

"We know that causes a lot of pain personally, as it eats up a bigger and bigger share of people's paychecks. So it's important for us to stay focused on it," she added.

JPMorgan CEO Dimon: Iran war could reignite inflation and keep Fed rates higher for longer

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon warned in his annual shareholder letter that a "resilient" U.S. economy could face renewed inflation pressures if the war in Iran disrupts global energy markets.

Dimon described inflation as the potential "skunk at the party" this year, cautioning that turmoil in oil and commodity markets could ripple through the economy, affecting everything from gasoline prices to manufacturing costs. He also warned

that sustained inflation could force the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates higher for longer, posing risks to the broader economy and financial system.

"Given our complex global supply chains, countries are experiencing disruptions in shipbuilding, food and farming, among others," Dimon wrote. "The outcome of current geopolitical events may very well be the defining factor in how the future global economic order unfolds - then again, it may not."

Sponsors pull out of London festival

Wireless Festival boss stands by Ye headlining concerts

LOS ANGELES, April 7. (AP): As sponsors pull out from London's Wireless Festival over headliner Ye, its organizer is standing by the rapper formerly known as Kanye West.

Melvin Benn, the managing director at Festival Republic, shared a statement on Monday backing his company's decision to book Ye.

"Forgiveness and giving people a second chance are becoming a lost virtue in this ever-increasing divisive world," he wrote. "I would ask people to reflect on their instant comments of disgust at the likelihood of him performing (as was mine) and offer some forgiveness and hope to him as I have decided to do."

Ye, who changed his name in 2021, is booked to perform in front of around 150,000 revelers over the course of the festival's three nights, July 10 - 12.

The rapper has drawn widespread condemnation in recent years for antisemitic remarks and voicing admiration for Adolf Hitler. Last year, he released a song called "Heil Hitler" and advertised a swastika T-shirt for sale on his website. The 48-year-old apologized this past January for his antisemitic

remarks in a letter, published as a full-page advertisement 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."

Wireless sponsors Pepsi, Rockstar Energy and Diageo have pulled out of the festival since Ye was announced as the headliner, although lead sponsor Pepsi didn't offer a reason. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer called the booking "deeply concerning."

"Ye's music is played on commercial radio stations in this country. It is available via live streams and downloads in this country without comment or vitriol from anyone and he has a legal right to come into the country and to perform in this country," Benn's statement said.

"We are not giving him a platform to extol opinion of whatever nature, only to perform the songs that are currently played on the radio stations in our country and the streaming platforms in our country and listened to and enjoyed by millions," the statement continued.

Last week, Ye held two concerts at SoFi Stadium in Los

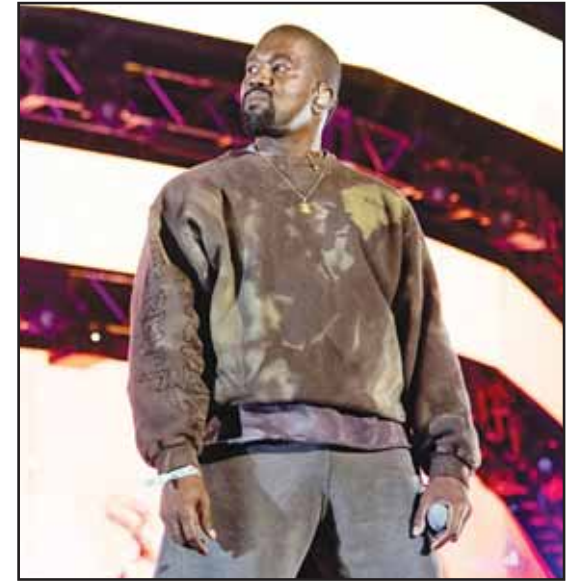
Angeles, marking his first major US performances in nearly five years. There, fans appeared to separate his personal beliefs and public statements from his music - and were ready to forgive after his January apology letter.

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

A representative for Ye didn't immediately reply to a request for comment Monday.

A senior member of the British government said Tuesday that Ye should "absolutely not" play the Wireless Festival, as the rapper offered to meet members of the UK's Jewish community and show he has changed since provoking outrage with antisemitic statements.

Organizers are under mounting pressure from sponsors and politicians to cancel the gigs by the rapper, who has drawn widespread condemnation for making antisemitic remarks and voicing admiration for Adolf Hitler.



Kanye West, who changed his name to Ye in 2021, performs at the Coachella Music & Arts Festival in Indio, Calif., on April 20, 2019. (AP)

Rap star's case

Acquitted man may be freed

NEW YORK, April 7. (AP): A man who was convicted and then cleared of killing rap star Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC could be freed within days after a judge granted him \$1 million bond on Monday.

Karl Jordan Jr. wasn't automatically let go because he still faces drug charges unrelated to the pioneering DJ's 2002 death. For now, Jordan remains behind bars while prosecutors decide this week whether to appeal the bond decision. If they don't, he'll go free as soon as his bond paperwork is in order.

"There's a real chance, Mr. Jordan, that you may be released in the very near term,"

US District Judge LaShann DeArcy Hall said. If that happens, she added, "I wish you luck. And you will stay out of trouble."

Jordan quietly agreed as more than a dozen of his relatives and supporters looked on from the audience. Some have attended nearly six years of court dates in his case and 17 agreed to co-sign his bond. Jordan's loved ones also agreed to put up Southern properties worth a total of \$525,000. If released, he will be under electronic monitoring.

His lawyers declined to comment after court.

Jam Master Jay, born Jason Mizell, was fatally shot in his New York City recording studio in 2002. As the DJ in Run-DMC, he helped rap reach music's mainstream with 1980s hits including "It's Tricky" and a remake of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way." He later mentored up-and-comers including a young 50 Cent.

After the case went cold for years, Jordan and Ronald Washington were arrested in 2020. Washington, now 61; and Jordan, 42, denied the charges.

A jury convicted the men in 2024, after hearing eyewitness testimony that Jordan shot Mizell while Washington blocked the door. But in December 2025, DeArcy Hall unraveled Jordan's conviction and acquitted him, while upholding the verdict against Washington.

Her reasoning centered on whether prosecutors had proven that the killing was narcotics-related, a requirement of the federal murder charge in this case. Witnesses testified that after Run-DMC's heyday, Mizell dabbled in cocaine deals to pay his bills and was providing drug-trade opportunities to Jordan and Washington - the DJ's godson and old friend, respectively.

The judge concluded that the jury heard sufficient evidence that Washington was bitter at Mizell about the collapse of a planned drug transaction in Baltimore. But there wasn't such proof, "just conjecture," that Jordan had the same animus. DeArcy Hall wrote.

Prosecutors are appealing her decision to acquit Jordan of Mizell's killing.

Jordan's attorneys argued that he ought to get bond while that appeal and the outstanding drug and weapons charges play out.

Jordan, whose girlfriend is a city jail official, "is not a danger to the community. But his continued detention is a danger to Mr. Jordan," lawyer John Diaz said at a March 13 hearing. Jordan was stabbed and seriously wounded in Brooklyn's troubled federal jail last year; other inmates were charged with assaulting him.

Prosecutors deplored the stabbing but urged the judge to continue detaining Jordan, maintaining that he remained a flight risk.



Jay

Television

Iconic TV trio reflects on fame and impact

Jackson, Smith and Ladd reunite for 'Charlie's Angels' 50th anniversary

LOS ANGELES, April 7. (AP): Once upon a time there were three little girls who starred as private detectives answering to a never-seen boss in a show that turned into a pop culture phenomenon called "Charlie's Angels."

Kate Jackson, Jaclyn Smith and Cheryl Ladd reunited to mark the show's 50th anniversary at PaleyFest LA on Monday night. They were greeted with a standing ovation and whoops and cheers from an audience at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

The hour-long crime adventure series debuted on Sept. 22, 1976, in a pre-Internet and streaming world when there were just three major television networks. It was a top-10 hit for ABC in its first two of five seasons, ending in 1981.

"I knew the show was different, special and unique," Smith told the audience. "Three women chasing danger instead of getting rescued."

Jackson added, "We made an impact, I think."

Farrah Fawcett-Majors became a 1970s icon with her feathered hair and sexy swimsuit poster. She left after the first season to pursue a film career. She died in 2009.

She was replaced by Ladd, who showed up on her first day wearing a Farrah Fawcett Minor T-shirt. She had turned down producer Aaron Spelling three times, knowing how beloved Fawcett had been.

"I knew that there was nobody that was going to replace Farrah, so I made a joke of myself," Ladd said on the red carpet. "Everybody laughed. Farrah would have done something like that."

Jackson added, "Cheryl stepped in and we didn't miss a beat."

Critics weren't kind, however, calling the show "jiggle television" because the women dressed scantily to go undercover and slamming it for vapid acting.

"It didn't bother me," Jackson said on the red carpet. "I knew what we were doing and Gloria Steinem knew what we were doing, and some other very impressive people knew what we were doing. We were helping to punch a hole in that glass ceiling and that makes a big difference."

Five decades later, the show remains popular in reruns and DVDs, having spawned a film series starring Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz and Lucy Liu.

"We were giving people an hour to sit back, put their feet up, forget everything and watch television," Jackson said, "and then again just kind of subtly getting the message in there that women are just as capable, intelligent, can do anything that a man can do."

The mostly older audience cheered and laughed as scenes from various episodes were played. Included in the highlights were Shelley Hack, who lasted one season after replacing Jackson, and the late Tanya Roberts, who appeared in the final season. Smith and the late David Doyle, who played Charlie's go-between, were on the show's entire run.

Smith, who is 80, and Ladd, who is 74, went on to prolific careers in made-for-TV movies and guesting on other shows. Jackson, who quit after three seasons, later starred in



From left: Kate Jackson, Jaclyn Smith and Cheryl Ladd, cast members in the classic television series 'Charlie's Angels,' pose together at the PaleyFest LA 50th anniversary celebration of the show on Monday, April 6, at Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Cast members Kate Jackson, (from left), Jaclyn Smith and Cheryl Ladd pose on the set of 'Charlie's Angels' in Los Angeles in March 1978. (AP)

the CBS hit "Scarecrow and Mrs. King."

Jackson left the business nearly 20 years ago to raise her son. Now 77, she said, "I'm ready to go back."

