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KUWAIT AIRSPACE STILL CLOSED AMID FLIGHT RESTART RUMORS

Calm reigns across Kuwait as EOD teams sweep 17 threats

By Fares Ghaleb and Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) on Thursday denied rumors on the resumption of flights at Kuwait International Airport, stressing that no official approvals have been issued and the airport remains closed.

Official spokesperson of PACA Abdullah Al-Rajhi revealed that a social media post, attributed to an airline, falsely reported the restart of flights from Kuwait International Airport.

Al-Rajhi stressed the information is incorrect, indicating no approvals have been granted to date. He urged the public to verify information through official sources and avoid unreliable online reports.

He reaffirmed the commitment of PACA to adhere to the principles of transparency, adding that updates will be announced through official communication channels.

On Feb 28, PACA announced the temporary closure of Kuwaiti airspace to aircraft and passengers due to regional political and security developments. The precautionary measure was taken to safeguard the passengers, airlines and airport operations.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense announced on Thursday that the air defense systems of the country have not reported

- Civilian attacks condemned by Kuwait human rights body
- Private nurseries remain closed for safety
- Authorities extend suspension of sporting events
- 25 unauthorized camps removed near military sites
- US-Iran ceasefire teeters with disagreements

any military movement or developments within its designated operational zones in the last 24 hours.

Spokesman of the ministry Colonel Staff Saud Al-Atwan made

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Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times



Washington must understand Tehran's deceptive tactics

IS Tehran sincere about the ceasefire? The answer to this question was clear from the very first hours following the ceasefire announcement.

While Washington and Tel Aviv adhered to the ceasefire, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard had quickly bombed several countries in the region and threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, claiming that the conflict in Lebanon had not ended.

Anyone familiar with the Iranian mindset knows that Iranian promises are often a tactic to buy time.

This is their modus operandi, even in trade and public relations.

Therefore, the negotiations are nothing more than an opportunity for Iran to prepare for a second round of war, or at the very least, to get ready for dealing with potential domestic developments. Perhaps it has other objectives that will become clear in time.

Iranian calculations differ sharply from those in Washington, Tel Aviv, and the Gulf states, which were most affected by the recent war. Given their deep understanding of Persian culture, the Gulf states, when warning against a lack of decisive action in the current war, knew exactly what a truce would mean for Iran and were certain that Iran would not honor it.

Iran is now seeking to evade the ceasefire, first by claiming that the agreement does not cover Lebanon, and then by arguing that it does not guarantee the Gulf states, among other justifications.

It is clear that the statements of Iranian officials, regardless of their wording, imply that Iran is not serious about committing to the ceasefire agreement.

Thus, the Iranian regime is attempting to back out of the agreement by placing the blame on the United States or Israel.

The U.S. Vice President made it clear recently by stating, "If Iran is using Lebanon as a pretext for withdrawing from the agreement, that is their prerogative. Lebanon is not part of the agreement, and Iran knows this very well."

This unequivocal statement from the U.S. Vice President leaves no room for misinterpretation.

In response, Tehran has been spreading the claim that Lebanon is included in the agreement, in an attempt to mislead its proxies.

Iran follows a consistent strategy - if its proxies win a battle, it claims partnership in the victory; if they are defeated, Iran disavows them.

The world witnessed this reality in 2006 when the former Secretary-General of Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah launched attacks on Israel, ostensibly to secure the release of Lebanese prisoners.

Hezbollah succeeded in capturing two Israeli soldiers. However, faced with Israel's response, widespread destruction, and the number of Lebanese casualties, Nasrallah famously admitted, "Had I known these consequences, I would not have ordered this operation."

Today, Naim Qassem, Nasrallah's successor, who remains hidden deep underground, has followed a similar path. When Israeli-American attacks targeted Iran, Hezbollah launched missiles from Lebanon. Yet, witnessing the Israeli retaliation and the resulting casualties among his own community, Qassem shifted the blame to the Lebanese government, accusing it of failing to protect its people and thereby absolving himself of responsibility for the harm inflicted.

As the saying goes, "If a person lives among a people for forty days, he will either become one of them or leave them." So what about someone who has been tied to the Iranian regime for 44 years, repeatedly claiming full support from Iran?

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Motorists head toward Kuwait City on Thursday as the iconic Liberation Tower rises through a gloomy sky. Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Thunder rolls, fog strolls into Kuwait weekend

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The acting Director of the Kuwait Meteorological Department, Dhirar Al-Ali, forecasted that the country will experience moderate rain with occasional thunderstorms on Friday, April 10, and Saturday, April 11, along with chances of fog forming in the evenings.

In a press statement to the Kuwait

News Agency (KUNA), Al-Ali explained that the daytime weather on Friday will be somewhat hot and partly to mostly cloudy, with chances of light scattered rain later in the day. At night, temperatures will be slightly cool to mild, partly cloudy, with chances of scattered rain and occasional thunderstorms, along with possible fog in

some areas. On Saturday, daytime weather will be warm and partly to mostly cloudy, with chances of scattered rain and occasional thunderstorms. At night, it will be slightly cool to mild, with some scattered clouds and chances of fog forming in the evening.



Sue Salam Kaoukji shares a moment with ambassadors and guests at her French knighthood ceremony. Photo by Rezk Tawfiq

Art icon bridging cultures

France honors Kaoukji with 'Knight of Arts and Letters'

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: French Ambassador to Kuwait Olivier Gauvin awarded the Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters to Sue Salam Kaoukji in a ceremony held at his residence recently.

Lebanese Ambassador to Kuwait Ghadi Khoury, other ambassadors, diplomats and those interested in cultural affairs attended the event.

Gauvin praised the decades-long

career of Kaoukji, asserting that she serves as an example of dedication to art and heritage, and that she plays a vital role in showcasing Islamic art on the global stage.

He called to mind the remarkable moments since her early artistic journey and her exposure to a rich cultural environment before she moved to Kuwait in 1977, where her career became closely intertwined with cultural work and museums.

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Weapons amnesty yields 2,818 guns and 284,860 ammunition

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Ministry of Interior announced that the exceptional grace period for surrendering unlicensed weapons, ammunition and explosives resulted in the surrender of 2,818 firearms, including seven RPG launchers, and 284,860 rounds of ammunition from March 24 to

April 8.

In a press statement, the ministry explained that the grace period was aimed at giving those concerned a chance to legalize their status and maintain societal security.

It commended the remarkable cooperation shown by citizens and expressed its gratitude to all those who surrendered their unlicensed

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Truce tunes up global markets

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Some economic experts shared their views about the two-week truce declared by US President Donald Trump, as the newspaper posed the following questions:

- Does the truce implicitly signal a definitive resolution to the crisis that has paralyzed global economic interests since the hostilities began?

- Does the recent announcement of the US President regarding American assistance to Tehran in mitigating maritime congestion in the Strait of Hormuz - alongside his call for the commencement of reconstruction - indicate a permanent end to the conflict?

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8 Boursa Kuwait general index slips 0.29% to 8,626.97



9 Gulf Bank issues its Sustainability Report and continues to boost environmental, social and governance standards

Anxiety alters appetite

Regional turmoil takes a bite out of daily diets, say experts

By Marwa Al-Bahrawi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Amid escalating political tensions in the region, the repercussions of this turmoil have extended beyond the psychological realm, affecting every aspect of daily life, particularly dietary habits.

Disordered eating patterns are emerging, ranging from overeating driven by anxiety to loss of appetite caused by stress, highlighting the impact of these crises on public health.

Dr. Sanaa Abdullah Al-Majed, a clinical nutritionist and former head of the Nutrition Awareness Department at the Food and Nutrition Administration of the Ministry of Health, highlighted the strong link between psychological state and eating behavior.

She explained that stress can trigger two opposing responses in the body - either turning to "emotional eating" for comfort or experiencing a complete loss of appetite.

Dr. Al-Majed explained that constant exposure to political news and its rapid developments generates anxiety and fear, causing some individuals to use food as a way to relieve stress.

Others respond by restricting their food intake, which can lead to loss of appetite. Stress triggers the release of the hormone cortisol, which increases appetite and cravings for sugary and fatty foods because they provide quick energy and stimulate the release of dopamine, the hormone responsible for a temporary sense of well-being. This behavior is known as "emotional eating."

Dr. Al-Majed went on to explain that cases of appetite loss are linked to the body's "fight or flight" response, where elevated adrenaline levels suppress appetite and slow the digestive system as the body focuses on confronting threats. In such cases, even thinking about food can feel exhausting or provoke nausea.

Regarding how to distinguish between true hunger and emotional hunger, she explained that true hunger develops gradually and arises from a physical need. A person can eat any type of food and stop once they feel full.

Emotional hunger, on the other hand, appears suddenly and intensely and is often linked to cravings for specific sugary or fatty foods. It may persist even after feeling full.

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Dr. Al-Majed



Al-Bader

HH Amir sponsors, Defense Minister attends officer cadets graduation event

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The Ali Al-Sabah Military College on Thursday held a graduation ceremony for its 24th batch of university graduate officer cadets, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Kuwait Armed Forces Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah attended the ceremony, which is considered a major milestone for the graduates, who formally took the oath of office and transitioned from intensive academic preparation to active military duty.

The Minister conveyed his sincere congratulations to the newly

commissioned officers, highlighting the "great trust" bestowed upon them by His Highness the Amir – may Allah protect him.

He commended the graduates for the academic and practical excellence they demonstrated throughout their studies, affirming that their accomplishments have fully prepared them to join their fellow servicemen in the ranks of the Kuwaiti Army.

Addressing the graduates, Sheikh Abdullah Ali urged them to apply the knowledge and field training they have acquired in a practical and effective manner within their respective military units.

He emphasized the need to embody the highest standards of dis-

cipline, conduct and responsibility, calling on them to serve with utmost dedication and sincerity in defending the homeland and preserving its security and stability.

He asserted that the current regional situation requires continuous vigilance and readiness by all members of the Armed Forces.

He also expressed his appreciation to the leadership and staff of Ali Al-Sabah Military College, while praising the faculty for their committed efforts in shaping a distinguished generation of officers.

He concluded by praying for the continuous safety and prosperity of the nation under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the



Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah rendering the speech.



Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah awards a graduating cadet.

Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah – may Allah protect them.

Also present at the ceremony were Chief of the General Staff

Lieutenant General Khaled Daraaj Al-Shuraiaan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshaal Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief

of the General Staff Major General (Pilot) Sabah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Commandant of the College Brigadier General Abdullah Ahmed Al-Turkait.

Kuwait consulate hit in Basra draws scorn

Iraq waters down attack as 'regrettable'

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The attack on the Kuwaiti Consulate in Basra two days ago, including acts of vandalism and storming, sparked widespread resentment and anger among Kuwaiti citizens, as well as many Iraqis and politicians, who viewed it as a blatant violation of international conventions and norms.

According to an investigation conducted by the daily, the small group responsible for storming the consulate does not represent the Iraqi people as a whole. The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) act as an Iranian proxy.

The report stressed the necessity of holding those involved accountable to prevent a recurrence of such deplorable acts and to curb the unchecked actions of certain factions and militias.

In this regard, the advisor to the Iraqi Prime Minister, Ayed Al-Hilali, condemned the storming of the Kuwaiti Consulate in Basra, describing the incident as deeply regrettable due to its negative implications, which are inconsistent with the longstanding historical relations and fraternal ties between Iraq and Kuwait.

He explained that the incident was impulsive and ill-considered, casting a shadow over the internal situation and raising legitimate concerns about the ability of certain parties to regulate public behavior within legal and diplomatic frameworks. The Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations have seen significant development in recent years, based on the principles of respecting sovereignty

and promoting shared interests. This makes such individual actions a clear departure from the general approach adopted by both countries. The incident cannot be seen as representing an official or public stance, but rather as an isolated event that does not reflect Iraq's true orientation.

Al-Hilali affirmed the Iraqi government's full commitment to protecting diplomatic missions in accordance with international agreements, including the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

He stressed the necessity of holding those involved accountable and taking legal action against them, thereby restoring the state's prestige and sending a clear and reassuring message to the Kuwaiti side.

Al-Hilali affirmed that the incident represents a crucial test of the Iraqi state's ability to enforce the rule of law and maintain balance in its foreign relations, ensuring that such actions are not repeated and preserving the fraternal ties between the two brotherly countries.

Meanwhile, researcher and academic Dr. Ayed Al-Manna'a described the attack as an act of aggression that reflects the negligence of the relevant Iraqi authorities in protecting the Kuwaiti Consulate.

He called for holding the perpetrators accountable, particularly since they recorded themselves storming the consulate, climbing onto its roof, and

tearing down the Kuwaiti flag.

Dr. Al-Manna'a emphasized that these actions are completely unacceptable, especially considering Kuwait's consistent support for Iraq through all its trials.

Furthermore, Lawyer Hamdan Al-Namshan, legal advisor to the National Human Rights Bureau, stated that the attack on the Kuwaiti Consulate by a small group of Iraqis is unacceptable and that the Iraqi government must hold those responsible accountable.

He emphasized that international law strictly prohibits violations of diplomatic missions.