The trio's sisterhood includes all of them overcoming breast cancer, with Ladd revealing for the first time publicly Monday that she had an aggressive form of the disease. She didn't say when it occurred.

"When Cheryl called me," Smith said, "the first thing I did was send her my wigs."

Smith was at Jackson's bedside during her cancer battle. Each of them urged the audience to have regular health screenings.

In one of many lighter moments, the women were asked to name their favorite outfits.

"I wore a lot of turtlenecks," Jackson said, drawing laughs.

Smith singled out her tiny white bikini seen in the opening credits.

Ladd recalled, "Bikinis, a lot of bikinis."

Smith joked, "Our ratings went up."

Jackson, Smith and Ladd will reunite again on May 14 when they are among the recipients at the Paley Honors gala in New York. Smith's memoir titled "I Once Knew a Guy Named Charlie" comes out in September.

"I was really proud to be part of that show," said Ladd, who always welcomed fans expressing their fondness for the Angels. "I felt so loved. You couldn't be in a bad mood. It was always uplifting to hear it."



Dave Franco (left) and Isa Mazzei arrive at the premiere of 'Faces of Death' on Monday, April 6, at Hollywood American Legion Post 43 in Los Angeles. (AP)



Cameron Diaz and Matt Bomer attend the world premiere of Apple TV's 'Outcome' at AMC Lincoln Square on Monday, April 6, in New York. (AP)



Variety

HOLLYWOOD, Florida: The rapper Offset was shot Monday and is stable, according to a spokesperson for the Migos rapper, but his exact condition is unknown.

He is being treated at a hospital and being closely monitored, the spokesperson said in a statement.

Offset was formerly married to Cardi B, with whom he has three children.

The Seminole Police Department said a person sustained injuries that were not life-threatening Monday evening at a valet area outside of the Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood, Florida. The police department did not identify the victim.

Two people were detained by police and officials are investigating the incident, according to a statement from the police department.

"The site is secure and there is no threat to the public," according to the police department. "Operations continue as normal."

Offset's cousin Takeoff, another member of Migos, was shot dead in 2022. (AP)

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LOS ANGELES: A judge has allowed Lil Nas X to enter a mental health diversion program intended to lead to the dismissal of charges of attacking Los Angeles police officers.

Judge Alan Schneider told the "Old Town Road" rapper and singer on Monday that if he sticks to his treatment program and obeys all laws for two years, his four felony counts will be dismissed.

The court found that the incident was the result of his since-diagnosed bipolar disorder and was an aberration from his usual behavior. The program, formally known as postponement of prosecution probation, also requires that he not possess guns or threaten violence.

Authorities allege that the 26-year-old was walking naked down a street in LA's San Fernando Valley in August, and charged at police officers who were responding to calls about him. A criminal complaint says three officers were hurt. Photos and video apparently shot before the police confrontation showed him walking in the street in only white briefs and white boots.

He pleaded not guilty to three felony counts of battery with injury on a police officer along with one count of resisting an executive officer. (AP)

□ □ □

SALT LAKE CITY: A Utah judge is set to hear arguments Tuesday on a protective order sought by a former partner against Taylor Frankie Paul, the star of "The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives" and a recently filmed season of "The Bachelorette" that was canceled over abuse allegations in the relationship.

Dakota Mortensen, who has temporary custody of his and Paul's 2-year-old son, is asking the court to turn a short-term protective order against her into a long-term one as authorities investigate domestic violence reports from earlier this year.

Paul and Mortensen are expected to participate in the hearing remotely while their lawyers appear in person at the Salt Lake City courthouse. Details of the temporary protective order have been kept sealed.

Attorneys are expected to address reports under investigation from February, not a 2023 fight that led to Paul's arrest and resurfaced just before her "Bachelorette" season was supposed to premiere, though the older issues may be discussed.

ABC last month announced the unprecedented move of shelving an entire, already-filmed new season of "The Bachelorette" with Paul in the title role. The network and its parent company Disney blamed the cancellation on a leaked video, shot in 2023 and posted by TMZ on March 19, in which Paul appears to punch, kick and throw chairs at Mortensen while her young daughter watches and cries. (AP)



Offset

'Small Scale Sinners'

Pakistan's Mahreen Sohail wins PEN/Faulkner prize

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): Mahreen Sohail's "Small Scale Sinners," a wide-ranging debut collection of stories set everywhere from a college campus to a training camp for child soldiers, has won the PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction.

"With sharp and striking prose, 'Small Scale Sinners' performs the magical feat of encompassing every aspect of humanity in a slim volume of stories, which reveals the hearty landscape of desire, rage, love, and loss contained in nearly every life," PEN/Faulkner Awards Committee Chair Lauren Francis-Sharma said in a statement released Monday.

Sohail is from Pakistan and now lives in Washington, D.C. In a statement Monday, she said worked on the book for a decade to "map out possible ways of being an independent woman in the world."

She will receive \$15,000 for the award, which in previous years has been given to authors including



This cover image released by A Public Space shows 'Small Scale Sinners' by Mahreen Sohail. (AP)

Philip Roth, Don DeLillo and Ann Patchett among others.

From book bans to basement makeovers

10 win I Love My Librarian Award for making a difference

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): There are many ways to win an I Love My Librarian Award.

You might be a fighter against book bans, like Valerie Byrd Fort at the University of South Carolina; or a mentor for graduate students researching biomedicine, like Joanne Doucette at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, or transform a dark basement into a gathering space for families, like Mary Anne Russo at the Hubbard Public Library in Ohio.

They are among 10 recipients of the I Love My Librarian Award, which comes with a \$5,000 cash prize and a \$750 stipend for the American Library Association's annual convention, held this year in Chicago from June 25-29. The winners were selected from a pool of more than 1,300 submissions by library patrons who explain how a "librarian made a difference in your life or gone above and beyond to serve your community."

"We recognize the remarkable contributions these 10 librarians



Books are displayed on shelves in an elementary school library in suburban Atlanta on Aug 18, 2023. (AP)

make for our communities, for learning, for our health and for the public good." ALA President Sam Helmeck said in a statement Monday. "These librarians are people who power possibility

in our neighborhoods, our schools, and our places of higher learning. Their leadership, creativity, and innovation strengthen the communities they serve, and we are proud to honor them."

Other winners include Tracy Fitzmaurice from Jackson County, North Carolina, praised by the ALA as a "transformative leader for rural libraries"; Deb Sica of the Alameda County Library, in Fremont, California, a champion of diversity and intellectual freedom; Zachary Stier, who has worked for years on literacy projects at the Ericson Public Library, in Boone, Iowa; and Christine Szeluga of New Jersey's Cranford High School, where she secured grants for a podcast studio and history archive.

Also cited were Mahasin Ameen, whose initiatives at Indiana University cover everything from health literacy to information literacy; Mia Gittlen, who transformed the shuttered library at California's Milpitas High School; and Jenny Cox of South Carolina's Georgetown Middle School who worked to boost funding for thousands of new books.

The awards, established in 2008, are presented by the ALA, the New York Public Library and Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Lifestyle



An artisan displays an eggshell porcelain bowl in Jingdezhen, east China's Jiangxi Province, March 10, 2026. (Xinhua)



This photo taken on Oct. 18, 2025 shows cultural and creative products exhibited during the 2025 China Jingdezhen International Ceramic Expo in Jingdezhen, east China's Jiangxi Province. (Xinhua)



A guest of the Global Mayors Dialogue visits China Ceramics Museum in Jingdezhen, east China's Jiangxi Province, Oct. 18, 2025. (Xinhua)

China's 'Porcelain Capital' maintains edge with 'soul'

Jingdezhen's answer to AI: What makes us truly human?

By Gui Tao and Huang Haoran

NANCHANG, April 7, (Xinhua): Our encounter with Jingdezhen, an eastern Chinese city with over 1,700 years of ceramic-making history, began, improbably, with a lump of clay.

In a modest workshop, tourists gathered to experience the ancient pleasure of shaping earth by hand. The clay spun obediently at first, then faltered the moment attention wavered. A craftsman nearby offered quiet instruction: steady your mind, steady your hands. Only then can the object in your imagination take shape.

For centuries, the essence of porcelain-making here has rested on a deceptively simple principle: unity of mind and hand. In Jingdezhen, the hand is not merely an instrument of thought. It is thought itself. Porcelain emerges when human intention passes through earth and fire, becoming something durable enough to outlast its maker. In the process, humans have shaped more than objects. They have shaped systems of order, taste, and labor itself.

The Chinese "porcelain capital" offers something increasingly rare: the experience of making. Even in an era when algorithms can orchestrate machines and ideas can

become reality at digital speed, the city remains unapologetically committed to craft. The value of a handmade porcelain piece still depends on the skill and reputation of the artisan. The traditional process, often described as requiring "72 steps," endures less as a literal count than as a philosophy: every step is a decision, and every decision leaves a human trace.

Consider the kiln master Hu Jiawang, reputedly the last of his kind in Jingdezhen. At 82, he can gauge the temperature of a wood-fired kiln by simply spitting into it and observing how quickly the moisture evaporates. "In the kiln, the wind changes, so do the wood and the glaze," he explained. "The fire is nothing but alive."

Hu is no nostalgic Neo-Luddite. He acknowledged that machines can shape clay faster, and AI can generate decorative patterns in seconds. But, he insisted, neither can produce a vessel with "soul." A slight tremor in a human hand and a barely perceptible deviation in a brushstroke are not flaws, but signatures of life.

He spoke candidly about Jingdezhen's decline in the 19th century, when it fell behind technologically. While British kilns adopted thermometers after the Industrial Revolution, Jingdezhen still relied on incense sticks to measure time.

Within a century, the city had lost its edge.

The lesson, Hu suggested, is not to resist technology but to recognize its limits. "Use it where it excels," he said. "Hold fast to what only humans can do."

Today, a new wave of technology is quietly transforming the city, the most important ceramic production center in China. Robots sell ceramic "blind boxes," while university labs experiment with AI-assisted kiln firing, using real-time data to fine-tune temperature and flame. Algorithms piece together fragments of ancient porcelain, and blockchain helps ensure the authenticity of renowned brands. Each innovation pushes porcelain-making toward greater precision, higher yields, lower costs, and fewer surprises, but never fully replaces the human touch.

And yet, Jingdezhen resists total control. It preserves a margin of unpredictability.