Al-Namshan noted that the perpetrators do not represent the Iraqi people as a whole and highlighted that they are affiliated with another country.

He affirmed that Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations will remain fraternal.

In addition, former acting Director General of Immigration, Bader Al-Hammadi, expressed his astonishment at the attacks, asking, "Is this acceptable behavior from Iraqis toward their Kuwaiti brothers?"

He recalled that during the term of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad (may God have mercy on him), Kuwait provided Iraq with extensive aid, including the reconstruction of residential cities and power stations, as well as the construction of a sports stadium.

Al-Hammadi stressed that the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are behind the efforts to incite a segment of the Iraqi population against Kuwait, noting that this group, like Hezbollah, receives support from Iran.

US slams attack on Kuwait consulate, asks Iraq to dismantle terror groups

WASHINGTON, April 9, (KUNA): The United States on Thursday condemned in the strongest terms the April 7 attack on the Kuwaiti Consulate in Basra.

The Iraqi government must hold accountable and dismantle the Iraqi terrorist groups aligned with Iran that conducted this attack and continue to use Iraqi territory and resources to terrorize the region, read a State Department statement.

Oman condemns

The Sultanate of Oman's foreign ministry condemned the attack on Kuwait's General Consulate in the Iraqi city of Basra. A ministry statement expressed "absolute rejection" of such acts and stressed the imperative of respecting the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, as well as ensuring the protection of all diplomatic and consular missions under any circumstances and at all times.

Arab League condemns

The Arab League on Wednesday condemned the attack on the Gen-

eral Consulate of the State of Kuwait in Basra, Iraq.

In a press statement, the League's Secretary General Ahmad Abu al-Gheit expressed reiterated its utter rejection of any attacks on diplomatic missions and consulates, be it storming or vandalism under any excuse. He welcomed Iraq's announcement of forming an investigation committee

on the matter to take legal actions against those involved and making sure the incident does not take place again.

Pakistan condemns

Pakistan on Wednesday condemned the storming and vandalism of the Consulate General of the State of Kuwait in Basra, and the

violation of the sanctity of consular premises, said Foreign Office.

A press release by Pakistan Foreign Office said that it has noted with deep concern the reported storming and vandalism of the Consulate General of the State of Kuwait in Basra, and the violation of the sanctity of the consular premises. It further said, "Pakistan strongly condemns such acts, which are inconsistent with established diplomatic norms and international law, particularly the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations."

Pakistan emphasizes the importance of ensuring the security and inviolability of diplomatic and consular missions and calls for a thorough investigation into the incident, as well as bringing those responsible to justice. Pakistan expresses its solidarity with the Government and people of Kuwait and reaffirms its principled position on respect for diplomatic missions and adherence to international obligations, the release added.



Abu al-Gheit

Charities get nod for sacrificial projects

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Ministry of Social Affairs, through its Department of Charitable Societies and Foundations, has started granting approval to a number of charitable organizations to implement sacrificial animal projects.

Approval is granted to organizations that have obtained the necessary permits within a regulatory framework outlining the mechanisms for announcing these projects and the regulations governing their fundraising activities.

The ministry has specified the conditions for advertising sacrificial animal projects as follows:

- The administrative fee must be mentioned in the advertisements for projects that are implemented locally and internationally.

- Advertisements must include the approval or license number found on the license of the project, the validity

period of the license, and the phrase, "Cash collection is prohibited."

- Advertisements must clearly state the project name and the country or countries where the project will be implemented, as per the official application.

- Refrain from using any language with sectarian or political connotations.

- Obtain approvals before publishing images of children or individuals, and displaying the State of Kuwait's slogan, "Kuwait Stands with You," when implementing the project in the relevant country.

- The advertisement period ends upon the expiration of the project's license.

- All relevant circulars and regulations must be adhered to.

Meanwhile, following are the fundraising regulations:

- Obtain approval from the ministry before establish private fundraising

links for prominent figures or individuals, while the publication of authorized links on the official website or social media accounts is allowed.

- It is prohibited to collect cash or in-kind donations, restricting them to the approved electronic methods like bank transfers, electronic collection devices, K-NET and other electronic payment services.

- It is prohibited to publish fundraising links on marketing, advertising and public relations platforms.

- Compliance with the circular about the new mechanism for international funds transfers for implementing licensed projects abroad.

- Charitable societies must register in the 'Safe Travel' system of the Foreign Affairs Ministry before sending representatives to oversee project implementation outside the country. They should deal only with entities approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nazaha and FIU to jointly track suspicious activities

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Chairperson of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Dr. Rana Al-Fares and Head of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) Dr. Hammad Al-Mekrad held a meeting on Thursday to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and coordination between relevant entities in tracking and analyzing suspicious financial activities, as well as exchanging expertise and information, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press statement issued after the meeting, Dr. Al-Fares affirmed Nazaha's commitment to fulfilling its national role in line with the directives of the political leadership, and highlighted the importance of unifying institutional efforts to achieve the highest levels of integrity and transparency.

Meanwhile, Dr. Al-Mekrad affirmed the Financial Intelligence Unit's commitment to strengthening its partnership with Nazaha to support national efforts in combating corruption and promoting transparency.

He also expressed satisfaction with the current level of cooperation between the two entities.

According to the press statement, the meeting reflects the directives of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, to eradicate corruption, eliminate its sources, and firmly establish integrity and transparency as guiding principles in government work.



Al-Fares

PAAET gives go ahead for distance learning

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced the approval of Board of Directors' regulations governing distance learning during exceptional or emergency circumstances.

This step is part of a proactive approach to ensure the continuity of education and training without interruption, while maintaining high standards of quality and efficiency.

PAAET explained that the regulations reflect its institutional preparedness to deal with various exceptional or emergency situations through the adoption of a flexible educational system supported by clear regulatory controls that ensures a balance in the continuity of education with academic discipline. The adopted regulations provide a comprehensive framework for managing distance learning, including oversight of educational platforms to meet the highest standards of technical readiness and information security, and clearly defining the responsibilities and obligations of faculty members and students.

The regulations include organizing assessment and examination procedures to ensure fairness and integrity, while requiring in-person final examinations.

PAAET emphasized the importance of respecting intellectual property rights for educational content and strengthening the role of the Measurement and Evaluation Center in monitoring the quality of distance learning outcomes and submitting periodic reports.

Plan to build water tanks in Al-Na'eem

By Mohammad Ghanem
 Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, through its Water Projects Sector, intends to construct six underground water reservoirs in Al-Na'eem, with a capacity of 100 million imperial gallons each.

The ministry included a contract in its current fiscal year plan to offer the project for public bidding. It will be open to companies classified by the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

CAPT will announce the tender, set the deadline for bid submission, open the bids, and then refer them to the ministry for review and preparation of a technical recommendation.

The ministry will then make the final decision on awarding the contract, with the approval of the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

This project is part of the efforts to increase the strategic reserve of fresh and brackish water to be ready for the peak consumption periods.

The underground reservoirs will serve those residing in Al-Na'eem and the surrounding areas to ensure continuous water supply during the peak consumption periods.

Other Voices

A unique historical event

By Ahmad alsarraf

In 1914, when Kuwait was a British protectorate, the British Consul in Kuwait organized a celebration at the consulate to mark King George V's birthday.

He invited the then-ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, his sons, and several sheikhs and dignitaries to foster acquaintance and strengthen relations.

Among the attendees were Salem Buqam-maz, Hilal Al-Mutairi, Hamad Al-Khaled, Abdulrahman Al-Asousi, Ibrahim Al-Mudhaf, Abdulrahman Al-Roumi, Abdulkarim Marafie, and Abdullah Al-Sumait.

These are the names that could be identified from an anonymous notice listing all the invitees in small, illegible print. The notice also included other details in larger print, highlighting the simplicity of life in those days.

The Mubarakiya School had opened shortly before this event, becoming the first official school in Kuwait and possibly in the Arabian Peninsula.

American missionaries in Basra had tried to persuade Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah to establish a mission hospital in Kuwait with an attached English language school. He was hesitant, suspecting that the initiative combined missionary objectives with humanitarian activities.

The newsletter also noted that the cost of the King's birthday celebration was approximately 14 rupees, slightly



alsarraf



Kuwait map with Qur'anic verse.

Solidarity campaign on social media proves hit

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Social media platforms in Kuwait are witnessing a widespread solidarity campaign, with WhatsApp users sharing posts featuring a map of Kuwait and the Qur'anic verse at its center - "And We have placed before them a barrier and behind them a barrier and covered them, so they do not see", reports Al-Jarida daily.

The initiative has received significant engagement from both individuals and public figures, as well as influencers. May God protect Kuwait from all harm and evil.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

'Hegemony' goal in Iran aggression against Gulf

"TODAY, the situation has completely changed, and we must consider the consequences and understand that Iran's targeting of the Gulf states is not merely a reaction to American and Israeli attacks," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"I have said it before, and I repeat it today - Iran operates under a political ideology that is not rooted in religious doctrine. At the core of this ideology is the principle of exporting the revolution, as enshrined in the Iranian constitution.



Adel Al-Kharafi

"This principle is also reflected in the ideology of the Iranian regime's proxies in the region. This is why, when the former Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, stated in a public speech nearly 12 years ago that glass-fronted towers would collapse with the first missile, he was issuing a threat toward the United Arab Emirates.

"In another speech, Nasrallah threatened Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Considering the terrorist cells that have been uncovered in Kuwait, the UAE, and Bahrain over the years, it becomes clear that the Iranian regime is firmly committed to destabilizing the region as part of its policy of exporting the revolution.

"Given these facts, it requires little effort to understand why Iran is targeting the Gulf states.

"Realities over the past 47 years are sufficient to reveal Iran's strategic posture. Iran's actions against the Gulf states are not a reaction to American or Israeli attacks, but rather an expression of a deeply rooted political ideology. Such ideologies often blur the line between public policy and personal convictions, especially in societies based on racism and ethnic supremacy.

"Persian culture is rooted in imperial doctrine rather than Islamic principles. As a result, Persians have historically exhibited a sense of superiority that sets them apart from other peoples, particularly the Gulf states and the entire Arab world.

"There are notable parallels between Persian, Jewish, and Nazi German ideologies in terms of notions of racial superiority and supremacy, with Hitler adopting this concept as the basis of his political and military strategy.

"I am astonished by those Arabs who embraced the Persian revolutionary ideology to the extent that they participated in the destruction of their own homelands to serve Persian interests. The clearest examples are Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, the Houthis in Yemen, and the sectarian factions in Iraq, who acted as Iranian proxies in similar ways.

"All of these actors have shown a lack of political foresight, perhaps failing to realize that they are merely instruments of Iran's agenda, which has little to do with resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestine. If Iran truly supported the resistance, why did it abandon Gaza to face Israel alone?"

"Iran has not provided any humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, exposing the true motives behind its actions in the Gulf. Another objective appears to be a desperate attempt to pressure the Gulf states into influencing Washington to end the war, yet this effort has not succeeded."

Also:

"We will never forget that dark day in the history of our beloved Kuwait, the day of the bombings on December 12, 1983, when the country was struck by a series of coordinated terrorist attacks targeting vital and diplomatic facilities," Kuwaiti lawyer Dr. Abdullah Al-Turaji wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"These facilities included the American and French embassies, Kuwait International Airport, the Shuaiba Water Desalination Plant, the telecommunications complex in Al-Maqwa, and other sensitive sites. These attacks were aimed at destabilizing the nation's security and spreading fear among citizens and residents.

"On that day, teams of detectives were deployed to the targeted locations. I was part of the unit assigned to the site of the American Embassy, located on Arabian Gulf Street opposite the Hilton Hotel. When we arrived, the scene was devastating. The explosion had caused widespread destruction and significant loss of life and property.

"The initial investigation revealed that the attack was carried out using a truck bomb loaded with a large quantity of explosives, which detonated at the entrance to the site. The blast resulted in numerous casualties and fatalities.

"The suicide truck driver was torn to pieces due to the strong explosion. After extensive efforts by forensic experts, a fragment of his thumb was recovered. Examination of the remains led to the identification of the perpetrator as Raad Muftan Ajil, an Iraqi national affiliated with an organization connected to the Dawaa Party.

"Following extensive investigations and careful surveillance, security forces apprehended the remaining suspects involved in these crimes. Among them was Jamal Jaafar Muhammad Ali, later known as Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, along with several individuals connected to pro-Iranian organizations. They were subsequently tried and received varying prison sentences.

"These bombings took place against a tense regional backdrop, during the height of the Iran-Iraq War.

"Kuwait was directly impacted by these conflicts due to its support for

Iraq at the time, making it a target for terrorist acts designed to exert political pressure and send messages through violence.

"This incident stands as one of the most notable examples of Kuwait's vulnerability to terrorism, underscoring the severity of threats that even stable nations can face as a result of regional conflicts.

"At the same time, these attacks highlighted the effectiveness of Kuwait's security services, their ability to manage crises, track down perpetrators, and bring them to justice. While the events are a painful memory, they also serve as a testament to the resilience of the state and the strength of its institutions in confronting terrorism."



"Global supply chains are currently experiencing rapid disruptions, accompanied by a significant increase in transportation and shipping costs as a result of international crises. This makes Ministerial Resolution No. 30/2026 a strong example of sound economic management," columnist Bassam Fahad Thunayan Al-Ghanim wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The decision does not merely address the symptoms of the problem, but directly targets its root causes by establishing a practical framework that balances market stability, consumer protection, and the sustainability of the commercial sector.

"It is important to emphasize that this resolution does not involve adding new items to the supply system, as might be initially understood. Rather, it aims to support the additional costs borne by companies importing essential goods for ensuring their uninterrupted flow to the State of Kuwait and preventing these costs from being passed on to final prices in the local market.

"The aforementioned resolution reflects a mature economic vision that addresses challenges through a proactive and well-considered approach.

"This approach highlights a deep understanding of the nature of the modern economy, which is no longer purely local but is closely tied to complex global fluctuations. Therefore, supporting the cost of goods instead of directly intervening in prices is a smart tool that preserves market equilibrium without disrupting its mechanisms.

"This measure ensures that companies can continue to perform their vital role without bearing burdens that could lead to supply disruptions or sudden increases in prices.

"The decision was accompanied by precise controls to ensure that support is directed to genuinely exceptional cases and that companies refrain from raising prices during the period of benefit. This strengthens confidence and confirms that the state is exercising its regulatory and oversight role efficiently and responsibly.

"The decision cannot be viewed in isolation from the state's overall vision of strengthening food security and enhancing economic stability. Rather, it is an extension of a comprehensive approach that places the protection of people above all else and preserves their ability to live with dignity amid global challenges.

"Sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah,



Al-Ghanim

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Sabah, and the Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Khaled

Abdullah Boodai for their sincere efforts in managing the affairs of the country with wisdom and competence.

"If this decision reflects a progressive governmental awareness in managing current challenges, the next phase requires building on this approach by accelerating the adoption of sustainable food security projects, foremost among them the micro-farm project.

"This project distributes agricultural land in carefully planned areas, achieving economic, social, and national objectives simultaneously.

"The micro-farm project includes allocating up to 10,000 square meters to retirees, providing them with a productive source of income and a dignified life. Approximately 4,000 square meters are allocated to young entrepreneurs to support agricultural entrepreneurship and stimulate local production. In addition, there is a model of agricultural housing of approximately 3,500 square meters, combining residential and productive spaces. This model contributes to reducing housing demand and achieving a degree of self-sufficiency for Kuwaiti families.

"This approach supports the New Kuwait 2035 vision and complements the commendable efforts of the Minister of State for Development and Sustainability Affairs and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Dr. Reem Ghazi Al-Faleej during this crisis.

"The importance of these projects extends to a strategic dimension, as they contribute to enhancing food security and reducing dependence on imports, in addition to their vital role in strengthening human and productive presence in border regions, particularly in the north."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

'Professional swindler'

Kuwaiti woman jailed 5 years in cash fraud

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Hamoud Al-Shami, sentenced a Kuwaiti woman with a history of committing fraud to five years in prison for illegally obtaining money from an individual at a five-star hotel by impersonating an employee of the State Audit Bureau (SAB).

The Public Prosecution charged the woman with fraudulently obtaining KD650 by deceiving the victim, the manager of a travel and tourism company, into believing that she works at SAB and has the authority to make contracts.

Case files indicate that the defendant had earlier been convicted of a similar offense.

In the current case, the defendant claimed to be from SAB and that she is authorized to sign a contract to purchase a plane ticket for a Bahraini woman who is supposedly the guest of SAB, and to arrange her stay at a five-star hotel. The victim complied, purchased the ticket and booked the hotel for a total of cost of KD960. The defendant paid KD310 for the ticket, leaving a balance of KD650 for the hotel stay. The victim's repeated requests for payment of the remaining balance, evidenced by their correspondence, were ignored.

The investigating officer testified that the defendant falsely claimed to be from SAB and used this false identity to obtain money for the hotel stay.

The court confirmed in its ruling that the documents proved beyond reasonable doubt that the accused committed the crime as a repeat offender, as she was previously convicted of fraud. It turned out that her criminal record is laden with fraud cases, indicating her bad conduct and even the fact that she is a 'professional swindler'.

500 trucks/day keep flow of goods steady

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: A visit to the Nuwaiseeb border crossing revealed the significant efforts of the General Administration of Customs (GAC) to ensure the flow of essential goods, reports Al-Rai daily.

The border crossing received approximately 11,000 trucks in a single month, from February 28 to March 29, averaging 500 trucks per day. This directly contributes to strengthening the country's food and drug security system.

The Nuwaiseeb Customs Director Mohammad Al-Baloushi explained that operations are proceeding according to a comprehensive, round-the-clock plan. The customs teams are working efficiently to ensure quick completion of procedures without compromising oversight or security.

He highlighted GAC's commitment to facilitating the entry of trucks, especially those carrying essential goods, by expediting clearance processes and increasing staffing during peak hours.

Al-Baloushi stressed that there are clear directives to give these trucks the highest priority through fast lanes, ensuring their rapid arrival in the local market.

He said, "We have adopted a flexible operational mechanism that allows for the immediate handling of any increase in the number of trucks while implementing rigorous control procedures to ensure the safety of goods and their compliance with health and safety standards."

Al-Baloushi highlighted that the port is operating at full capacity, supported by modern electronic systems that help reduce waiting times, in continuous coordination with relevant authorities.

He emphasized that inspectors are present at all locations to monitor entry and exit movements in real time and prevent any bottlenecks.

In a message of reassurance to citizens and residents, Al-Baloushi explained that food and medicine stocks are continuously flowing and there is no cause for concern. Customs is operating under high-level directives to ensure market stability, and supplies are unaffected under any circumstances.

The efforts at the port reflect the readiness of Kuwaiti customs authorities and their ability to handle various situations efficiently, ensuring the uninterrupted flow of vital supplies.

Customs officers were observed treating travelers and truck drivers with exemplary courtesy, maintaining smiles despite the pressures of their work and the exceptional circumstances facing the country.

They expressed their unwavering commitment to Kuwait, its leadership, and its people.

The Customs Administration at the border crossing has designated three lanes - one for trucks, one for passenger buses, and one for private vehicles, to facilitate entry and exit.

A total of 850 customs officers are working at the Nuwaiseeb border crossing in three shifts for ensuring the smooth entry and exit of travelers while maintaining rigorous inspections without compromising security or economic considerations.

From February 28 to March 29 this year, the border crossing saw the entry of 11,000 trucks into the country, averaging 500 trucks per day, and received 30 buses daily carrying passengers for Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways.

Among the notable achievements at the crossing was the detection of commercial violations. A total of 62 violation reports were issued, with cigarette smuggling being the most prominent.

One of the main challenges facing customs officers is the lack of understanding among some travelers about the importance of customs procedures, which are designed to protect the country from smugglers and contraband, especially given the exceptional circumstances the country is currently experiencing.

Al-Baloushi explained that the Nuwaiseeb border crossing is equipped with numerous inspection devices and X-Ray machines for examining trucks, vehicles, and luggage.

The use of sniffer dogs further enhances the efficiency of customs officers in detecting contraband and supports cooperation with relevant authorities, streamlining the clearance process for travelers and trucks.

3 citations, warnings for housing rules violations

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced the issuance of 3 citations and 14 warnings for investment housing violations in Bneid Al-Gar, related to building regulations and unauthorized land use, reports Al-Jarida daily.

The department explained that inspection campaigns were launched by engineers and supervisors in all six governorates to monitor construction work and ensure compliance with building regulations. These campaigns aim to verify adherence to requirements and standards for all types of residential, industrial, commercial, agricultural, investment, and craft uses.

The field work of the inspection teams will continue throughout the month, thanks to the efforts of national staff.

The latest campaign conducted by the Engineering Audit and Follow-up Department in the Capital Governorate is the second such campaign in all governorates since the launch of the main campaign targeting building violations in private housing. All necessary regulatory measures are being taken against violators to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

The inspection team conducted field visits to several areas where violations were observed and took the necessary measures.

The campaign will be followed by additional field visits in all governorates according to a schedule prepared by the Public Relations Department in coordination with the relevant departments to implement these campaigns over the coming weeks.

State bodies eye output upgrade

KFF, IRU, Municipality ink MoU

By Inaas Awad

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Kuwait Municipality, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), and the Insurance Regulatory Unit (IRU) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Thursday to strengthen cooperation in areas of joint work and enhance the efficiency of regulatory roles.



Eng. Al-Asfour



Talal Al-Roumi

Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng. Manal Al-Asfour stated that this collaboration will help raise the effectiveness of regulatory roles, and ensure the optimal completion of tasks.

Also, Director General of KFF, Major-General Talal Al-Roumi, stated that KFF aims, through this MoU, to enhance community safety and protect individuals and property by establishing and implementing safety and security regulations and standards in various activities and buildings.

In addition, Head of the Insurance Regulatory Unit, Mohammad Al-Otaibi, stated that the unit aims, through the MoU, to protect policyholders and develop insurance market tools in line with best practices, with a focus on identifying risks that require coverage to ensure fairness and transparency.

He explained that the MoU reflects the spirit of cooperation between state agencies, promoting clarity and transparency in service delivery while safeguarding the public interest.

The MoU includes several vital provisions, most notably exploring the possibility of issuing mandatory insurance policies related to public safety and fire protection for investment and commercial properties. It aims to integrate the procedures for issuing these insurance policies into the general requirements for obtaining and renewing building, demolition, or fire permits.

The MoU also emphasizes strengthening cooperation in regulating, qualifying, and accrediting insurance companies that specialize in issuing these policies, ensuring full compliance. It calls for the formation of a joint committee, with representation at the department director level or higher, to oversee the implementation of the proposed mechanisms and controls.

Five perish in 2-car crash inferno

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Fire engulfed two vehicles that collided on the Sixth Ring Road, opposite Saad Al-Abdullah, resulting in the death of five individuals, and injuring one on Wednesday evening, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

According to a press statement issued by the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), firefighters from Al-Tahrir Fire Station rushed to the location and handled the situation, after which the site was handed over to the relevant authorities.

3 get 10 years in terror case

5-year jail stays for truant staffer

By Jaber Al-Hamoud

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: The Court of Cassation upheld the five-year prison sentence with hard labor and KD330,000 fine imposed on an employee for misappropriating salaries and financial benefits.

Case details revealed that the defendant received monthly salaries and allowances totaling about KD110,000 despite being absent from work for 10 years, exploiting the fact that her name remained on the payroll.

The Public Prosecution charged the employee with misappropriating public funds, demanding the maximum penalty.

The court declared her guilty, confirming in its ruling that her actions harmed public funds.



Trio jailed 10 years: The Criminal Court, presided over by Judge Nayef Al-Dahoum, sentenced two citizens and an individual whose Kuwaiti citizenship was revoked to 10 years in prison with hard labor and fined them KD10,000 each for financing and joining the Hezbollah, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Case files indicate that the Public Prosecution accused the defendants of engaging in activities aimed at supporting and financing a banned organization by collecting and transferring funds through illegal means, as well as joining the organization and participating in its activities - acts considered a threat to national security and a violation of the law.

The prosecution then charged the defendants with financing and joining a banned organization, demanding the maximum penalties for them.



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De-escalation, regional developments in focus

Kuwait FM engages with Saudi, Türkiye, Pakistan, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, and NATO

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, received a phone call on Thursday from Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, during which they discussed current regional developments.

On the same day, Sheikh Jarrah held a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Dr. Hakan Fidan to discuss the latest regional developments and ongoing efforts in this regard.

He also discussed regional developments on Thursday with Cyprus's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Constantinos Kombos, and NATO Deputy



Sheikh Jarrah Secretary General

Radmila Shekerinska. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said these took place during separate calls with the two officials.

On Wednesday, Sheikh Jarrah held a phone call with Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar to discuss current developments and efforts to address them. During the call, he commended Pakistan's diplomatic efforts that contributed to reaching a US-Iran ceasefire.

Additionally, Sheikh Jarrah received a phone call on Wednesday from his Italian counterpart, Antonio Tajani. According to the ministry, they discussed the latest regional developments and related efforts.

He also spoke with Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, José Albares, during a phone call on Wednesday, reviewing regional developments and ongoing initiatives to address them, the ministry said.

Kuwaiti women's housing allocations back on track

20 units distributed weekly, numbers may rise

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Sheikha Bibi Al-Yousef, Head of the Women's Housing Committee at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), announced the resumption of housing distribution for Kuwaiti women.

In a press statement issued recently during the housing distribution lottery at the PAHW headquarters, Al-Yousef said evictions had previously been suspended due to

current circumstances, and about two weeks ago, she raised the issue with the relevant committee, asking, "Why should women have to wait for so long?"

She said, "What has been accomplished sends the message that Kuwait does not stop working, even in the most difficult circumstances."

Al-Yousef emphasized that PAHW's actions are part of its responsibility toward Kuwaiti women.

She explained that she proposed continuing housing allocations every Wednesday to the relevant committee, which approved the plan. Approximately 20 Kuwaiti women receive housing each week, and they should not face any delays.