In industrial logic, uncertainty is noise. In human experience, however, it is meaningful. A wood-fired kiln, even with identical materials and conditions, produces wildly different results each time. The moment the kiln is opened resembles a ritual of revelation. A single accident, say, a sudden drop in temperature caused by a power outage, can transform an ordinary piece into something extraordinary.

More unpredictable still is the human being. An artisan's mood seeps into the work: joy lifts a line while sorrow weighs it down. AI can replicate the form, but not the feelings behind it.

"In the end, it's not about who makes something better," 87-year-old local master craftsman Liu Yuanchang told me. "It's about who makes it true." By "true," he clarified, he meant something elusive yet precise: genuine human emotion embedded in the form.

He described Jingdezhen as a laboratory, not of materials, but of humanity itself. It is in here that tradition and technology, craft and code, are constantly tested against one another. The central question remains: what can be delegated to machines, and what must remain human?

Visitors often find themselves lingering in Jingdezhen longer than planned. It is tempting to interpret this as a form of escape from modern life. That explanation, however, falls short.

What draws people here is not retreat, but recognition. For over 1,000 years, Jingdezhen has persisted through a form of manufacturing that is, by modern standards, inefficient. Yet it respects something fundamental: the human urge to create, and to see oneself reflected in what one makes.

27th JIFF set for April 29-May 8

Jeonju festival to display spectrum of global films

JEONJU, South Korea, April 7, (AP): The 27th Jeonju International Film Festival (JIFF) is set to run from April 29 to May 8 in Jeonju, featuring 237 movies from 54 countries. Jeonju—the most authentic Korean city and a prominent tourist destination in Asia known for its tradition and cuisine—will host this year's film festival under the slogan "Beyond the Frame."

Opening the 27th edition will be Kent Jones's "Late Fame," while the film "The Longest Night: Namtaeryong" directed by Kim Hyun-ji will close the festival.

In addition, a special program honors the late Korean actor Ahn Sung-ki, who passed away last year. Titled "Special Focus: Ahn Sung-ki's Memorable Films Yet Rarely Seen," it showcases seven of his films to pay tribute to a distinguished acting career defined by ceaseless artistic challenges.

The festival will present "Special Focus: New York Underground - The Mavericks," a program that proposes an alternative perspective on the dominant structures of investment, production, and distribution within the film industry. By showcasing major works by directors Robert Downey Sr., Jack Smith, and Carolee Schneemann, the section reexamines the cinematic spirit of the "New York Underground."

This year's "Cinephile JEONJU" section features a curated selection of films that subvert conventional genre boundaries. It highlights the work of Pere Portabella, known for redefining Spanish cinematic forms, alongside independent art films from Hong Kong. These selections, which combine distinct authorial perspectives with experimental forms, present new possibilities for cinema.

A variety of side events will also take place throughout the city's iconic landmarks, such as Jeonju Movie Street in Gosa-dong. The event includes "the 12th 100 Films 100 Posters exhibition" and "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" in Jeonju, offering fresh experiences for both domestic and international visitors.

Yoon Dong-uk, Acting Chair of the JIFF Organizing Committee, said, "The JIFF has established itself as Asia's premier film festival and a meaningful venue where global filmmakers can interact with audiences and present their creative works. We hope many filmmakers, tourists, and audiences visit Jeonju, the city of Korean cinema, where Korean authenticity is best preserved."

Tech Tip

Experts advise on using tech in job searches

How AI can (and can't) help you in job hunt

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): For many job seekers, it might seem like there's never been a harder time to find a job.

Hiring for white-collar jobs has been especially weak, part of what economists call a "low-hire, low-fire" job market in which businesses are largely holding onto their workers while hiring remains sluggish, making it difficult for younger workers to land permanent work.

Technology is also shaking up the hiring process. Automated systems enable job seekers to easily apply to more jobs, but those same systems also makes it even tougher to get noticed. According to data from hiring platform Greenhouse, the average recruiter has 3.5 times more job applications to sift through than they did a few years earlier.

But artificial intelligence has offered job seekers new ways to stand out, such as improving resumes or helping with interview prep. Here's advice from experts on how to use technology to your benefit:

An updated resume is one of the basic tenets of a job search. AI is a great tool for revamping CVs and cover letters but experts warn that everyone else has also already realized this.

AI "absolutely does risk reducing your job application materials to the same style as every other applicant's," said Daniel Zhao, chief economist at online job and recruitment site Glassdoor. "As a hiring manager, this is something I have seen myself in application materials that have clearly been customized using AI. For job seekers, that makes it hard for your application to stand out from your peers."

Instead, take it a step further by using AI to "personalize your approach" to the companies you're most interested in, recommends Daniel Chait, CEO of recruitment firm Greenhouse. You could, for example, get AI to read all of a company's reports for the past year or analyze its job openings to "help you improve your cover letter or the wording of your resume in very specific ways," he said.

A lot of people think there are secret tricks to getting a resume past the automated system that screens applications. One long-held belief is that you can add in keywords in white text, which a human won't see but a computer will.

But the latest systems have long since moved on from that practice, said Chait.

"There's no secret keyword you can put in, that's just wasting your time. Don't bother doing that."

You shouldn't just rely on your resume to land a job.

"The resume is still an important part of the job search process but it is not sufficient. You need far more than your

resume," said Pat Whelan, a product manager at LinkedIn.

With the rise of AI seeping into many parts of work life, Whelan said job seekers should show off any AI skills they have.

LinkedIn has teamed up with some AI platforms, such as Lovable and Relay.app, to certify that a user has the proficiency to use AI tool, for example, vibe code an app.

Others, however, say it's more important to make sure you have basic AI skills that the office jobs of the future will require, and which can be easily transferred.

"When the state of art is shifting so rapidly, focusing on narrow AI certifications or skills isn't as important as being thoughtful about the benefits and risks and also being able to adapt quickly," Zhao said.

The rules of the recruitment game are changing quickly and employers are now starting to include AI in their hiring guidelines, so do check whether the company you're applying to has any rules to follow.

Target, software company SAP, cybersecurity company Zscaler and even the British civil service are among employers that outline do's and don'ts of using AI during recruiting. Acceptable uses generally include formatting resumes, explaining technical concepts and brainstorming, while inappropriate uses include using AI to invent skills, achievements or complete assessments.

The process, from initial application to final interview, should "be an authentic representation of your own skills, experience, and thought process. This principle is especially important in the age of AI," cloud security firm Zscaler says.

If you've made it through to the interview stage, AI can be a useful tool to help prep for your conversation with a hiring manager.

Chait recommends getting the AI to tell you everything about the company, the industry, the job, the hiring manager, and the best practices of interviewing.

Then, he advises spending an hour or two with the AI, getting it to ask you mock interview questions, which will help make sure that you've got good answers prepared for the real thing.

But don't use AI as an interview cheat. There are AI tools marketed to job seekers to help them pass remote job interviews and tests, but experts say you should avoid the temptation to use them.

These tools typically are used to listen to the interview questions and provide answers in a window overlaid on

the video call. But it's often pretty obvious to the interviewer that you're using them.

Chait said customers have told him of interviews they've done in which the applicant has responded to every single question by saying, "Let me think for a minute," before replying, making it obvious they were reading off the AI answer.

"You're not fooling anyone," he said.

Get ready for AI-powered job interviews:

One emerging trend that job seekers should be ready for is the AI-powered interview. More employers are expected to start deploying bots to carry out at least the initial round of interviews, either by text chat, audio call or a video avatar.

While the tech is still in its early days, Chait predicted AI interviews would quickly spread because they allow for a better and fairer interview experience.

"Being comfortable with being screened by a bot first is something that will help give you an edge as a job seeker. It will make you applicable to more jobs," Chait said.

AI technology is also powering employment scams on both sides of the hiring equation.

Workers should be on the lookout for phony recruitment ads designed to con desperate people. These postings, often shared by email or through text messages, typically say a well-known company is hiring and will ask the recipient to follow a link for more information.

But experts say you should verify that it's a real job by going directly to the hiring company's website or looking on a reputable job board to see if the job is actually posted.

If you click the link, there's a good chance you'll end up talking to a scammer who wants to hire you for a non-existent job. They'll want you to provide identification, a social security number or bank details so they can supposedly put you on the payroll, Chait said.

Employers, meanwhile, are increasing scrutiny for remote hires. They're learning to be wary after some companies unwittingly hired North Koreans as remote IT employees, earning money for Pyongyang.

Job hunters should be prepared for identity verification requests from potential employers, who typically ask an applicant to take a selfie and compare it against their government-issued ID.

LinkedIn also offers a verification service that works either by checking ID or sending a confirmation request to a work email.

'Gulf states key donors in conflict-hit health operations'

GCC among region's most digitally advanced in healthcare: WHO

GENEVA, April 7, (KUNA): The World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday that GCC countries, particularly Kuwait, rank among the most digitally advanced health systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

It added their experience could help inform health responses in fragile and crisis-affected settings, noting their dual role as humanitarian actors supporting emergency health operations.

Responding to KUNA, WHO spokesperson Christian Lindmeier said GCC states are technologically advanced and key donors delivering health interventions in conflict-affected countries, including Yemen, Syria, Sudan and the occupied Palestinian territory.

He explained domestic digital health capacity, including telemedicine platforms, electronic health records and logistics systems, could be deployed in emergency operations, particularly amid ongoing crises.

The UN official said that Kuwait and its neighbours rapidly scaled national telemedicine and e-health systems during the COVID-19 pandemic. That experience and infrastructure are instructive for designing systems that remain resilient under stress.

When asked about artificial intelligence's role in health response in conflict zones, Lindmeier said digital transformation and AI could support health systems in conflict zones, but their effectiveness depends on infrastructure, governance and human oversight.

He described AI and digital tools as valuable in addressing gaps in expertise and capacity, including diagnostic support in the absence of specialists, triage for

overwhelmed workers and improve supply chain management.

He also highlighted portable technologies, such as handheld ultrasound devices and rapid diagnostic tests, as practical solutions in low-resource and insecure environments.

However, Lindmeier stressed such technologies require minimum conditions, including reliable electricity, connectivity, data systems and regulatory oversight, often lacking in conflict zones.

"AI cannot replace the fundamentals of a health system - workforce, medicines and infrastructure," he said, emphasizing its role remains complementary and must be carefully governed by health authorities.