The usual lottery, which includes

between 200 and 300 women, was scheduled to resume after the Eid Al-Fitr holiday. However, due to current circumstances and the government's precautionary measures, the process was scaled down.

About 20 housing units will be distributed weekly, with the possibility of increasing to 30.

Al-Yousef urged the selected women to attend when summoned and not miss this opportunity to secure their right to housing.

She concluded by emphasizing that this step affirms that Kuwait is safe and secure and that the housing program will continue to progress, adding that Kuwait has faced and overcome even more difficult circumstances in the past.

Personal interviews set for April 15-16

MoSA finalizes Co-op supervisory selection

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi announced the commencement of personal interviews for candidates for supervisory positions in cooperative societies, which will be conducted on April 15-16.

This follows the successful completion of the first stage of online exams carried out at a private university.

In a press statement, Al-Ajmi confirmed that 1,072 citizens were eligible to take the exams, but only 809 took the online exams and 147 of whom passed the first stage, qualifying for the personal interview.

He explained that this is part of the plan of the ministry to Kuwaitize supervisory positions and increase the presence of national talent in the cooperative sector. He said 48 supervisory positions are available in 18 cooperative societies, disclosing these positions include general manager, deputy general manager for commercial

and marketing affairs, deputy general manager for financial and administrative affairs, and heads of departments for procurement, accounting, information technology, administrative affairs, public relations, legal affairs and investment branches.

He affirmed that all interviews will be fully documented through audio and video recordings in order to establish the highest standards of integrity, transparency and impartiality in the evaluation process and ensure fairness among all applicants.

He said the evaluation mechanism is based on these criteria -- online exam score which constitutes 90 percent of the final evaluation and personal interview which constitutes 10 percent -- to guarantee the selection of the most qualified and deserving candidates for supervisory positions in cooperative

societies. He added the interviews will be conducted under the supervision of the Supervisory Positions Filling Committee, whose members are from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Union of Cooperative Societies, and Public Authority for Manpower.

He confirmed that the committee is keen on applying the regulations and procedures with utmost professionalism and impartiality.

He stressed the need for applicants to strictly follow their appointment times, which the ministry will send through email and WhatsApp message.

He also underscored the need for the applicants to bring the 'no criminal record' certificate obtained through the Sahel application as it is a requirement for completing the interview.

He added that the ministry will announce the results -- including the online exams score, personal interview score and total score -- through its official website and social media platforms as soon as they are approved, in line with the principle of transparency.



Dr. Al-Ajmi

Identity claims surge in 2025

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Al-Sumait stated that the statistics recorded by the Committee for Lineage and Name Correction Claims during 2025 highlight the importance of the decree-law regulating procedures for lineage and name correction claims, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

He emphasized that the law was enacted in response to practical realities that required standardizing procedures related to personal and family identity.

In a press statement, Al-Sumait revealed that the total number of applications submitted to the committee in 2025 reached 2,582.

Continued from Page 1

Truce tunes

■ How will the Gulf economy harvest the benefits of this transition after the declaration of force majeure and the cessation of exports?
■ What is the reaction of global financial markets following the announcement of the truce?

Anwar Al-Rashid -- an economist, former Secretary General of the Kuwait Association for Protecting Public Funds and international human rights advocate -- believes that the truce is a crucial lifeline for the global and Kuwaiti economies, pulling them from the precipice of total stagnation, particularly since international markets were almost on the verge of collapse.

Regarding his assessment of the enormous losses sustained by financial, commercial and industrial sectors throughout the conflict, Al-Rashid affirmed that losses have reached the scale of billions, specifically within the financial landscape.

He pointed out that all contending parties recognized the importance of a ceasefire to stop the financial drain, emphasizing that economic imperatives dictated the cessation of hostilities.

He said the Iranian regime will find itself compelled to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to avoid further ruin, especially since all indicators suggest this truce is the foundational step toward a permanent conclusion. He added that the restoration of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz after the 40-day paralysis will revitalize the global economy.

He added that the disruption of Gulf oil exports proved that regional production remains the indispensable factor influencing the global economic equation. He indicated that global markets reacted with immediate relief to the decision of Trump, as reopening this vital artery guarantees the flow of 20 percent of the world's oil supply.

He also emphasized that the Gulf states have demonstrated a high degree of institutional responsibility and wisdom in managing this crisis, proving their capacity to confront the daunting challenges imposed on them.

He said the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states must fully realize that the economic paradigms and policies effective before Feb 28, 2026 will no longer suffice in the post-war landscape. He suggested that they must strengthen their coordination and pursue a higher level of economic integration to protect themselves in case of the recurrence of regional hostilities or the strangulation of maritime routes.

Economic analyst and lawyer Salem Al-Hamoud described the truce as an implicit declaration of the permanent conclusion of the conflict, an assessment supported by current indicators.

He anticipates a surge in oil prices within days as the Strait of Hormuz fully reopens, noting that global markets remain thirsty for Gulf supplies after weeks of disruption that inflicted heavy losses worldwide. He said that oil serves not only as fuel for transportation, but also as the lifeblood for industrial operations and a primary input for global manufacturing value chains. He pointed out that restoring maritime freedom will effectively extinguish the inflationary pressures and recessionary fears that have shadowed international markets.

He thinks that despite the cessation of exports, the war failed to significantly undermine the Gulf economy, with its impact remaining limited due to the strength of national economic foundations and substantial reserves.

However, he stressed the necessity for Gulf states to internalize the lessons of this conflict by diversifying income streams, ensuring that oil does not remain the sole source of income for GCC economies.

He underscored the need for unifying Gulf efforts to bolster economic cooperation and expand industrial output, since the region possesses the potential to emerge as the world's preeminent economic bloc.

On international financial centers, Al-Hamoud expressed a sense of relief as investors embrace the hope that this ceasefire signals a permanent end to the era of regional adventures.

He explained that the announcement sparked an immediate surge in GCC stock markets, paralleled by a jump of over three percent in European indices Wednesday morning.

Economic specialist and former head of Kuwaiti contracting firms Dr. Salah Boursali, stated that the rehabilitation of the Gulf oil sector following the conflict has three fundamental axes:

First is rapid restoration within weeks for those facilities that sustained only superficial material damage.

Second is the recovery period of about three to four months in instances where the damage to infrastructure is moderate.

Third is comprehensive rehabilitation that may extend one year or more should the damage prove to be extensive.

He said the availability of essential components will greatly expedite these repairs, while cautioning that concerns persist regarding the potential for any violation of the truce. He was

quick to add that with the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, freedom of navigation will be restored under reliable security guarantees, facilitating the recovery of the global markets impacted by the war.

Weapons amnesty

weapons within the grace period, proving their awareness, responsibility and commitment to support the security system and maintain national security and stability.

It affirmed that at the end of the grace period, the law will be strictly enforced on anyone found to be in possession of or using unlicensed weapons in accordance with the regulations.

The Public Relations and Security Media General Department at the ministry, under the leadership of Director Brigadier General Nasser Bousulaib, played a vital role during the exceptional grace period for surrendering unlicensed weapons.

The general department spearheaded an intensive and continuous awareness campaign that raised public awareness and encouraged citizens to surrender their unlicensed weapons without legal repercussions at any police station.

Director of the Security Media Department Colonel Othman Al-Mansouri and Director of the Public Relations Department Colonel Faisal Al-Daihani monitored the campaign daily, setting an example of balanced fieldwork and media engagement with transparency and credibility.

The security officials pointed out that the exceptional grace period was a chance to rectify the situation without legal consequences, stressing that surrendering unlicensed weapons at police stations is a national duty, which contributes to maintaining security and stability, and reflects the community's awareness and cooperation with security agencies.

Regional turmoil

Dr. Al-Majed suggested using the "apple test," where willingness to eat any available food indicates genuine hunger, while refusing it and seeking specific foods points to emotional hunger.

For cases of emotional eating, Dr. Al-Majed recommended the "10-15 minute rule" to delay sudden urges to eat. She also advised avoiding eating while watching screens and preparing healthy snacks in advance.

In cases of appetite loss, she emphasized the importance of eating small, frequent meals and avoiding foods or smells that are unpleasant to maintain a basic level of nutritional balance.

She concluded by highlighting that nutritional awareness is the first line of defense for maintaining health during crises, stressing the need to pay attention to the body's signals and not let stress dictate unhealthy eating habits.

In this regard, clinical nutritionist Bashayer Al-Bader confirmed in an interview with Kuwait TV that psychological stress from current circumstances directly affects eating habits.

She revealed that responses vary, with some individuals turning to "emotional eating" to relieve stress, while others experience a significant loss of appetite.

Al-Bader explained that emotional eating is one of the most common responses, as consuming foods high in sugar and fat produces a temporary sense of comfort by triggering the release of feel-good hormones in the brain. Another group reacts differently to stress, with psychological pressure causing the digestive system to contract and leading to a noticeable loss of appetite.

She emphasized the importance of developing self-awareness to manage these behaviors by distinguishing between genuine hunger and emotional hunger, asking a simple question - "Am I truly hungry, or am I eating to soothe my feelings?"

According to Al-Bader, this awareness is the first step toward maintaining balanced eating habits during periods of stress.

Risks of emotional eating and loss of appetite:

- Weight gain and obesity
 - Increased risk of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes
 - Digestive disorders
 - Malnutrition
 - Weakened immunity
 - Chronic fatigue
 - Muscle loss
 - Hair loss
 - Dull skin
- Foods that boost mood:
- Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon and tuna
 - Fiber-rich and magnesium-rich foods, such as spinach and bananas
 - Probiotics, such as yogurt, to support gut health
 - Dark chocolate, rich in antioxidants

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Solidarity initiative launched as both nations face regional challenges

Kuwait, Lebanon stand united with 'unwavering' support amid crisis

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Lebanese Ambassador to Kuwait Ghadi Khoury affirmed that Kuwait and Lebanon stand in solidarity with each other during critical times.

In a press statement, Khoury asserted that the two countries are brothers facing aggression simultaneously. He revealed the launching of a solidarity initiative with Kuwait at the

Lebanese state level, adding that he is certain Kuwait will do everything in its power to help the Lebanese people.

He pointed out that the current circumstances and the ongoing blockade may make the delivery of aid logistically difficult.

He believes that the political and moral support Lebanon receives from Kuwait is constant and unwavering, just as Lebanon strongly supports Kuwait morally and politically, and stands in solidarity with it to pre-

vent further attacks.

He also stated that intensive contacts are underway at the leadership level. He said Lebanese President Joseph Aoun has been in contact with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as well as the Lebanese and Kuwaiti prime ministers, and the foreign affairs ministers. He emphasized that there is no lack of communication and that the vision and assessment of the situation in both

countries are very similar, even though the nature of the threats and attacks is different. He said Lebanon is currently facing a brutal Israeli aggression that has so far resulted in hundreds of martyrs and injuries.

He added the Lebanese Embassy in Kuwait is constantly communicating with the Lebanese community here, including those wishing to return to Lebanon, considering this work the core duty of any embassy toward their citizens, especially during times of war

and crisis.

He expressed his deep gratitude to his staff at the embassy, and the Lebanese Embassy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi authorities for their full cooperation.

He described this as a joint and positive Arab effort that he hopes will be repeated in ordinary times, not only in times of disaster, stressing that this joint Arab work is a resounding success, thanks to everyone's cooperation.

Continued from Page 1

Washington must

He will inevitably mirror the Persian in behavior and character, ultimately becoming a puppet in the hands of his handlers. As long as Iran continues to benefit from this puppet, it will keep investing in him, even if only through the media.

Nevertheless, tomorrow may see the first direct talks between Americans and Iranians in Islamabad. We can expect considerable Iranian stalling.

It is crucial for the American negotiators to understand that decisive action is the only solution. In short, the Iranian regime is like a rotten tooth that must be extracted.

Calm reigns

the announcement in the media briefing conducted by the Government Communication Center.

He also pointed out that the Kuwait Armed Forces are still on the highest level of vigilance and readiness for any development in order to guarantee the safety and security of the homeland.

Moreover, the Ministry of Interior affirmed that the situation in the country is stable, secured and under control.

Official spokesperson of the ministry Brigadier General Nasser Bouslaib revealed in the media briefing that all security and military bodies can and will deal with any emergency that might occur to ensure the safety of the public and the country.

He added that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams handled 17 reports about debris, which fell from the previous interception operations, raising the total number of such reports to 793 since the start of the Iranian aggressions.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Society for Human Rights issued a comprehensive human rights report Thursday, detailing the impact of hostile attacks on the State of Kuwait from Feb 28 to April 8.

The report documents a series of

missile and drone attacks that targeted civilians and vital infrastructure. It revealed 34 direct attacks on civilian facilities, where the strikes systematically focused on essential sectors to disrupt civilian life. The electricity and water sector topped the target list with 10 attacks or 29 percent of the total, pointing out that a single attack may involve more than one drone or missile. The civil aviation sector ranked second with a targeting rate of 24 percent -- eight attacks on Kuwait International Airport, radar systems and fuel tanks. The oil sector was subjected to seven attacks (21 percent), while residential and service buildings faced six attacks (17 percent), targeting residential apartment buildings, the Ministries Complex, and the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) building. Maritime ports face three hostile strikes (nine percent), which included the Shuwaikh, Shuaiba and Mubarak Al-Kabeer ports.