Telemedicine has emerged as one of the most practical tools in insecure environment settings, enabling remote consultations and reducing the need for risky patient transfers.

He noted remote consultations are widely used in conflict and post-disaster settings, allowing frontline workers to access specialist advice without physical movement.

In contrast, remote surgery and robotics remain largely impractical in conflict zones due to reliance on stable, high-bandwidth connectivity and controlled clinical environments.

Lindmeier warned the Eastern Mediterranean Region faces one of the world's most acute health crises, with 14 conflict-affected countries in the region.

Environmental health risks are rising due to attacks on energy infrastructure, he added, while disruptions to airspace and transport routes are straining supply

chains and delaying medicines and vaccines.

He expressed concern over increasing attacks on health facilities, workers and patients, describing the trend as deeply alarming.

He added the escalation in the Middle East has intensified challenges, particularly in Lebanon, with over 1.16 million displaced, and in Iran with at least 3.2 million displaced.

According to recent WHO report the UN health Agency verified incidents include 88 attacks on health care in Lebanon and 30 in Iran within one month.

In Sudan, WHO documented 214 attacks since April 2023, resulting in 2,042 deaths and 784 injuries, severely disrupting already fragile health systems, and only 54 percent of health facilities remain fully functional, with disease outbreaks and malnutrition increasing amid ongoing conflict.

In the occupied Palestinian territory, WHO verified more than 200 attacks on health facilities and 217 damaged ambulances. In Gaza, shortages of fuel and medical supplies continue to disrupt essential services, including maternal care, dialysis and cancer treatment.

"Attacks on health care are unacceptable and must stop immediately," Lindmeier said, urging protection of health workers and facilities at all times.

The UN official stressed strengthening health system resilience in conflict areas requires practical investments, international cooperation and protection of medical personnel under international humanitarian law.



A mother administers a nebulizer treatment for her child suffering from measles at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Monday, April 6, amid a countrywide outbreak. (AP)

Bird flu spreads in Nepal

Measles outbreak kills over 100 children in Bangladesh

DHAKA, Bangladesh, April 7, (AP): Bangladesh is conducting emergency measles-rubella vaccinations while trying to contain an ongoing outbreak that has killed more than 100 children in less than a month.

The government in partnership with the World Health Organization, the UN children's agency and the Gavi vaccine alliance began working to vaccinate children age 6 months to 5 years old in 18 high-risk districts Sunday and will expand nationwide in phases from next month, a joint statement said.

A UNICEF official said the agency was deeply concerned about the sharp rise in cases, which was putting the youngest and most vulnerable children at serious risk. "This resurgence highlights critical immunity gaps, particularly among zero-dose and under-vaccinated children, while infections among infants under nine months, who are not yet eligible for routine vaccination, are especially alarming," said Rana Flowers, the agency's representative in Bangladesh.

More than 900 cases of measles have been confirmed among 7,500 suspected cases reported since March 15, according to the official data in the South Asian nation of more than 170 million people.

Measles is a highly contagious airborne disease causing fever, respiratory symptoms and a characteristic rash and can sometimes have severe or fatal complications, especially in young children, according to WHO.

Vaccination is crucial to preventing the spread of measles, but the WHO says 95% of the population has to be vaccinated in order to stop the disease from spreading.

Bangladesh's Health Minister Sardar Mohammed Sakhawat Husain responding to questions in Parliament said Monday that the new outbreak was caused by the mismanagement and failures of past governments.

He said the previous government of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and an interim government headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus failed to make proper decisions regarding vaccine stockpiles, causing shortages affecting vaccines for measles and six other diseases.

The vaccination campaign for measles was disrupted during Bangladesh's recent political upheavals. Hasina was ousted in a mass uprising in 2024, and Yunus led an interim administration that transferred power to an elected government after an election in February.

Also:

KATHMANDU: The H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza, also commonly called bird flu, has spread across four districts of Nepal, a government official said on Tuesday.

The highly pathogenic virus has been detected in 23 poultry farms in **Morang, Sunsari, Jhapa and Chitwan districts, Indira Sharma**, an information officer at the Department of Livestock Services, told Xinhua. This year, the bird flu was first detected in the farms in Morang district on March 18.

"We are putting all our efforts together to ensure it doesn't spread further," Sharma told Xinhua. As per the department's report, a total of 113,608 birds, including chickens and ducks, and 211,867 eggs have been destroyed from the affected places as of Saturday.

Droughts push regions to seawater

Desalination grows as water scarcity rises

NEW YORK, April 7, (AP): As climate change intensifies droughts, disrupts rainfall patterns and fuels wildfires, more regions are turning to the sea for drinking water.

Desalination, which is the process of removing salt from seawater, offers a way to produce freshwater in regions that lack sufficient rain, rivers or groundwater to meet demand. Today, it supplies water to hundreds of millions of people worldwide, from the Middle East to the US, and its use is growing as water scarcity deepens.

Here's what you need to know.

Most modern desalination plants rely on a process known as reverse osmosis. Seawater is forced at high pressure through a semi-permeable membrane that allows water molecules to pass through while blocking most salts and other impurities. The result is freshwater on one side and a highly concentrated salt solution, known as brine, on the other.

Before the water reaches the membrane, the seawater is typically filtered to remove debris and microorganisms that could clog equipment. Afterward, the freshwater is treated again to meet drinking water standards, often including the addition of minerals.

An older method, thermal desalination, involves heating seawater until it evaporates, then condensing the vapor back into liquid, leaving the salt behind. While still used in some regions, it is generally more energy intensive.

In the Middle East, countries such as Kuwait and Oman source more than 85% of their drinking water from desalination, according to a 2022 report by the French Institute of International



Pipes carrying brackish feed water run through the Carlsbad desalination plant in Carlsbad, Calif., Dec. 2, 2025. (AP)

Relations think tank.

It's also widely used in parts of Africa and Australia, as well as in the U.S., particularly in drought-prone coastal areas like California and Texas. In some Pacific Island nations, where rising seas have contaminated groundwater with salt, desalination is becoming an increasingly important source of freshwater.

More than 20,000 desalination plants now operate worldwide, and the industry has been expanding at about 7% annually since 2010, according to the International Desalination and Reuse Association.

The process is energy intensive, with plants worldwide producing between 500 and 850 million tons of

carbon emissions annually, according to a 2025 study published in the journal *Water Research*. That's nearing the roughly 880 million tons emitted by the entire global aviation industry, an estimate from industry group Air Transport Action Group.

The byproduct of desalination, highly concentrated brine, is typically discharged back into the ocean, where it can harm seafloor habitats and coral reefs by increasing salinity and introducing chemicals used during treatment. Meanwhile, intake systems can trap and kill fish larvae, plankton and other organisms at the base of the marine food web - losses that can ripple outward, reducing populations of fish and larger predators that depend on them.

Heart valve test

New compounds fight blood clots

MOSCOW, April 7, (Agencies): Russian researchers have developed new compounds based on spruce extracts, which they say, as shown in lab tests, are effective in slowing blood clotting, according to a recently published study.

According to the study published in the open-access scientific journal *Polysaccharides*, the researchers obtained the chemical compounds after modifying the structure of a natural polysaccharide substance extracted from spruce, a process involving adding sulfates that can make the compounds better dissolve in water.

Natural plant polysaccharides are known for being safe and biocompatible with the human body.

In the study, researchers from the Krasnoyarsk Scientific Center, in partnership with the Siberian Federal University and the Russian Ministry of Health, found in lab tests that the modified compounds can work to slow down blood clotting, which is important in preventing diseases such as thrombosis.

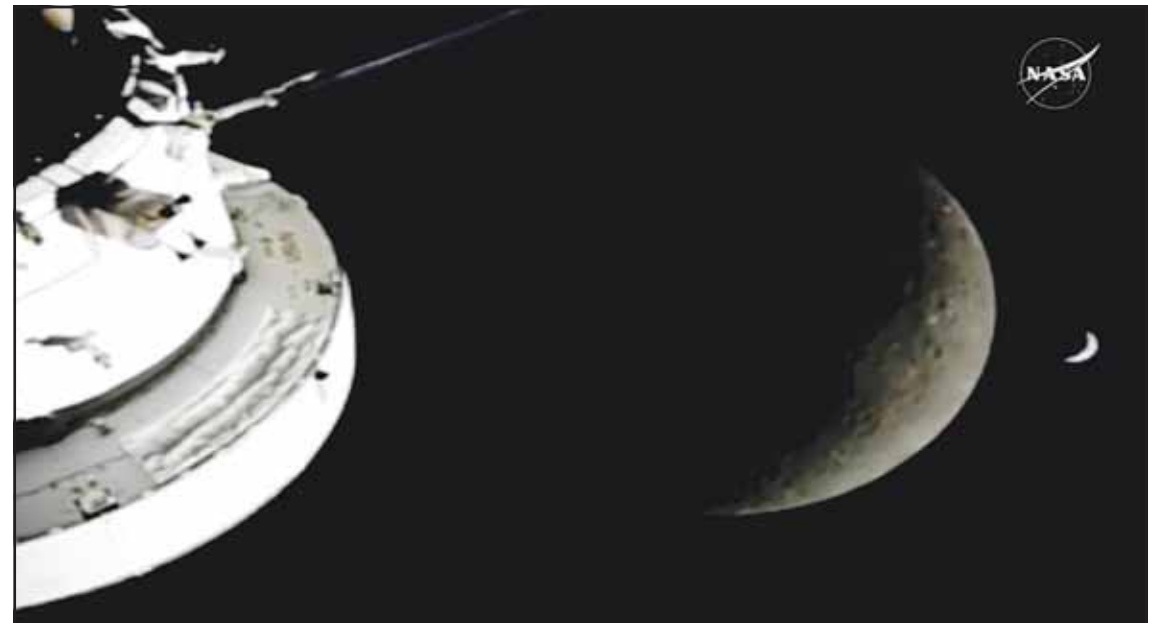
In addition, the online report said that the compounds demonstrated strong antioxidant properties, neutralizing up to 96 percent of free radicals - harmful molecules that can damage cells and speed up aging and the development of diseases.

Researchers believe that the new findings could lead to the development of new, more effective medicines with fewer side effects and lower doses, and that the modified compounds could also be used to develop drug delivery systems and biomedical coatings that resist clot formation.