According to the report, the attacks caused injuries to 74 civilians, including two emergency medical personnel who were injured while performing their duties.

Regarding daily life, the report affirmed the civilian paralysis in various sectors like education, civil service, air navigation and social life.

The report emphasized that these acts do not fall under international humanitarian law, because Kuwait is not a party to the conflict, which makes these acts tantamount to a crime of aggression as per Article Eight-bis of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

It stressed that targeting civilian and vital facilities is a flagrant violation of the right to life and personal security according to the international human rights law and the United Nations Charter. It recommended that the international community and United Nations organizations must explicitly condemn this aggression and take urgent measures to ensure international accountability and prevent impunity.

On the other hand, the Ministry of

Social Affairs has instructed all private nurseries -- regular and those for children with special needs -- to postpone their reopening until further notice in order to guarantee the safety of the children and staff.

Sources disclosed that the decision is in compliance with the directive the Cabinet, indicating it is one of the precautionary measures being taken under the current situation. Sources said the postponement will continue until a directive is issued on the resumption of operations under certain guidelines.

Sources confirmed that the ministry is continuously monitoring the situation, in coordination with other concerned authorities, emphasizing that the health and safety of children and staff are the top priority.

They added that the decision to reopen nurseries will be made only after a thorough assessment of the situation, ensuring compliance with the health and safety regulations and preventive measures.

Furthermore, the concerned authorities announced on Thursday that Kuwait has extended the suspension of all sports activities and events until further notice due to ongoing exceptional circumstances.

Minister of State for Youth and Sports Dr. Tariq Al-Jalalima disclosed that the decision is based on the recommendations of a joint committee in charge of assessing the impact of current conditions on the sports sector. He said the committee concluded that sports events should remain on hold until a full evaluation is completed and conditions are deemed safe for a gradual and organized return.

He added that discussions during the meeting covered a range of organizational, technical and health considerations related to hosting sporting events at present.

He confirmed that the authorities will continue to closely monitor developments, indicating the joint committee will hold weekly meetings to review the situation and determine the appropriate timing for resuming sports activities.

He urged the sports clubs, federations

and organizations to comply with the decision, emphasizing that the safety of athletes and the public remains the top priority.

Present at the meeting were senior officials, including representatives of the Public Authority for Sports, Kuwait Olympic Committee, ministries of Defense, Interior and Health, and Directorate General of Civil Defense, highlighting a coordinated government approach to managing the situation.

In a related development, Head of Sabah Al-Ahmad Maritime Center at the Kuwait Municipality branch Ahmadi Ahmed Al-Hibaaj affirmed the removal of 25 unauthorized spring camps due to their proximity to military sites.

In a statement to Kuwait TV, Al-Hibaaj urged the owners of camps near military installations to take the initiative to remove them and cooperate with the relevant authorities, stressing that these measures are part of the organization and safety efforts, and are not intended to inconvenience the citizens. He said some camp owners have voluntarily removed their camps.

He pointed out that removal procedures are preceded by warnings issued to violators, indicating a notice is put on the camp for 24 hours, which is immediately followed by removal.

He stated that the Municipality is working continuously in coordination with the relevant security authorities, and that reports are dealt with right away.

On dealing with misdemeanors in such areas, he disclosed that this is done in coordination with the Environment Public Authority (EPA), which takes the necessary measures, such as withdrawing the permit or issuing violation citations. He clarified that the role of the Municipality is limited to the removal of violating chalets and camps.

In latest developments, a tentative ceasefire in the Iran war staggered Thursday under the weight of Israel's bombardment of Beirut, Tehran's continued chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and uncertainty over whether planned peace talks can find common ground.

Iran and the U.S. - which both declared victory after the ceasefire announcement - appeared to apply pressure. Semiofficial news agencies in Iran suggested forces have mined the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for oil that Tehran has closed. President Donald Trump, meanwhile, warned that U.S. forces would hit Iran harder than before if it did not fulfill the agreement.

And there was disagreement over whether the ceasefire deal included a pause in fighting between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel on Wednesday pounded Beirut with airstrikes, resulting in the deadliest day in Lebanon since the war began on Feb. 28.

Questions also remained over what will happen to Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium at the heart of tensions, how and when normal traffic will resume through the strait, and what happens to Iran's ability to launch future missile attacks and support armed proxies in the region. Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, warned Thursday that continued Israeli attacks on the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon would bring "explicit costs and STRONG responses" in a social media post.

Qalibaf has been discussed as a possible negotiator who could meet U.S. Vice President JD Vance this weekend in Islamabad. The White House has said Vance would lead the delegation for talks starting Saturday.

Iran said Israel was violating the ceasefire agreement. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump have said it was not.

Netanyahu said Israel will continue striking Hezbollah "with force, precision and determination."

Lebanon's health ministry said at least 203 people were killed and more than 1,000 wounded Wednesday in Israeli strikes in central Beirut and other areas of Lebanon that Israel said targeted Hezbollah, which joined the war in support of Tehran.

Israel said Thursday it killed an aide to Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem, Ali Yu-

suf Harshi. Hezbollah did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A New York-based think tank warned that the ceasefire "hovers on the verge of collapse."

"Even if Lebanon was formally outside the deal, the scale of Israel's strikes was likely to be viewed as escalatory," the Soufan Center wrote in an analysis. "Israel's strikes can be understood both as an effort to drive a wedge between Iran and its proxies and as a response to being allegedly sidelined in the original ceasefire discussions."

France honors

He highlighted her collaboration with Sheikh Hessa Al-Sabah and Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, which marked a turning point in her career and contributed to the revival and development of the Al-Sabah Collection, transforming it into one of the world's most famous collections of Islamic art, housing rare artifacts that depict the history and geographical reach of Islamic civilizations.

He praised her role at the Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah (House of Islamic Antiquities) in terms of promoting knowledge and making the arts accessible to the public, in addition to her contributions to preparing and publishing scholarly works and organizing major international exhibitions, which helped build lasting cultural bridges between Kuwait and France.

On the other hand, Khoury, expressed his happiness over the French Embassy's honoring of Kaoukji, a pillar of Lebanese culture, as well as the French government's awarding of the Order of Arts and Letters to her. He pointed out that her career is inspiring, and that her success is the success of all Lebanese people.

Khoury is proud of the fact that Lebanon continues to contribute to the cultural landscape despite all the challenges it has been facing.



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INTERNATIONAL

America

Protesters rally in Maryland: Horns blared and protesters screamed "Stop ICE!" outside a meeting on the western edge of Maryland where county officials were discussing mundane issues like the solid waste budget.

It's been like this ever since the Department of Homeland Security bought an 825,000-square-foot (76,645-square-meter) building in Washington County as part of a plan to transform warehouses across the US into detention facilities for tens of thousands of immigrants.

"This is a facility built for packages, not people," Patrick Dattilio, the founder of an anti-Immigration and Customs Enforcement group called Hagerstown Rapid Response, said as he stood outside the county commission meeting.

The federal government has faced fierce opposition in communities where it spent a total of \$1.074 billion for 11 warehouses under a plan that Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin is reviewing. Washington County is the most welcoming community - a place where officials said they supported ICE, albeit amid whistles and jeers. The processing center there was supposed to be one of the first to open in a facilities project hatched under Mullin's predecessor, Kristi Noem. (AP)

2 killed in Arizona plane crash: Two people have died in a fiery plane crash at a small airport in Arizona, officials said Wednesday.

The plane went off the runway and burst into flames, Marana Mayor Jon Post said.

City spokesperson Vic Hathaway said there were two people on board the plane. They have not been identified. No other injuries were reported and no other aircraft were involved, the Marana Police Department said in a news release. (AP)

The National Transportation Safety Board said it was investigating the crash of a Piper PA-32 airplane.

Marana is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northwest of Tucson. (AP)

Doc convicted of attempted manslaughter: A Hawaii anesthesiologist who was accused of trying to murder his wife on a scenic cliffside hike with ocean views last year has been convicted of the lesser charge of attempted manslaughter.

A Honolulu jury returned the verdict against Gerhardt Konig, 47, on Wednesday after a day of deliberations. He was convicted of attempted manslaughter based on extreme mental or emotional disturbance, which carries up to 20 years in prison. Sentencing was set for Aug. 13.

Thomas Otake, his attorney, said he planned to appeal. Nevertheless, Otake said the defense respected the jury's verdict.

"We are thankful that they did not convict him of attempted murder, which would have been life in prison," Otake said. "We look forward to an appeal related to some of the judge's rulings throughout the case." (AP)

Army vet charged with sharing classified info: An Army veteran has been charged with sharing classified information about an elite commando unit with a journalist, which one official said put the country, members of the US military and the nation's allies at risk.

Courtney Williams, 40, of Wagram, North Carolina, is accused of violating federal law, as well as multiple nondisclosure agreements by sharing details of her work with a "special military unit" at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

"Anyone divulging information they vowed to protect to a reporter for publication is reckless, self-serving and damages our nation's security," Reid Davis, the FBI special agent in charge in North Carolina, said in a US Justice Department news release. (AP)



A stately southern mansion sits close to a proposed ICE detention center, top, in a small community in western Maryland known as a destination for weekend bicyclists and Civil War history buffs in Williamsport, Md on March 26. (AP)

Democratic presidential prospects flock to NY to court activists at Sharpton's conference

Republican fears grow as Dems keep notching election victories ahead of midterms

MADISON, Wis., April 9, (AP) — The bluntest assessment of Republican failures during this week's elections in Wisconsin came from one of their own.

"We got our butts kicked," said US Rep Tom Tiffany, who is running for governor.

He was referring to Democratic victories in campaigns for the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the mayor's office in Waukesha, a conservative suburb outside of Milwaukee. But some Republicans were also rattled by a Georgia special election, where their candidate to replace Marjorie Taylor Greene in Congress won by a much slimmer margin than the party enjoyed in the past.

Taken together, the swings from red to blue added more data points to an increasingly clear picture of Democratic momentum heading into the November midterms, when control of the U.S. House, U.S. Senate and state governments around the country are up for grabs.

"In rural, urban, red, blue, Democrats have overperformed everywhere," said Jared Leopold, a Democratic consultant whose clients include Keisha Lance Bottoms, a candidate for Georgia governor. "That is a significant canary in the coal mine about what November of '26 is going to look like."

Some Republicans insisted there was no need to panic, and their fundraising remains stronger than Demo-

crats. Stephen Lawson, a Georgia strategist, said "the sky is not falling."

But he also said his party is running behind where it has been in the past, and Republicans need to be "looking at these results carefully."

Special elections can be notoriously unreliable as political benchmarks, but Democrats have consistently demonstrated surprising strength. They flipped a Texas state Senate district. They won a Florida state House seat in a district that includes President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach.

Then they gained ground on Tuesday in the race to replace Greene, who resigned from Congress in January after a falling out with Trump.

Clay Fuller, the Republican candidate, prevailed by 12 points. Two years ago, Greene won by 29 points and Trump carried the district by almost 37 points.

"That's a red alarm for Republicans," said Democratic strategist Meredith Brasher.

Fuller defeated Shawn Harris, who plans to challenge him again in November.

Jackie Harling, the district's Republican chairwoman, said she believed that Greene's resignation energized Democrats while her party is suffering from "election fatigue."

"Marjorie Taylor Greene was like a freight train that you couldn't stop, and when she pulled out, it gave Democrats hope and it gave them a shot at



Josh Shapiro, Governor of Pennsylvania, speaks with Reverend Al Sharpton during the National Action Network (NAN) Convention in New York, on April 8. (AP)

winning something they believed was unwinnable," Harling said.

Georgia has key races this year, including an open contest for the governor's office. Sen. Jon Ossoff, a Democrat, is trying to defend his seat as well.

There's reason to think that simmering discontent could boomerang back on Republicans just two years after Trump harnessed voters' anger with his comeback presidential campaign.

In November, Democrats defeated two Republican incumbents in statewide races for seats on the Public Service Commission, which regulates

utilities. Rising electricity rates have been a fault line in recent campaigns, especially as enormous data centers are built to power artificial intelligence.

But Georgia Democratic Party Chair Charlie Bailey is trying to maintain modest expectations.

"We could cement ourselves, put ourselves, on the slightly bluer side of purple," he said. "We're not going to overnight turn into Colorado."

Wisconsin holds statewide elections for supreme court seats, and liberals expanded their majority with a 20-point blowout victory on Tuesday.

Democrats saw gains in red, blue and purple counties when compared to another judicial race last year, which was also won by the liberal candidate.

"This to me was a very clear sign of momentum and enthusiasm for Democrats in the fall," said Wisconsin Democratic Party Chairman Devin Remiker.

The state has its own open race for governor this year, and Democrats are hoping to take control of the state legislature and oust Republican U.S. Rep. Derrick Van Orden.

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, another Democratic candidate for governor, said it's clear that "people are really upset with the Republican Party and their brand right now."