Also:

MAPLE GROVE, Minn.: VDYNE, Inc. ("VDYNE" or "the Company"), a privately held medical device company developing next generation transcatheter valve replacement technologies, has announced that the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has approved an investigational device exemption (IDE) for the company's pivotal clinical trial evaluating its Transcatheter Tricuspid Valve Replacement (TTVR) system. The IDE approval enables initiation of a US pivotal study at leading clinical centers to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of the VDYNE system in patients with severe tricuspid regurgitation (TR).

Significant unmet clinical needs exist in the treatment of TR with 1.5 million people in the US suffering from TR with a small percentage of those patients eligible to receive surgical treatment. Severe TR is linked to poor prognosis and high mortality (10% at one year), yet current treatment options remain extremely limited.



In this image from video provided by NASA, the Orion Spacecraft, the Earth and the Moon are seen from a camera as the Artemis II crew and spacecraft travel farther into space, Monday, April 6. (AP)



Left: Artemis II mission specialist and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Jeremy Hansen enjoys a shave inside the Orion spacecraft during Flight Day 5 and Artemis II commander and NASA astronaut Reid Wiseman (right) looks out one of the Orion spacecraft's main cabin windows at the Moon ahead of the crew's lunar flyby on April 6. (AP)



Moon mission breaks Apollo 13 distance record

Artemis II crew begins journey home after historic lunar flyby

HOUSTON, April 7, (AP): After traveling deeper into space than any other humans, the Artemis II astronauts pointed their moonship toward home Monday night, wrapping up a lunar cruise that revealed views of the far side never beheld by eyes until now.

Their flyby of the moon - NASA's first return since the Apollo era - even included some celestial sightseeing besides yielding rich science. It was a significant step toward landing boot prints near the moon's south pole in just two years.

A total solar eclipse greeted the three Americans and one Canadian as the moon temporarily blocked the sun from their perspective. Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn nodded at them from the black void. The landing sites of Apollo 12 and 14 also were visible, poignant reminders of NASA's first age of exploration more than half a century ago.

In an especially riveting retro throwback, Artemis II shattered the distance record set by Apollo 13 in 1970. NASA's Orion capsule reached a maximum distance of 252,756 miles (406,771 kilometers) from Earth before hanging a U-turn behind the moon, 4,101 miles (6,600 kilometers) farther than Apollo 13.

"It is blowing my mind what you can see with the naked eye from the moon right now. It is just unbelievable," Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen radioed. He challenged "this generation and the next to make sure this record is not long-lived."

Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell wished the crew well in a recording made two months before his death last August. Mission Control beamed up his message to commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Chris-

tina Koch and Hansen, before their fly-around began.

"Welcome to my old neighborhood," said Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 8, humanity's first lunar visit. "It's a historic day and I know how busy you'll be, but don't forget to enjoy the view."

The Artemis II astronauts carried up with them the Apollo 8 silk patch that accompanied Lovell to the moon. "It's just a real honor to have that on board with us," Wiseman said.

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.

Reducing

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 put the astronauts on course for home once they emerged from behind the moon Monday evening.

Artemis II's lunar fly-around and intense observation period lasted seven hours, by far the highlight of the nearly 10-day test flight that will end with a splashdown in the Pacific on Friday.

Venturing as close as 4,067 miles (6,545 kilometers) to the gray dusty surface, the astronauts zipped through a list of more than two dozen targets, using powerful Nikon cameras as well as their iPhones to zoom in on impact craters and other intriguing lunar features.

Before getting started, they requested permission to name two bright, freshly carved craters. They suggested Integrity, the name of their capsule,

and Carroll, commander Wiseman's wife, who died of cancer in 2020.

Wiseman wept as Hansen put in the request to Mission Control, and all four astronauts embraced in tears.

"Such a majestic view out here," Wiseman radioed once he regained his composure and started picture-taking. The astronauts called down that they managed to capture the moon and Earth in the same shot, and they provided a running commentary to scientists back in Houston on what they were seeing.

At one point, Koch reported an overwhelming sensation of emotion for a second or two while zooming in on the moon. "Something just drew me in suddenly to the lunar landscape and it became real," she said.

The Artemis II astronauts made their closest approach to the moon and reached their maximum distance from Earth while they were out of contact. Their speed at closest approach: 3,139 mph (5,052 kph). The spacecraft accelerated as it appeared from behind the moon and the planned communications blackout and made tracks for Earth.

An Earthrise came into view showing Asia, Africa and Oceania as Mission Control called out: "We are Earth-bound and ready to bring you home." Flight controllers in Houston flipped their mission patches over to signify the return leg.

President Donald Trump phoned the astronauts following the flyby, calling them "modern-day pioneers." "Today you've made history and made all America really proud, incredibly proud," the president said, adding that more lunar traveling is coming and ultimately "the whole big trip to Mars."

Single-port robotic surgery helps liver donors

Saudi hospital achieves liver surgery breakthrough

RIYADH, April 7, (Xinhua): Saudi Arabia's King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center (KFSHRC) has performed a series of single-port robotic liver resections from living donors, marking a milestone in organ transplantation, according to an article published Monday on the hospital's website.

The surgery was done using a single-port robotic system through a tiny 3.5 cm incision, instead of multiple cuts used in traditional robotic surgery. This approach reduces pain, speeds up recovery, and keeps safety high, the KFSHRC said.

The achievement is significant for donor safety. Proce-

dures performed on six donors resulted in reduced blood loss without complications, with low pain levels and discharge within two to three days.

The technique is also used in pediatric liver transplants, where the left lateral segment - about 20 percent of the total liver - is removed. Single-port access reduces the surgical burden on young donors while maintaining safety.

The KFSHRC has performed more than 1,600 robotic living donor liver resections, supported by a model that includes training, simulation, and phased clinical implementation, the statement said.

SPORTS

Desire key in green jacket pursuit

Rose draws confidence from 3 Masters runner-up finishes

AUGUSTA, Ga., April 7, (AP): Justin Rose, the player who missed the cut 21 straight times to start his professional career, has a knack for seeing the glass half-full.

Rose is 45 - only four players older than him have won major championships - and yet he prefers to refer to his "Indian summer" of playing great golf at this stage in his career. Evidence can be found three months ago when he beat a strong field at Torrey Pines.

He became a footnote in Masters history last year when Rory McIlroy beat him in a playoff, making Rose the only player to have twice lost in a playoff at Augusta National without ever having won the Masters green jacket.

The consolation - fine print, at that - is getting his name etched three times on the Masters trophy because the club lists the runner-up each year. The playoff loss to McIlroy. A more crushing playoff loss to Sergio Garcia in 2017. A runner-up by four shots to Jordan Spieth in 2015.

All that means to Rose is he knows his way around Augusta National, and that's the inspiration he brings to the Masters this year.

"I'm very aware that I've been close here," Rose said Monday afternoon. "I'm very aware that I've had tough, tough losses here. I also am aware that I enjoy this place. I don't want to feel that those three second-place finishes need to create a different sort of feeling for me."

The record for winning the silver salver awarded to the runner-up without ever having Tuesday night plans at the Masters Club dinner is held by the late Tom Weiskopf, four times a bridesmaid.

Weiskopf was haunted by coming close without ever winning the Masters, as were so many others over the years. Greg Norman had Larry Mize hole a miracle chip in a playoff in 1987 and blew a six-shot lead to Nick Faldo in 1996. David Duval, who had three chances in a four-year stretch. It's a long, sad list.

There is desire and obsession when it comes to the green jacket.

"I'd say firmly in the desire camp, just because I know that the latter is not going to help me," Rose said. "It's probably professional discipline just to keep it in the desire realm. I think I probably wouldn't let myself go down the other path. Like I said, that probably won't be fruitful. Professionally, I'm not going to do that."

Rose had a two-shot lead with six holes to play and Sergio Garcia in the azaleas left of the 13th hole, but the Spaniard caught him and beat him in a playoff. Last year, Rose holed a 20-foot birdie putt on the 18th and needed McIlroy to make bogey from the fairway on the 18th to get in a playoff.

Both times he lost to friends. That doesn't make it easier.

"The key is showing up. The key is to try to be as free as you can in those moments," Rose said. "Yeah, you have to hope a little bit along the way that it's your day. It could have been my day in a couple of major championships. Hopefully with that mindset, keep chipping away, my day might still happen where a little bit of something goes my way."

And now he returns to Augusta National, which holds so much familiarity as the only major held on the same course every year. That's what can make it so difficult to win after coming so close. There's a lot of scar tissue built up over the years.

Rose is leaning on that half-full glass.

"I hope it only boosts my belief that I can go ahead and do it," he said. "I feel like I've pretty much done what it takes to win. I just haven't walked over the line. I feel like I've executed well enough to have done the job. From that point of view, I don't feel like I have to find something in myself to do something different. I truly believe that."

"No, I don't feel like it owes me anything. I come here with a good attitude. It's a place that I enjoy being. There's certain places you get to and you take a deep breath and go, 'Right, it's nice to be here.' Augusta still is one of those places for me."



Justin Rose, of England, hits from the bunker on the second hole during a practice round at the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga. (AP)

O'Neal starting new Dunkman league

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): Shaquille O'Neal wants to find the best dunker in the world.

O'Neal - who had roughly 4,000 dunks in his NBA career, including playoffs - announced Monday night that he's the founder and inaugural commissioner of Dunkman, which he's touting as the first professional league for dunking.

It follows a Dunkman television series, which aired last year. The league, O'Neal said, will look to build off the popularity of that six-episode series.

In a partnership with TNT Sports, O'Neal's new league will have five live events - four group stage competitions, followed by a title event - featur-

ing 24 dunkers from around the world. At stake: the title of world champion, along with \$500,000.

"These athletes are innovators and Dunkman is going to give them a global stage, real stakes, and a chance to build careers doing what they love," O'Neal said. "We are transforming dunking from a one-night contest to the fastest growing professional sport off two feet."

The league's events will air across a variety of platforms, including TNT, TBS, truTV and HBO Max, along with some social channels. The league said it will use "an Olympic-level scoring system that sets a modern standard for professional dunking," featuring a panel of expert judges.

Castle powers Spurs past 76ers after Wembanyama injury scare



Philadelphia 76ers guard V.J. Edgecombe, left, passes as he is guarded by San Antonio Spurs center Victor Wembanyama during the first half of an NBA basketball game in San Antonio. (AP)

Grizzlies match NBA record by making 29 3-pointers in loss to Cavs; Nuggets move into 3rd

SAN ANTONIO, April 7, (AP): Stephon Castle had 17 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds and the San Antonio Spurs held on to beat the Philadelphia 76ers 115-102 on Monday night after Victor Wembanyama left in the first half due to a left rib contusion.

Wembanyama's status for the final week of the regular season is unknown.

San Antonio (60-19) is 2 1/2 games behind Western Conference-leading Oklahoma City (62-16) and assured of finishing no worse than second in the conference.

Philadelphia lost its second straight as it battles to stay out of the play-in tournament. The 76ers (43-36) are a half-game behind the Toronto Raptors (43-35) for sixth place in the Eastern Conference.

Philadelphia center Joel Embiid had 34 points and 12 rebounds, and Paul George added 16 points.

Wembanyama did not play in the second half after taking an elbow from George near midcourt. Wembanyama was sprinting up-court when George attempted to deflect a pass, but instead struck the 22-year-old in the side at the 1:11 mark of the second quarter. Wembanyama remained on the court for about a minute before being subbed.

Wembanyama returned to play five more minutes before asking San Antonio coach Mitch Johnson to take him out of the game with 44 seconds left in the first half. He did not return.

San Antonio opened a four-game homestand to close its regular season before hosting the first

two games of the opening round of the playoffs.

Wembanyama had 17 points, five rebounds and three blocks in 15:40. It constitutes an official game per the NBA guidelines, which allow two exceptions of 15 to 19:59 minutes to count toward the league-required minimum of 65 games played for award eligibility. Wembanyama has said he wants to win the league's MVP award this season.

Wembanyama had played 63 games this season, including the NBA Cup Final.

Luke Kornet, who started the second half in place of Wembanyama, had 10 points and three rebounds.

It was Castle's fifth triple-double.

Cavaliers 142, Grizzlies 126

In Memphis, Evan Mobley scored 24 points, Dennis Schroder had 22 points and 11 assists, and Cleveland beat Memphis despite the Grizzlies tying the NBA single-game record with 29 3-pointers.

Cleveland (50-29) reached 50 wins for the second straight season and 14th overall.

Memphis (25-54) shot 29 for 59 (49%) from behind the arc with all nine Grizzlies making a 3-pointer. Memphis's franchise record for 3-point shooting matched the NBA mark of 29 shared by the Milwaukee Bucks (versus Miami on Dec. 29, 2020) and the Boston Celtics (versus the New York Knicks on Oct. 22, 2024). Adama Bal broke Memphis' franchise record on the 28th make with 3:25 left and he added another at 1:41.

Magic 123, Pistons 107

In Orlando, Paolo Banchero scored 31 points, Desmond Bane added 25 and the Orlando Magic beat the Detroit Pistons.

Nuggets 137, Trail Blazers 132, OT

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 35 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists, and Denver rallied from a 16-point deficit in the fourth quarter to beat Portland in overtime.

Denver (51-28) moved into third place in the Western Conference with its season-high ninth straight win. Jokic recorded his 33rd triple-double and Jamal Murray scored seven of his 20 points in overtime to move the Nuggets a half-game ahead of the Los Angeles Lakers (50-28).

Portland (40-39) had its three-game winning streak snapped and dropped into ninth in the West, a half-game behind the Los Angeles Clippers.

Jalen Suggs had 12 points, 12 assists, six rebounds and three steals for the Magic, who won for the fourth time in five games.

Jalen Duren and Daniss Jenkins scored 18 points apiece for Detroit. Kevin Huerter and Javonte Green added 17 each for the Pistons, who had 21 turnovers.

Knicks 108, Hawks 105

In Atlanta, CJ McCollum's half-court shot at the buzzer was ruled no good after a review and New York held off Atlanta.

Jalen Brunson made two free throws with 1.2 seconds left to give New York a three-point lead. McCollum took an inbounds pass near the free-throw line and took two dribbles before launching a shot that banked in. But replays showed the ball was still in his hands as time expired.

It was the Hawks' first home loss since early February and put an end to Atlanta's 13-game home win streak.

Brunson led New York with 30 points and 13 assists, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points, 12 rebounds and six assists. MVP chants erupted in State Farm Arena as a 17-point fourth quarter from Brunson carried New York to its 51st win of the season.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker led the Hawks with 36 points, 20 coming in the first half to help Atlanta to a 57-53 lead at halftime.



New York Knicks guard Jalen Brunson (11) dribbles against Atlanta Hawks guard CJ McCollum (3) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Atlanta. (AP)

Ex-Brazil boss Diniz takes charge of Corinthians

Rodríguez returns to Minnesota after hospitalization for dehydration

GOLDEN VALLEY, Minn., April 7, (Agencies): Colombian star James Rodríguez, who was hospitalized last week for severe dehydration, returned to his MLS club Minnesota United to continue his ramp-up to game readiness.

The team announced that Rodríguez reported to the practice facility for a supervised return-to-activity session. His reintegration into full team training will be fully guided by the club's medical staff.

Rodríguez played for Colombia's national

team in an exhibition match against France on March 29, when his symptoms of dehydration began. He was hospitalized two days later for continued monitoring and IV fluid therapy. Since his discharge after a three-day hospital stay, Rodríguez has been recovering at home with continued medical supervision, the team said.

Minnesota United said its medical staff "can unequivocally state there has been no clinical or laboratory evidence of rhabdomyolysis," referring to a rare but life-

threatening condition in which muscles can disintegrate from overexertion or other causes.

The Colombian Football Federation issued a statement last week declaring a favorable prognosis for Rodríguez's recovery and improvement. Colombia's first World Cup match is on June 17 against Uzbekistan.

Rodríguez became a worldwide star at the 2014 World Cup, when he won the Golden Boot award as the tournament's leading scorer with six goals in five

matches. He joined Real Madrid in Spain after that, spending six seasons with the La Liga powerhouse and also had stints with Bayern Munich in Germany's Bundesliga and Everton in the English Premier League.

Since signing with Minnesota United two months ago, Rodríguez has played in just two of six matches with the club.

Former Brazil manager Fernando Diniz has been appointed head coach of Corinthians on a deal

running until December next year, the Brazilian Serie A club said.

The 52-year-old replaces Dorival Junior, who was sacked on Sunday after a 1-0 home defeat to Internacional.

"For me, the game has to be played in the same way the fans experience it, with emotion, grit, intensity and courage," Diniz said in a video published on the club's website. "My heart is already beating in the same rhythm as the fans in the stands. I'm ready." Diniz, who made 50 appearances for

Corinthians as a player in 1997 and 1998, had been out of work since departing ways with Vasco da Gama in February.

His first game in charge will be a visit to Argentina's Platense in the Copa Libertadores group stage on Thursday.

Announcement

The owners of Al-Jazeera Insurance Brokerage Company have submitted a request to the Insurance Regulatory Unit to cease operations and terminate their operating license, number (IBC20230005).

Anyone with an objection should submit it in writing to the Insurance Regulatory Unit at its headquarters located on Khalid Bin Al Waleed Street - Kamco Tower, within thirty days of the date of this announcement. The objection must be accompanied by supporting documentation, otherwise, it will not be considered.

Change Name

I, PAL HIREN SHAH, holder of Indian Passport No. V5153793 having permanent address 6/7, SHREEJIDARSHAN DUPLEX, BH TAPANS VIDHYALAYA, NR VRAJDHAM MANDIR, MANJALPUR, VADODARA, PIN:390011, GUJARAT, INDIA residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as (given name) PAL HIRENKUMAR (and surname) SHAH. Also, my parents name to be read as per below: Earlier Name: JIGNABEN HIREN SHAH Given Name: JIGNA HIRENKUMAR SHAH & Earlier Name: HIREN JAGDISHCHANDRA SHAH Given Name: HIRENKUMAR JAGDISHCHANDRA SHAH

SPORTS

Napoli leapfrogs Milan into 2nd with last-minute winner



AC Milan's Luka Modric, center, and Napoli's Stanislav Lobotka battle for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Milan in Naples, Italy. (AP)

Juventus stays in Champions League hunt

TURIN, Italy, April 7, (AP): Substitute Matteo Politano scored late to give Napoli a 1-0 win over fellow title chaser AC Milan and close the gap on Serie A leader Inter Milan.

With Napoli starting the night in third place, one point behind AC Milan and 10 behind Inter, both clubs knew a win was needed to keep alive their title aspirations.

However, neither showed much urgency or guile in a game that featured few clear scoring chances.

Politano, who replaced Leonardo Spinazzola just five minutes earlier, eventually broke the deadlock with 11 minutes remaining when he fired home a low shot after the Milan defense failed to clear a cross from the left.

Milan poured forward in the final minutes but could not get an equalizer and dropped to third.

Napoli was seven points behind Inter with seven matches remaining. AC Milan was two points further back.

U.S. midfielder Weston McKennie scored for Juventus to beat Genoa 2-0 and was named man of the match.

McKennie netted 17 minutes after kickoff to add to a fourth-minute opener from Brazilian defender Bremer.

McKennie missed two chances to add to his tally, and the woodwork also

came to Genoa's rescue when Jonathan David hit the post.

Genoa defender Aaron Martin missed a golden opportunity to bring the visitor back into the game with 15 minutes remaining when Mattia Perin got down brilliantly to save his penalty kick and his rebound.

The result enabled Juventus to close the gap on fourth-placed Como to one point. Como was held by Udinese to 0-0.

Cesc Fabregas' men were on top for most of the game but could not find a way past Maduka Okoye in the Udinese goal.

The result brought Como's five-game winning streak to an end in Serie A but the point kept alive its hope of winning a Champions League place.

Udinese was comfortably in mid-table, in 11th.

Atalanta remained on track for a top-four finish with a comprehensive 3-0 win at Lecce.

Giorgio Scalvini opened the scoring when he hammered home after some lovely footwork inside the box, and former Lecce striker Nikola Krstovic doubled Atalanta's lead early in the second half with some clinical finishing.

Lecce goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone kept his side in the game with several fine saves, but he could do nothing about the third goal, a vicious strike from Giacomo Raspadori.

The result was the fifth defeat in its last six games for Lecce and left it third from bottom in the table, equal on points with the team above it, Cremonese.

Atalanta was seventh, one point behind Roma.