Also:

NEW YORK: The Democratic Party's most ambitious politicians are courting African American activists in New York this week as the party's unofficial 2028 presidential nomination contest takes shape at an annual conference led by Rev. Al Sharpton.

Up first was **Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro**, who warned that "everyone is less safe" because of President **Donald Trump's** leadership and blamed him for a nationwide surge in antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and bigotry.

"There's more chaos, there's more cruelty in our world," Shapiro said. "Even if we disagree on health care policy or tax policy or whatever, we

should at least, at a baseline, have an honorable president of the United States. We do not have that right now."

The Democratic governor, already considered a top-tier 2028 presidential prospect with a clear path to reelection in his battleground state this year, delivered a scathing criticism of the Republican president on the opening day of the National Action Network's four-day conference. More than a half-dozen potential candidates are speaking here to make inroads among Black leaders, one of Democrats' most powerful voting blocs.

The presidential primary season won't begin in earnest until after November's midterm elections, but this week's conference is showcasing a collection of Democrats already jockeying for position in what promises to be a crowded primary fight.

For now, at least, there is no clear early favorite.

"Everybody's talking about who may run for president," said Sharpton, the National Action Network's founder and president. "I want to first know what their vision is now, and what they're doing now. So I've invited all of the people that could run."

In addition to Shapiro, the speaking program features Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, former Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, Rep. Ro Khanna of California, and Arizona Sens. Mark Kelly and Ruben Gallego.



People walk through Red Square on a sunny day in Moscow on April 7. (AP)

Russia's internet crackdown leads to a spring of growing discontent

MOSCOW, April 9, (AP) — Several dozen people lined up outside a presidential administration building on a sunny spring weekend in central Moscow as police stood nearby and watched them closely.

The people were lodging complaints about the government's intensifying crackdown on the internet that has seen regular shutdowns of cellphone internet connections, blocked popular messaging apps and cut access to thousands of other websites and digital services.

It was the latest sign of the growing anger and frustration over the restrictions that have disrupted the daily lives of Russians, hurt businesses and drawn criticism even from Kremlin supporters.

Knowing that any unauthorized demonstrations are harshly suppressed, activists have tried to organize authorized rallies, plastered posters on walls and notice boards, and filed lawsuits. Industry leaders pleaded with authorities to repeal the measures.

Even the leader of Armenia delivered a not-so-veiled barb at Russia during a televised meeting with President Vladimir Putin on April 1. Prime



Russian President Vladimir Putin, (center right), and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, left, meet in the Kremlin, in Moscow on April 1. (AP)

Minister Nikol Pashinyan noted that in Armenia, "our social media, for example, is 100% free. There are no restrictions whatsoever."

An unsmiling Putin stared at Pashinyan with slightly raised eyebrows.

The clampdown not only serves to control what websites Russians can see, but also has thrown digital life into disarray, making it difficult to or-

der taxis and deliveries, pay for goods and services electronically, and stay in touch with friends and family.

Politician and Kremlin critic Boris Nadezhdin spoke for many Russians who are upset about the internet clampdown when he said in an interview with The Associated Press: "This infuriates a huge number of people."

Trump complains NATO 'wasn't there when we needed them' after talks with Rutte

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP) — US President Donald Trump repeated his complaint about NATO after a closed-door meeting with the alliance's Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Wednesday for discussions that had been expected to be aimed at soothing Trump's anger with the military alliance over the Iran war.

Ahead of the private meeting, Trump had suggested the US may consider leaving the trans-Atlantic alliance after NATO member countries ignored his call to help as Iran effectively shut the the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping waterway, and sent gas prices soaring.

Afterward, he issued an all-caps comment on social media suggesting he remained aggrieved. "NATO WASN'T THERE WHEN WE NEEDED THEM, AND THEY WON'T BE THERE IF WE NEED THEM AGAIN," Trump said in his post. The White House did not immediately offer any further updates.

The Republican president has had a warm relationship with Rutte in the past, and the meeting came after the US and Iran late Tuesday agreed to a two-week ceasefire that includes the reopening of the strait. The nascent ceasefire was struck after Trump said he would strike Iran's power plants



US President Donald Trump meets with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte in the Oval Office of the White House on Oct 22, 2025, in Washington. (AP)

and bridges, threatening that "a whole civilization will die tonight."

Earlier Wednesday, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt acknowledged that Trump had discussed leaving NATO. "I think it's something the president will be discussing in a couple of hours with Secretary-General Rutte," Leavitt said.

Congress in 2023 passed a law that

prevents any US president from pulling out of NATO without its approval. Trump has been a longtime critic of NATO and in his first term had suggested he had the authority on his own to leave the alliance, which was founded in 1949 to counter the Cold War threat posed to European security by the Soviet Union.

Europe

'3 submarines tracked in North Atlantic': British Defense Secretary **John Healey** said Thursday that Britain and Norway tracked three Russian submarines in North Atlantic.

In a 10 Downing Street press conference, he said that British forces, together with allies including Norway, had led a month-long operation in the North Atlantic to track Russian submarines near key undersea infrastructure, including cables and pipelines.

He added that the vessels had since left British waters and headed north, with no signs of damage found to underwater infrastructure.

According to Healey, the operation involved a British frigate, aircraft and hundreds of personnel. He said the Russian deployment included one Akula-class attack submarine and two specialist submarines linked to Russia's Main Directorate for Deep Sea Research, known as GUGI. (Xinhua)



Healey

4 dead after boat sinks in English Channel: Four

people died after a boat sank on the French side of the English Channel on Thursday morning, local media reported.

Preliminary data from local authorities showed that 38 others were rescued, with one person being treated for hypothermia, the French news channel BFMTV reported.

The boat went down well offshore near Boulogne-sur-Mer in the northern French region of Hauts-de-France while attempting to cross the channel from France, local authorities told BFMTV. (Xinhua)

French ex-detainees Kohler, Paris back home: French former detainees Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris returned to France Wednesday after more than three years of detention in Iran, following weeks of talks with Tehran.

Kohler, 41, and Paris, 72, left by road on Tuesday, right before a tentative ceasefire between the United States and Iran was announced to halt fighting that has rocked the region since Feb 28. Their release was hailed as a major diplomatic success by French authorities.

President Emmanuel Macron, who has attempted to distance his country from the Middle East conflict, welcomed them at the Elysee presidential palace.

Arrested on spying charges, they were released from prison in Iran in November. However, the two had been held up in French diplomatic premises in Tehran as Iranian authorities wouldn't allow them to leave the country. Macron said they were given the green light to make their way back home on Tuesday. (AP)

Little signs of a return to civilian governance

Myanmar's parliament approves cabinet mostly of former generals and holdovers

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar, April 9, (Agencies): Myanmar's parliament approved a cabinet Thursday that largely includes former generals and holdovers from the past military-led government under Min Aung Hlaing.

Despite the formation of a new government following controversial elections in December and January, there's little signs of a return to civilian governance five years after he led the 2021 army takeover.

Min Aung Hlaing will be sworn into office as president Friday, along with two vice presidents and cabinet members.

Parliament Speaker Aung Lin Dwe said the appointments of 30 ministers were approved with no objections.

According to the official list, 24 are current or former generals and military officers or are lawmakers from the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party. Eighteen of the ministers were cabinet members of the previous military government, while four others were military and government officials under the same administration.

Several have also been sanctioned by foreign governments that accused them of supporting and serving in the military government or violating human rights.

Parliament also reappointed the chairman of the constitutional tribunal, attorney general, and judges of the Supreme Court.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was among the outside groups that did not recognize Myanmar's elections after most opposition groups were excluded and dissent was tightly restricted. Voting also could not take place in some areas due to Myanmar's ongoing civil war.

Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated Min Aung Hlaing



Myanmar's military representatives stay stand as Parliament chairman Aung Lin Dwe, (unseen), leaves after a session at Union Parliament in Naypyitaw, Myanmar, on April 9. (AP)

on his election as Myanmar's president.

In the message, Xi pointed out that China and Myanmar are friendly

neighbors connected by mountains and rivers, and the two peoples enjoy a longstanding "Paukphaw" (fraternal) friendship.

Under the guidance of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which the two sides jointly advocate, the two countries have lived in harmony and helped each other, firmly supporting each other on issues related to their core interests and major concerns, Xi said.

This fully demonstrates the profound connotation of the China-Myanmar community with a shared future, marked by the spirit of sharing weal and woe, he emphasized.

Xi recalled the two meetings held between the two leaders last year, during which they reached important consensus on accelerating the building of the China-Myanmar community with a shared future. He added that various departments and localities of both sides are actively working to implement this consensus.

Xi noted that this year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan, and that Myanmar has entered a new phase of political transformation and national development.

Saying that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Myanmar relations, Xi expressed willingness to work together with President-elect Min Aung Hlaing to strengthen strategic communication, deepen political mutual trust, enhance and solidify the building of the China-Myanmar community with a shared future, so as to better benefit the two peoples and further contribute to regional peace and development.

Chinese Vice President Han Zheng extended congratulations to U Nyo Saw and Nan Ni Ni Aye on being elected as the country's vice presidents.

Latest weapons tests included missiles with cluster-bomb warheads: N.Korea

SEOUL, South Korea, April 9, (AP): North Korea said Thursday its testing spree this week involved various new weapons systems, including ballistic missiles armed with cluster-bomb warheads, as it pushes to expand nuclear-capable forces aimed at rival South Korea.

The report by North Korean state media came a day after South Korea's military said it detected North Korea firing multiple missiles from an eastern coastal area in its second round of launches in two days.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said the tests lasted three days starting Monday and also included demonstrations of anti-aircraft weapons, purported electromagnetic weapons systems and carbon-fiber bombs.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missiles launched Wednesday flew 240 to 700 kilometers (150 to 434 miles) before falling into the sea, and that it also detected at least one projectile launched Tuesday from an area near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

Japan's Defense Ministry said none of the weapons fired Wednesday entered waters within its exclusive economic zone, while the U.S. military said the North Korean launches on Tuesday and Wednesday posed no immediate threat to the United States or its allies.

KCNA said the latest tests included demonstrations of cluster-munition warhead systems mounted on the nuclear-capable Hwasong-11 ballistic



This photo provided by the North Korean government shows its leader Kim Jong Un, front right, his daughter, reportedly named Kim Ju Ae, and other soldiers on a tank at a military training base in North Korea, on March 19. (AP)

missiles, which resemble Russia's Iskander missiles in their design for low-altitude, maneuverable flight to evade missile defense systems. The report said the launches confirmed that the short-range missile, when armed with such warheads, "can reduce to ashes any target covering an area of 6.5-7 hectares (16 to 17.2 acres) with the highest-density power."

Jang Do-young, a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a briefing that the military was analyzing the launches while sharing information with U.S. and Japanese counterparts, but declined to provide

specific assessments about the North's claims of progress in its military capabilities.

The launches underscored continuing tensions between the Koreans, blunting South Korean hopes for warmer relations.

In a statement Tuesday night, Jang Kum Chol, a first vice minister at Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry, said South Korea would always remain the North's "most hostile enemy state" and mocked Seoul's liberal government for seeking to revive restore long-stalled dialogue, calling its officials "world-startling fools."

More than 1,000 aid workers killed in past 3 years says United Nations

UNITED NATIONS, April 9, (AP): More than 1,000 humanitarian workers have been killed across the globe in the past three years, nearly triple the death count in the previous three years, the UN said Wednesday.

"This is not an accidental escalation - it is the collapse of protection." UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher told the UN Security Council.

Of the more than 1,010 humanitarian workers killed from 2023 to 2025, he said, more than 560 were in Gaza and the West Bank, 130 in Sudan, 60 in South Sudan, 25 in Ukraine and 25 in Congo. That compares with 377 killed from 2020 to 2022.

The surge in deaths occurred during the war between Israel and Hamas, which began in October 2023. A ceasefire has been in effect since October 2025, although shootings and airstrikes have persisted.

Last year alone, Fletcher said, at least 326 aid workers were recorded as killed in 21 countries. In 2024, a record 383 were killed in global hotspots while distributing food, water, shelter and medicine.

"They died in clearly marked convoys and on missions coordinated directly with authorities," the undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs said.

The Security Council was meeting on a resolution it adopted in May 2024 that strongly condemned attacks on humanitarian workers



The United Nations logo is seen inside the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Sept 24, 2024. (AP)

and UN personnel and demanded that all combatants protect them in accordance with international law.

Fletcher asked the 15 members of the UN's most powerful body if the killings were because international law "is no longer convenient" or because "it is more important to protect those designing, selling, supplying and firing lethal weapons?"

"Or is it because member states see these numbers as collateral damage, part of the fog of war? Or worse, are we now seen as legitimate targets?" he asked. "Perhaps the most chilling question: If these deaths were 'preventable', why then were they not prevented?"

Fletcher said humanitarian staff are not only being killed but "restricted, penalized and delegitimized" - and told where they can't go and whom they can't help.

In Yemen, as a prime example, 73 UN staff and dozens of others working for nongovernmental organizations are being arbitrarily detained by Houthi rebels, Fletcher said.

In Afghanistan, female humanitarian staff are banned from doing their jobs, he said. In Gaza, Israel restricts the UN and other international organizations, and in Ukraine drone attacks have forced aid workers back from the front line.