Reasonable to expect that again

NBA often saves best basketball for playoffs

WASHINGTON, April 7, (AP): The NBA, typically, saves its best for last.

Here's hoping that rings true again this spring.

You may have noticed there's a lot of bad basketball out there right now. Blowouts are happening with record-setting regularity. Some teams are tanking, which is forcing the NBA's hand to make changes to the lottery system. There are some coaches whose jobs are likely in jeopardy; Chicago's front office has already been gutted. And Giannis Antetokounmpo says he and the Milwaukee Bucks need couples therapy, which isn't a great sign for any future they might have together.

Obviously, none of that is good.

But perhaps the real problem here is those storylines - all of which are valid - are overshadowing what is good as the NBA gets set for its best time of year, the playoffs.

Defending champion Oklahoma City is about to clinch another No. 1 seed in the Western Conference, topping the 60-win mark again to hold off Victor Wembanyama and an upstart San Antonio team that looks very much like a title contender. Detroit has gone from a laughingstock to a No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference, and needed only two seasons to complete that ascent.

"Reflect on where we've been, reflect on the work that we've put in to get here, but understanding that this isn't the finish," Pistons coach J.B. Bickerstaff said. "To grow the way this group has grown together, as quickly as it has, it is special. But we've got more food to eat."

Scoring around the league is at its highest clip in more than half a century. Stephen Curry has returned from injury to see if he can spark some postseason magic with Golden State. The coach of the year race might be wide open. The MVP race has tons of intrigue.



New York Knicks head coach Mike Brown reacts during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Atlanta Hawks in Atlanta. (AP)

Wembanyama and Denver's Nikola Jokic just waged an epic battle this past weekend, as did Dallas rookie Cooper Flagg and the Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James - who came away raving about the league's top freshmen like Flagg, Charlotte's Kon Knueppel and Philadelphia's VJ Edgecombe.

"League's in good hands with those rooks," said James, perhaps a passing-of-the-torch sort of sentiment from a 41-year-old who started his NBA career before anyone in that trio of rookie stars had even been born.

It's true there have already been more blowouts - entering Monday, 261 games had been decided by 20 or more points, and 90 games had been decided by 30 or more points - than in any other season in league history. Those are dangerous stats, given how easy it is to turn those numbers into a conclusion that the overall NBA product is bad.

But close games haven't gone away.

Entering Monday, there were 47 NBA games this season decided by exactly one point and 176 decided by three points or less. The average totals in those categories over the last decade: 49 one-point games, 177 one-possession games.

Are some teams giving up on some games? Absolutely.

Did tanking happen? Of course it did. Did it water down the product? Sure seems that way.

The playoffs should put all that in the rearview mirror. That's not to say there won't be blowouts; there will be. But at least there won't be tanking.

Just look at the games that have mattered the most in the last few days - New York beating Atlanta 108-105 on Monday (when the Hawks' CJ McCollum was a milisecond late with a halfcourt heave that went in and would have forced overtime), Houston beating Golden State 117-116 on Sunday and Denver beating San Antonio 136-134 in overtime on Saturday. All down-to-

the-wire, absolute thrillers. That's what's coming in the playoffs, not the likes of Utah losing games by 34 and 35 points in a three-day span, as was the case last week.

Denver coach David Adelman is evidently aware the narrative exists, suggesting there's no good ball being played anywhere. Unprompted, he addressed it after that game against the Spurs.

"I would say this, just kind of off topic, but I know, pessimistic world, sports, pessimism is everywhere," Adelman said. "I would pay to watch these two teams play. This is very good basketball. They're well coached. They have talented, fun players. They play together. Wembanyama, amazing talent. And then on our side, what we have ... yeah, you can build off this for sure."

The Spurs felt the same way. Jokic was brilliant in that win for Denver; Wembanyama was brilliant as well for San Antonio in the loss, and was clearly looking ahead afterward to what that game could mean as far as developing some playoff readiness.

"I think the timing of everything is great," Wembanyama said after that loss. "There's no better way that we would have learned. There's no better outcome of this game to learn from for us."

His eyes are already on the post-season. Plenty of teams are already pivoting that way, either for the play-in that begins April 14 or the start of the actual playoffs on April 18.

Hopefully, it won't take long for the tanking and the blowouts to be forgotten. The push for the Larry O'Brien Trophy awaits.

"I think the league is so, so talented and there (are) so many matchups and so many good teams playing against each other," Jokic said. "I think it's great to be a fan of basketball right now."

Maguire signs contract extension at Man United

Villarreal fails to solidify third spot

GIRONA, Spain, April 7, (AP): Villarreal fell at Girona 1-0 and missed a chance to cement its third-place position in La Liga. With fourth-placed Atletico Madrid losing at home to Barcelona, a win for Villarreal would have taken it four points clear.

However, Arnau's cross hit Pau Navarro and deflected past his own goalkeeper in first-half stoppage time.

It was the only shot on target for either side during a dour opening 45 minutes and neither side was much better in a poor second half. Villarreal remained in third spot, nine points behind Real Madrid and 18 adrift of leader Barcelona. Girona climbed two places into 12th, one point behind Osasuna, Espanyol and Athletic Bilbao.

□ □ □

Harry Maguire signed a one-year contract extension at Manchester United on Tuesday, with the option of a further 12 months.

The England defender was due to be out of contract at the end of the season.

"Harry represents the mentality and resilience required to perform for Manchester United. He is the ultimate professional who brings invaluable experience and leadership to our young, ambitious squad," director of football Jason Wilcox said.

Maguire joined United from Leicester in 2019 for \$97 million, which was a world-record transfer for a defender. He has won the FA Cup and League Cup with the club and has made 266 appearances.

The 33-year-old center-back looked set to leave in 2023 after losing his position under former manager Erik ten Hag. He has since established himself as a key figure and has earned a recall to the England squad ahead of the World Cup.

"Representing Manchester United is the ultimate honour. It is a responsibility that makes myself and my family proud every single day," he said. "I am delighted to extend my journey at this incredible club to at least eight seasons and continue to play in front of our special supporters to create more amazing moments together."

Afify secures silver for Egypt

Algeria's star Nemour shines with 2 titles at Cairo Gymnastics World Cup

CAIRO, April 7, (Xinhua): Algeria's Olympic champion Kaylia Nemour capped a brilliant campaign at the 2026 Artistic Gymnastics Apparatus World Cup in Cairo, winning the women's balance beam title a day after taking gold in the uneven bars.

Nemour's second gold confirmed her status as one of the stand-out performers at the Cairo meet, where top gymnasts from around the world competed across men's and women's apparatus events.

The Algerian star topped the podium in the women's balance beam final, while China's Ke Qingin and Qiu Qiyuan took silver and bronze, respectively.

Nemour had already struck gold on Sunday in the women's uneven bars final, where China's Jiang Shuting earned silver and Slovenia's Lucija Hribar took bronze.

Nemour said she was delighted with her double-gold performance in Cairo, describing the World Cup as another important step in her build-up to future major competitions.

"I'm very happy to have won two gold medals during this World Cup. I enjoyed Cairo 2026 even more than 2025. I think there were improvements and it was more enjoyable, so I'm very happy, and it is another step toward the 2028 Olympics," she

told Xinhua.

She added that each competition plays a key role in her long-term preparation and development.

"Each competition is a good step in my preparation for the World Championships. It gives me experience for later," she said. "In short, it came down to training. Of course, a lot depends on mindset on the day, and we work a lot on that." While Nemour provided one of the clearest highlights of the women's competition, China dominated the final day overall, winning three of the five titles on offer to top the gold tally at the Cairo World Cup.

China opened its gold account on Monday through Ke Qingin in the women's floor exercise, before adding two more titles in the men's events through Liu Yang in the parallel bars and Li Hongyan in the horizontal bar.

Among the other standout performers was Spain's Laia Font, who clinched gold on day one in the vault. She later added a bronze on the final day in the floor exercise, showcasing her versatility.

Armenia also made a strong impression on the closing day, with Artur Davtyan claiming gold in the men's vault final.

Host Egypt had its own proud moment in the men's parallel bars, where Mohamed Afify secured silver to give the home crowd a medal on the final day of competition.

Held from April 3 to 6, the Cairo World Cup brought together 128 gymnasts from 33 countries and regions at the Cairo International Stadium indoor halls complex.



Nemour

Achilles injury ends US forward Agyemang's World Cup hopes

DERBY, England, April 7, (Agencies): United States international Patrick Agyemang will miss his home World Cup after suffering a serious Achilles tendon injury.

Agyemang was visibly emotional when he was stretched off, with his right leg strapped, after landing awkwardly in Derby's 2-0 victory over Stoke in the second-tier English Championship.

Derby confirmed on Tuesday that the striker would miss soccer's biggest tournament, which is being held in the U.S., Canada and Mexico in June and July.

"As a result of this injury, Patrick will unfortunately miss this summer's FIFA World Cup," Derby said in a statement. "At this stage it would be wrong to put a timeline on his recovery."

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Veteran defenders Carlos Zambrano and Miguel Trauco have joined Sport Boys as free agents, the Peruvian club said.

The Peru internationals had been out of work since parting ways with Alianza Lima in January.

"Carlos Zambrano and Miguel Trauco will wear our colors for the entire 2026 season," the Lima-based club said in a statement.

Sport Boys is currently 16th in Peru's top flight standings with eight points from nine games so far this season.

Zambrano and Trauco are expected to make their debut for the club in a home clash against Melgar on April 14.

□ □ □

Alan Lescano scored late as Argentinos Juniors edged to a 3-2 home win over Banfield in Argentina's Apertura tournament.

Nicolas Oroz put the hosts ahead with a low effort from the edge of the penalty area after combining with Hernan Lopez.

Emiliano Viveros doubled the lead by pouncing on a loose ball and drilling a low 20-yard drive that left goalkeeper Facundo Sanguinetti with no chance.

The visitors pulled a goal back through David Zalazar, who danced around his marker before rifling a low strike into the far corner.

Pogacar among riders under probe after railway red-light incident

OUDENAARDE, Belgium, April 7, (AP): Tadej Pogacar is among the riders being investigated for running a red light at a railway crossing during the Tour de Flanders.

Pogacar, who won the race for a record-equaling third time, was in a group of riders who went through the crossing without stopping. The majority of the peloton behind them had to stop before the railway, Belgium officials confirmed there is an ongoing investigation for the riders who alleg-

edly ran the red light. They said no further details were immediately available.

Local media said the riders could face a fine and a driving suspension if found guilty.

Pogacar, who rides for the UAE Team Emirates-XRG team, reportedly said after the race that the signal for them to stop came in too late.

Race officials ordered the riders who went through to slow down so the rest of the peloton could catch up to them again.

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.

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Portland Trail Blazers center Robert Williams III, left, pulls in a rebound as Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokić defends in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

— See Pages 14 & 15

Sports

Michigan fends off UConn surge for 2nd national title

Cadeau leads the Wolverines with 19 points

INDIANAPOLIS, April 7, (AP): High-scoring Michigan had to get down and dirty to dig out the national title, making only two 3-pointers all night but still muscling its way to a 69-63 victory over stingy, stubborn UConn.

Elliot Cadeau led the Wolverines with 19 points, including the team's first 3, which came 7:04 into the second half. The second, from freshman Trey McKenney, came with 1:50 left and felt like a dagger, giving the coach Dusty May's team full of transfers a nine-point lead.

To no one's surprise, UConn fought to the finish. Solo Ball banked in a 3 to cut it to four with 37 seconds left - and after two missed free throws, UConn's Alex Karaban (17 points) barely



Michigan guard Nimari Burnett (4) shoots over UConn forward Alex Karaban during the second half of the NCAA college basketball tournament national championship game at the Final Four in Indianapolis. (AP)

grazed the rim on a 3 that would've cut the deficit to one with 17 seconds left.

Michigan also got out rebounded 22-12 on the offensive glass by a UConn team that would not go away. Not until McKenney sank two free throws to bring Michigan's shooting from the line to 25 for 28 for the night could the Wolverines (37-3) kick off the celebration for the program's second title - the other coming in 1989.

But this game had a 1950s feel to it. "If you'd told me we would shoot it this poorly and (be) dominated on the glass and still find a way to win, I don't know if I would have believed you," May said. "This team just found a way all season."

Michigan had to fight for everything. The Wolverines missed their first 11 shots from 3, finished 2 for 15 from there and won despite the struggles of their best player, Yaxel Lendeborg. Ailing with a hurt knee and foot that kept him from elevating, the graduate transfer from UAB finished with 13 points on 4-of-13 shooting. Truth be told, it wasn't anyone's prettiest night.

UConn's hopes at becoming the first team since John Wooden's UCLA dynasty to win three titles in four seasons came up short, done in by massive foul trouble and its own terrible shooting.

Coach Dan Hurley's team shot 30.9% from the floor and missed its first 11 shots from 3 in the second half.

Braylon Mullins, the hero of the Duke win that put UConn in the Final Four, finished 4 of 17, though he made a pair of late 3s that kept the game in reach.

UConn (35-5) covered the 6 1/2-point spread, and Hurley kept his players out on the court to watch the podium get set up for the presentation of a trophy heading not to Storrs, but Ann Arbor. About the only consolation: The Huskies clogged things up, slowed things down and made Michigan beat them at their game.

The Wolverines came in as the first team to crack 90 points in five straight high-flying tournament blowouts. They didn't hit 70 in this one but, in almost every way, it was the prettiest of them all - the one that gives them what even Michigan's most famous teams, the Fab Five, couldn't manage - namely, a natty.



Michigan celebrates after defeating UConn in the NCAA college basketball tournament national championship game at the Final Four in Indianapolis. (AP)

Style points aside, this was a championship built from outside - the best team money could buy.

All five Wolverines starters played

college ball elsewhere, and all but Nimari Burnett came to Ann Arbor this season. That's the product of the transfer portal that May has shown no

reluctance to use. His ability to form a makeshift group into a winner is still the value of a coach and a culture.

"They might be still calling us mer-

cenaries but we're the hardest-working team," Lendeborg said. "We're the best in college basketball and we'll be one of the greatest ever."

Pubill and Oblak available again

Atletico rings changes for CL as injuries limit Barcelona options

MADRID, April 7, (Xinhua): FC Barcelona and Atletico Madrid resume their three-game stretch in 11 days on Wednesday night when they meet in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

Barcelona won the first meeting last Saturday, coming from behind to beat Atletico 2-1 at Metropolitan Stadium after goals from Robert Lewandowski and Marcus Rashford canceled out Giuliano Simeone's opener.

Wednesday could offer a very different picture though, with the return leg shifting to Camp Nou and Atletico expected to field a much stronger lineup.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone rested several key players at the weekend. Ademola Lookman, Julian Alvarez and David Hancko were unused substitutes, while Marcos Llorente was not in the squad. All four are expected to return to the starting lineup.

Central defender Marc Pubill and goalkeeper Jan Oblak are also available again after injury and should start, along with left-back Matteo Ruggeri.

That would give Atletico a side much closer to the one that overwhelmed Barcelona 4-0 in the first leg of the recent Copa del Rey semifinal between the two teams.

Barcelona, by contrast, has fewer options to freshen its side.

Raphinha remains sidelined with a hamstring injury, Frenkie de Jong has yet to recover from a muscle problem and Marc Bernal suffered a twisted ankle in Saturday's win that is expected to keep him out for 10 days.



Atletico Madrid's Matteo Ruggeri attempts to keep the ball in play during a La Liga soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Barcelona in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

With Bernal and De Jong unavailable, Eric Garcia is set to play in central midfield alongside Pedri, who has struggled for form in recent matches.

Lewandowski, Ferran Torres and Jules Kounde offer alternatives, with Kounde likely to replace Ronald Araujo at right-back, but on paper Barcelona appears weaker than at the weekend.

Atletico, meanwhile, will arrive with fresher legs and renewed optimism despite Saturday's defeat.

Mounting questions over the manager's future

Liverpool aims to halt downturn against PSG

PARIS, April 7, (AP): Out of the Premier League title race. Routed in the FA Cup. Mounting questions over the manager's future. A star striker set to leave. A disgruntled captain saying his team gave up.

Liverpool heads into the first leg of its Champions League quarterfinal against Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday in disarray. A far cry from when the sides met in the last 16 last year.

Back then, Liverpool was romping to the Premier League title, new manager Arne Slot was the toast of the city and Mo Salah was at his brilliant best. By contrast PSG had struggled to get out of the Champions League group stage and observers were questioning coach Luis Enrique's methods.

PSG scraped through on penalties against Liverpool after an intense battle over two legs.

"Arne Slot has spoken about what an incredible match it was," PSG midfielder Vitorino said Tuesday at a pre-match news conference. "They didn't have a chance (in the first leg) apart from the goal they scored and (goalkeeper) Allison was man of the match."

Knocking the six-time champion out - away at Anfield, no less - gave PSG the belief it could finally win the Champions League. By contrast, Liverpool's agonizing defeat



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and Jeremie Frimpong, left, attend a training session in Liverpool, England. (AP)

marked the start of Salah's decline as Liverpool's aura took a hit.

Liverpool then began the current campaign poorly as Salah's goals dried up and he clashed with Slot.

PSG is closing in on another French title but Liverpool is fifth in the Premier League, a hefty 21 points behind leader Arsenal. Following a crushing 4-0 defeat to Manchester City in the FA Cup quarterfinals on Saturday, captain Virgil van Dijk said his side "gave

up" and he apologized to fans.

Slot called it a humbling loss.

The Dutchman is reportedly clinging onto his job. Salah will be gone next season and, if PSG knocks out Liverpool, a trophy-less season may cost Slot his position.

But PSG is blocking out any talk about being the favorite this time.

"Favorite according to you (the media). The same way you said last year that Liverpool was," said Vitorino, who finished third in the

Ballon d'Or standings in 2025. "Even if Liverpool are not in their best form they remain a great team with great players."

Liverpool forward Hugo Ekitike returns to face his old side as a player transformed.

He joined PSG four years ago as a promising 19-year-old but struggled to make an impact in a team containing Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Lionel Messi. He scored only four goals in 33 games in two disappointing seasons.

"You could already see the qualities he had," Vitorino said in his defense. "It just wasn't the right context for him at the time."

A move to Eintracht Frankfurt changed Ekitike's fortunes and, after scoring 22 goals last season, he earned a big move to Premier League champion Liverpool for 69 million pounds (then \$93.5 million).

He has done well with 17 goals and has broken into the France team, and national coach Didier Deschamps appreciates his ability to attack from deep and dribble at speed.

"Normally I don't talk about players who don't play for PSG," Luis Enrique said when asked about Ekitike. "But after leaving PSG he did well in Germany and England. He was very young when he was here and he has improved a lot."

Former Wales and Arsenal midfielder Ramsey calls time on playing career

CARDIFF, Wales, April 7, (AP): Former Wales and Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey announced his retirement from soccer on Tuesday.

The 35-year-old Ramsey has been without a club since leaving Mexican team Pumas last year after a brief, injury-hampered stint in which he missed league matches and several training sessions while looking for his lost dog.

"This has not been an easy decision to make. After a lot of consideration, I have decided to retire

from football," Ramsey said in a statement as he also thanked the supporters of Wales and the clubs he represented in his career.

Ramsey is regarded as one of Wales' greatest players, scoring 21 goals in 86 appearances and representing his country at three major tournaments.

He helped Wales reach the European Championship semifinals in 2016, where it lost to eventual champion Portugal. His last cap came in 2024.

Ramsey was overlooked for the recent World Cup play-off



In this file photo, Wales' Aaron Ramsey celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the Euro 2024 Group D qualifying soccer match between Latvia and Wales in Riga, Latvia. (AP)

against Bosnia and Herzegovina. Defeat in that game ended his hopes of a grand finale on the biggest stage.

"It has been my privilege to wear the Welsh shirt and experience so many incredible moments in it," he said. "It would not have been possible without the incredible input of all the managers I have played under and all the staff who have helped me in many ways.

"To the Red Wall. You have been there through thick and thin! You have been there through the

highs and lows, and you have been an essential and indispensable part of our success. I can't thank you enough. We've been through everything together and it's been an honour to represent you."

Ramsey started his career at Cardiff before moving to Arsenal in 2008. He won three FA Cups in 11 seasons there, scoring the winning goal in two of those finals.

He then played for Juventus and Nice before returning to Cardiff in 2023, ending last season with a brief spell as interim coach before joining Pumas in July.