Lat/Am

Heavy rains kill child in Dominican Republic:

Heavy rains in the Dominican Republic killed a toddler, damaged more than 1,000 homes and caused power and water outages on Wednesday, forcing officials to suspend classes at some public and private schools.

Forecasters noted that 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain fell in some areas in less than 24 hours, forcing crews to evacuate more than 5,000 people.

"There is no storm drainage system that can withstand that anywhere in the world," President Luis Abinader said.

A press official with the Civil Defense agency, Jaysi Capellán, told The Associated Press that a nearly 2-year-old girl died after a wall at her home collapsed in the capital of Santo Domingo.

The government ordered nonessential employees to work remotely as authorities warned of flooding and possible landslides, with more than a dozen provinces under alert, including Santo Domingo, which is the hardest hit area.

Listín Diario, a local newspaper, reported that more than 20 communities were cut off in the province of San José de Ocoa, located just northwest of Santo Domingo, after a river overflowed its banks. (AP)

□ □ □

Mexican miner rescued: A miner was rescued Wednesday after being trapped for nearly 14 days following a collapse in the northern Mexican state of Sinaloa, authorities said in a statement.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum confirmed that another miner has been found dead and one more is still missing.

A dam breach caused by a structural failure flooded El Rosario mine on March 25, trapping Francisco Zapata Nájera and three co-workers. Of the 25 miners present during the accident, 21 escaped immediately. Five days later, rescuers pulled one survivor from a depth of 300 meters (985 feet). Zapata Nájera was located on Tuesday by divers, but the rescue teams were unable to reach him through heavily flooded areas until 21 hours later. (AP)

Africa

21 missing after boat capsizes in e.Congo: A boat has capsized on Lake Kivu in eastern Congo, leaving at least 21 people missing, authorities said Wednesday.

The boat was on its way to the town of Makengere when it sank on Tuesday, after a visit to a market town. Officials said that 23 people survived, and a search was ongoing for the missing.

The cause of the capsizing was under investigation. It wasn't immediately known how many people were onboard or the exact number of missing.

Deadly boat tragedies are common in the central African country, where late-night travels and overcrowded vessels are often blamed.

Because of insecurity in eastern Congo, many people are abandoning the few available roads for wooden vessels crumbling under the weight of passengers and their goods. The roads are often caught up in the deadly clashes between Congolese security forces and rebels that sometimes block major access routes. (AP)

□ □ □

Detained aid worker freed in CAR: Detained aid worker Joseph Figueira Martin, who had been held in the Central African Republic (CAR) for nearly two years, was freed Tuesday, his family told The Associated Press.

His brother said that "the rumor is real and he should land in Lisbon in a couple of hours."

Figueira Martin, a dual Belgian-Portuguese citizen and consultant for the American aid organization FHI 360, was arrested in May 2024, according to the Central African Republic prosecutor's office, over allegations of spying, being in communication with armed groups to plot a coup, and jeopardizing national security.

He was arrested in Zemio, a town in the country's southeast that has been plagued by fighting between ethnic militias and anti-government rebels for over a decade. Figueira Martin was held in a military prison and had previously started a hunger strike to protest the conditions of his detention. (AP)



People stand in queues to cast their votes at a polling center during the state election in Guwahati, India on April 9. (AP)

Key Indian states hold elections

Voters in India's Assam and Kerala states and the federally administered region of Puducherry began casting ballots Thursday in local elections seen as a test of support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party.

The elections pit the BJP and its regional allies against a range of opposition parties. Assam and Puducherry are governed by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, while Kerala is ruled by the opposition.

Two other opposition-ruled states, West Bengal and

Tamil Nadu, will vote later this month. The results for all five regions are expected May 4.

The polls come while the public is concerned about rising energy costs and tighter cooking gas supplies due to the war in the Middle East. The outcome could show whether Modi's party can extend its dominance by making inroads into opposition strongholds. A strong showing would also bolster his federal government, as the 2024 national election forced his ruling party to rely on regional allies to form the government. (AP)

Hundreds march in Senegal over broken govt promises

DAKAR, Senegal, April 9, (AP): Hundreds of workers, union members and opposition supporters marched in Senegal's capital Dakar on Wednesday to protest what they say are broken government promises and a worsening cost-of-living, as the country is plagued by a severe debt crisis.

The protest was organized by the country's main labor unions and the Front for the Defense of Democracy and the Republic, also known as FDR, opposition coalition.

Mody Guiro, secretary-general of the National Confederation of Senegalese Workers, the country's largest labor union, said the government had betrayed a deal last year that had frozen strikes in exchange for promises of better wages and working conditions. Authorities say a record debt crisis inherited from the previous administration has left the government with little money to spend.

Protesters wearing red scarves and union hats held signs demanding that the government rehire laid off public sector workers and lowers income taxes. Some chanted slogans calling for the ousting of Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko.

The West African country's government, led by Sonko and President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, came to power in April 2024, promising to carry out ambitious reforms, which included fighting corruption, creating jobs for young people and maximizing the country's natural resource benefits.



Workers hold placards as they march to demand that the government honor its commitments and address their concerns, in Dakar, Senegal on April 8. (AP)

Peruvians choosing president from 35-candidate pool in Sunday election

LIMA, Peru, April 9, (AP): A former minister, a comedian and a political heiress are among 35 candidates for Peru's ninth president in just 10 years.

The election Sunday takes place during a surge in violent crime and corruption, fueling widespread discontent among voters, who largely view candidates as dishonest and unprepared for the presidency. Many of the contenders have responded to people's crime concerns with wide-ranging proposals, including building megaprisons, restricting food for prisoners and reinstating the death penalty for serious crimes.

"You can't trust anyone anymore, nothing's going to change," construction worker Juan Gómez, 53, said as he carried two heavy bags with potatoes and rice to feed his five children. "(Criminals) come on motorcycles, put a gun to your head... you look around and there's no police officer. What are you going to do? You just let them rob you."



Presidential candidate Roberto Sanchez of Together for Peru party arrives to his closing campaign rally on a horse in Lima, Peru on April 8. (AP)

Here's what to know about Sunday's election.

Voting is mandatory for Peruvians from the ages of 18 to 70. More than

27 million people are registered, and of those, about 1.2 million are expected to cast ballots from abroad, mainly in the United States and Argentina.

Oil price drops \$20.46 to \$100.63 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil fell by USD 20.46 to reach USD 100.63 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday trading, compared to USD 121.09 pb on Tuesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said Thursday. Globally, price of Brent crude dropped by USD 14.52 to USD 94.75 pb, while West Texas Intermediate crude fell USD 18.54 to USD 94.41 pb.

Main market rises 0.64% on turnover of KD 19.4 mln

Boursa Kuwait general index slips 0.29% to 8,626.97

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): Boursa Kuwait ended Thursday's trading session with its general index slipping 24.80 points, or 0.29 percent, to close at 8,626.97 points. A total of 276 million shares changed hands through 19,625 cash transactions, valued at KD 74.7 million (approximately USD 227.6 million).

The main market index posted a gain, rising 50.78 points, or 0.64 percent, to 7,971.52 points. Trading volume in the main market reached 152.10 million shares via 9,811 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 19.4 million



Boursa Kuwait

Oil route disruption pushes Kuwait toward recession

World Bank warns of sharp Middle East growth slowdown amid war & supply-chain disruptions

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: A recent World Bank Group report titled "War Challenges and Industrial Policies for Development" highlights the broad and direct economic impacts of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, along with damage to energy infrastructure and public utilities, has disrupted supply chains and markets, causing oil prices to surge to approximately \$112 per barrel, an increase of nearly 60 percent. This has been accompanied by rising gas prices, higher global inflation, and increased uncertainty in financial markets.

The report, which reviews recent regional economic developments, explained that these factors have contributed to greater financial volatility and weaker economic growth prospects for 2026.

The conflict adds another shock to economies already facing structural challenges, including low productivity growth, declining private sector dynamism, and persistent labor market pressures.

These conditions underscore the urgent need to strengthen governance and macroeconomic fundamentals, while adopting effective policies that support the creation of sustainable jobs and enhance economic resilience to shocks, ensuring long-term stability in the region.

The World Bank Group report forecasts a significant slowdown in economic growth in the region, excluding Iran, projecting a decline from 4 percent in 2025 to 1.8 percent in 2026, a decrease of 2.4 percentage points compared to the January forecast.

This slowdown is primarily concentrated in the economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Iraq, resulting directly from the impacts of the war and disruptions to supply chains, particularly due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Growth forecasts for the GCC countries have been lowered by 1.3 percentage points, from 4.4 percent in 2025 to 3.1 percent in 2026. This downward revision reflects these economies' heavy reliance on oil exports and their vulnerability to disruptions in export routes and heightened uncertainty.

The Kuwaiti economy is projected to contract by 6.4 percent, along with significant contractions in Iraq and Qatar, underscoring the fragility of dependence on a single trade and energy route.

The projections indicate that the risks surrounding these forecasts are heavily skewed to the downside.

A prolonged war could worsen these effects, driving higher energy and food prices, reducing trade, tourism, and remittances, increasing pressure on public finances, and raising displacement rates.

In this regard, Ousman Dione of the World Bank explained that the current crisis urgently requires proactive measures that go beyond merely withstanding shocks to include the rebuilding of more resilient economies.

Achieving this requires strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals, supporting innovation, improving governance, investing in infrastructure, and creating sectors capable of generating employment opportunities.

The report emphasized that peace and stability are essential prerequisites for sustainable development, enabling the establishment of strong institutions and economies that offer real opportunities for people.

It also highlighted the importance of industrial policies as a tool to support growth and job creation by promoting the strategic activities of companies and enterprises.

The report noted that the success of these policies depends on their feasibility, accountability, and alignment with each country's priorities and institutional capacities.

Although countries in the region have accelerated the adoption of these policies over the past decade, particularly through sovereign wealth funds and state-owned enterprises, results remain uneven. This underscores the need for strong institutions and clear guidance to ensure the achievement of development goals.

Roberta Gatti emphasized the importance of maintaining focus on long-term efforts, noting that achieving peace and sustainable prosperity remains a priority despite the severe economic consequences of the current war.

The report stated that the repercussions of the war extend beyond the oil sector, affecting trade and tourism, reducing remittances, and increasing food and energy costs.

(around USD 59.3 million).

The premier market index declined, dropping 42.19 points, or 0.46 percent, to settle at 9,214.11 points. About 123.9 million shares were traded through 9,814 transactions, valued at KD 55.2 million (approximately USD 169 million).

Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index advanced by 79.47 points, or 0.94 percent, closing at 8,514.54 points. Trading in this index totaled 142.9 million shares across 8,630 cash transactions, valued at KD 17.9 million (roughly USD 54.7 million).

If these conditions persist, they could lead to population displacement, erosion of human capital, and long-term negative effects on labor markets and economic growth.

The report highlights industrial policies as an important tool for supporting growth and job creation, particularly through sovereign wealth funds and state-owned enterprises.

It emphasizes that their success depends on the efficiency of institutions, clarity of objectives, effective oversight, and alignment with each country's capabilities.

The report noted that the crisis has exposed chronic structural challenges, including weak productivity, a limited role for the private sector, and heavy reliance on oil. This underscores the need to accelerate efforts to diversify the economy, invest in human capital, develop infrastructure, and promote innovation.

It stressed that peace and stability are fundamental to sustainable development, warning that conflicts could reduce per capita income by approximately 45 percent within a few years. Despite these challenges, the Gulf countries, particularly Kuwait, have an opportunity to build a more diversified and resilient economy.

The report underscores the scale of the challenges facing the Kuwaiti economy amid current geopolitical developments. Kuwait's economy is projected to contract by 6.4 percent, primarily due to the halt or restriction of oil exports. The impact also affects other regional economies, including Iraq and Qatar, which are experiencing significant contractions, highlighting the strong interdependence of the region's economies on the energy sector.

The report positioned Kuwait at the forefront of these economic challenges, not only because of its sensitive geographic location but also due to its limited economic diversification compared with other Gulf states, such as the UAE, which has made notable progress in expanding its sources of income.

The report emphasized that Kuwait's heavy reliance on the oil sector increases the economy's vulnerability to external shocks. As a result, any disruption to oil production or exports would directly affect government revenues and public spending. This, in turn, would influence the pace of development projects and growth plans, placing economic diversification at the forefront of strategic priorities for the coming period.

'Markets turn cautious'

Global stocks fall, oil climbs on war jitters

HONG KONG, April 9, (AP): Oil rose again and world shares were mostly down Thursday on skepticism over a fragile ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran.

Investors were closely watching whether a two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran was already slipping after a round of intense Israeli strikes on Lebanon that killed and injured hundreds. Iran again closed the Strait of Hormuz, in response to the attacks in Lebanon.

In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.3% to 10,572.73. France's CAC 40 dropped 0.8% to 8,198.77, while Germany's DAX lost 1.3% to 23,771.68.

Asian shares closed mostly lower. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 dropped 0.7% to 55,895.32, while South Korea's Kospi lost 1.6% to 5,778.01. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.5% to 25,752.40. The Shanghai Composite index was down 0.7% to 3,966.17. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up 0.2% to 8,973.20. Taiwan's TaieX was 0.3% higher, while India's Sensex dropped 1.6%.

U.S. futures were down more than 0.4%.

Oil prices were up Thursday, reversing an earlier plunge on optimism over the temporary ceasefire agreement. Brent crude, the international standard, was up 3.5% to \$98.09 per barrel. Benchmark U.S. crude was 3.6% higher on Thursday at \$97.83 a barrel.

Uncertainties over global energy supply remained. The Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for energy transport where a fifth of the world's oil typically passes, was largely closed

even though the U.S. repeatedly demanded that it must be reopened.

"(Oil) prices rebounded as fighting in the Middle East continued, and the ceasefire outlook deteriorated, keeping uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz firmly in focus," ING Bank analysts Ewa Manthey and Warren Patterson wrote in a note Thursday.

Talks to pursue a permanent end to the war could start in Pakistan on Saturday, and Vice President JD Vance is expected to lead the U.S. delegation. President Donald Trump posted on his Truth Social media platform that U.S. military will remain around Iran "until such time as the REAL AGREEMENT reached is fully complied with."

Wall Street closed higher Wednesday following Trump's announcement of a two-week ceasefire with Iran late Tuesday. The S&P 500 jumped 2.5% to 6,782.81. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 2.9% to 47,909.92. The Nasdaq composite was up 2.8% to 22,635.00.

Following renewed hopes over de-escalation of the war, shares of United Airlines surged 7.9% on Wednesday, American Airlines was up 5.6%, while cruise ship operator Carnival jumped 11.2%, trimming losses since the Iran war began on concerns over rising fuel costs.

In other dealings, gold and silver prices fell. Gold's price dropped 0.6% to \$4,750.20 an ounce. The price of silver fell 1.7% to \$74.08 per ounce. The U.S. dollar rose to 158.95 Japanese yen from 158.57 yen. The euro was trading at \$1.1675, up from \$1.1663.



Currency traders work near a screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), top center, and the foreign exchange rate between U.S. dollar and South Korean won, top center left, at the foreign exchange dealing room of the Hana Bank headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday, April 9, 2026. (AP)

Truce-driven dip could be gold buying chance

By Marwa Al-Bahravi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Global gold prices surged Wednesday after US President Donald Trump and Iran agreed on a two-week ceasefire to resume talks aimed at ending the war that has roiled global markets.

The precious metal prices rose by as much as 3.1 percent, surpassing \$4,850 an ounce, continuing gains of 1.2 percent from the previous session.

Gold expert Mohammad Hatab predicted a return to rising gold prices in the coming period, as the truce between the United States and Iran takes effect. He indicated that the yellow metal could regain its pre-war trajectory, taking into consideration the easing of factors that affected prices in the past.

Hatab told the newspaper that the main impact on gold prices during the crisis stemmed from the repercussions of the war, particularly the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which led liquidity shift toward oil, anticipating the price increase. He pointed out that with the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, liquidity is likely to return to gold, supporting its upward trend.

He stated that the war and the accompanying rise in oil prices contributed to rising inflation which, in turn, affected the policies of the US Federal Reserve. He added that interest rates were steady, and the Federal Reserve suspended its plans to reduce them, leading to a stronger dollar at the expense of gold.

He added that global expectations remain positive for the precious metal, citing estimates from JP Morgan that the price of gold could reach \$5,500, while Goldman Sachs predicted that it could reach around \$5,800, increasing the chances of continuous growth in the coming period.

He explained that the Kuwaiti market did not experience a gold shortage, although some investment products, such as bullion, were affected to a limited extent due to their reliance on imports, particularly through the

United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He revealed that import activity was affected during the period of tensions due to air transport restrictions, but supply operations will return to normal with the return to normalcy and the resumption of air travel.

Furthermore, Goldman Sachs stated in a recent research that gold prices may experience temporary decline during periods of geopolitical calm. However, this decline does not reflect a shift in the overall market trend.

The bank indicated that any price drop resulting from this calm could present a buying opportunity, affirming that the medium- and long-term outlook for gold remains positive.

The bank emphasized that strong demand from central banks is one of the most important factors supporting gold prices.

JP Morgan disclosed in its global commodities report that gold prices are likely to fluctuate during the current period, given the interplay between geopolitical factors and economic variables.

The bank pointed out that periods of geopolitical calm may temporarily curb gold's upward momentum but are not sufficient to reverse the overall price trend.

It added that investment demand for gold remains strong, supported by hedging against inflation and financial market volatility, in addition to continuous purchases by central banks.

In its periodic report, the World Gold Council indicated that easing tensions between the United States and Iran could lead to relative stability in gold prices, with a decrease in demand related to immediate risks.

It pointed out that gold does not lose its role as a safe haven during periods of calm as it rather continues to be a key hedge against risk. The report added that institutional investors do not completely exit the gold market during periods of calm, rather, they reallocate their investments, maintaining a portion of their positions in anticipation of renewed tensions.

Analysts see no real traffic shift despite ceasefire claims

Iran's proposal to collect tolls in Strait of Hormuz violates trade norms

FRANKFURT, April 9, (AP): To end the war with the United States and Israel, Iran is demanding the right to collect tolls in the Strait of Hormuz as a precondition for reopening the waterway vital to world oil supplies.

Yet collecting tolls in the strait would violate a basic and enduring principle of international maritime trade: freedom of peaceful navigation. It's an ancient idea that was codified by the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea, which took effect in 1994.

Opening the strait would save the global economy from supply constraints that have pushed energy and fertilizer prices sharply higher since the war began on Feb. 28. But agreeing to Iranian toll-collecting would cement the Islamic Republic's control over the strait through which 20% of the world's oil is shipped - and enrich the country against whom the war was launched.

U.S. President Donald Trump has made reopening the strait a priority. But the White House said Wednesday he is opposed to tolls, and analysts say the Gulf's oil producers are, too.

Analysts say they have seen no change in traffic through the strait since the ceasefire was announced, despite claims to the contrary from the White House.

Here are things to know about Iran's proposal and the international law with which it collides.

After the U.S. and Israel launched the war, Iran immediately exercised leverage by blocking the strait with attacks - and threats of attacks - on ships, making passage too risky. The disruption caused immediate shortages in some Asian countries highly dependent on the region's energy, sent gasoline prices higher in the U.S. and Europe, and threatened global economic growth.

Iran then began vetting vessels in a murky scheme dubbed the "tollbooth" by shipping analysts.

The ships were told to divert from the middle of the strait in Iranian and Omani territorial waters and instead detour around Iran's Larak Island. After delivering detailed information on crew and cargo to intermediaries of Iran's paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, some vessels were allowed to proceed - and at least two reportedly paid the equivalent of \$2 million in Chinese yuan.

Iran's 10-point proposal for ending the war includes a provision allowing it and Oman to charge ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, according to a regional official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss negotiations they were directly involved in. The official said Iran would use the money it raised for reconstruction.

But the Law of the Sea Treaty's Article 17 guarantees a right of "innocent passage" for ships that do not threaten the coastal states. So allowing Iran and Oman to start charging for passage through the strait would set a dangerous precedent, experts said.

Freedom of navigation in the world's seas has been a fundamental right for hundreds of years, founded on "the idea that the sea doesn't belong to anyone," said Philippe Delebecque, a professor and maritime law expert at Paris' Sorbonne University.

"Freedom of navigation has always been recognized, including specifically

in straits," he said. The concern is if the Strait of Hormuz could be closed, then why not the Strait of Gibraltar between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, or the Strait of Malacca off Indonesia?

He called that scenario "the end of an international society."

While 172 countries have ratified the U.N. convention, Iran and the United States are among those that have not.

"Not having ratified the convention doesn't give (Iran) total freedom of action in the Strait of Hormuz," said Julien Raynaud, who heads the French Association of Maritime Law, a trade group. "It remains subject to international law and notably this customary right of passage."

An Iranian tollbooth could lead China to conclude that it could restrict movement in the Taiwan Strait, Raynaud said.

Oman and Iran may face diplomatic pushback to adhere to the convention, said Constantinos Yiallourides, a senior research fellow at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law.

Free passage "is in the interest of everyone," he said. "We all want to get the best products at the best prices."

Some economists say that, from a strictly financial standpoint, the world would barely notice the additional costs from any tolling in the Strait of Hormuz.

For example, a \$2 million toll on a large tanker carrying 2 million barrels of oil amounts to \$1-per-barrel increase on that ship's oil.

"The burden does not fall on global consumers, but overwhelmingly on the Gulf states that supply the oil that transits the strait," wrote the Bruegel think tank in Brussels. It said the world economy would instantly benefit from the reopening the strait - returning 20% of the world's oil to the market and sending prices lower.

Plus, by lowering oil prices, it would eliminate a multibillion-dollar geopolitical windfall for Russia, whose oil is suddenly in greater demand despite sanctions.

The international price of oil has jumped from around \$72 per barrel before the war to as high as \$118 on March 31. On Monday, Brent crude, the international benchmark, traded at \$94.55, down sharply after news of the two-week ceasefire.

Saudi Arabia, the biggest Gulf producer, welcomed the ceasefire deal between the U.S. and Iran but called for keeping the Strait of Hormuz open "without any restrictions."

Gulf countries have had to shut down some 12 million barrels per day in crude production because there's no viable way around the strait for much of their oil. The two pipelines that bypass it aren't big enough to make up for all of the lost oil, and building new pipelines would take years.

Given the downsides of the tollbooth proposal, the Gulf states would only agree to it if all other options looked much worse, Bruegel said.

A major objection in the West is that the toll would likely benefit the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is responsible for Iran's ballistic missile program, suppresses domestic political opposition, and is listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union.

Under the title 'Converting to a Sustainable Path'

Gulf Bank issues its Sustainability Report and continues to boost environmental, social and governance standards

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Gulf Bank has issued its sixth annual Sustainability Report for the year 2025, titled "Converting to a Sustainable Path," highlighting the Bank's ESG progress and performance. The report reflects the Bank's continued commitment to strengthening environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards and embedding them across its operations and activities, and its alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), MSCI ESG Index standards, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Sustainability Disclosure Guidelines issued by Boursa Kuwait.

The report emphasized the progress made during the year, specifically in terms of implementing Phase 1 of the Bank's ESG strategy monitoring, highlighting its efforts to enhance governance practices and advance responsible banking. This was achieved through the delivery of strategic initiatives that serve customers, employees, and the community, including enhancing customer protection, expanding digital services, and supporting local businesses and Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The report also highlighted a number of key indicators reflecting the Bank's ESG performance in line with its ESG 2030 strategy. Most notably, Scope 2 emissions decreased by 16.5%, and we managed to recycle more than 2,300 square meters of outdoor commercial advertising billboards into reusable bags.

The report indicated that spending on local suppliers reached 97.53% of the Bank's total procurement budget, reflecting our strategy in supporting Kuwaiti entrepreneurs and local vendors.

As part of Gulf Bank's ongoing efforts to support and empower women, the report showed that women accounted for 40.26% of the total workforce, while the gender pay equity ratio (female to male) reached 0.75:1.

The report also noted 100% coverage of employee training on data privacy and information security, with



Meshal Al Wazzan

Meshal Al Wazzan:

- The report reflects the progress we have made in sustainability and its integration across the Bank's operations and activities
- The Bank will continue to develop its sustainability priorities in support of Kuwait's economic and financial goals



no recorded complaints related to data breaches or loss, and no complaints from regulatory authorities.

Key Pillars

In this context, Gulf Bank's Chief Strategy Officer, Mr. Meshal Al Wazzan, stated that during 2025 the Bank focused on four main pillars: Accountable Governance, Equitable Workplace, Empowered Community

Engagement, and Responsible Banking. This included strengthening oversight through frameworks, developing internal capabilities, expanding community partnerships, and improving customer experience and digital services.

He highlighted key sustainability milestones achieved in 2025, including the completion of the Sustainability Report, conducting a readi-

ness assessment for IFRS S1 and S2, launching Phase 1 of the ESG Strategy monitoring, updating relevant policies, activating internal communication plans, and commencing the ESG Management Committee.

In the area of accountable governance, the Bank enhanced supervision and oversight of sustainability practices, activated the ESG Management Committee, and implemented its comprehen-

sive ESG risk management framework.

With respect to equitable workplace, the Bank continued investing in capacity building, promoting diversity and inclusion practices, and fostering a supportive workplace that encourages employee engagement and satisfaction.

In terms of community engagement, the Bank focused on building effective community partnerships and supporting initiatives aimed at empowering individuals and enhancing overall social outreach.

Regarding responsible banking, the Bank continued to develop its digital services, enhance customer experience, strengthen its support for SMEs, and improve overall operational efficiency.

At the governance level, 2025 witnessed notable progress in integrating ESG factors into decision making processes, supported by enhanced organizational structures, defined roles and responsibilities, and improved internal oversight through the activation of the Bank's ESG Management Committee. These efforts contribute to meeting stakeholders' expectations and in addressing growing regulatory requirements.

Future Outlook

As part of the Bank's future outlook, Al Wazzan stated that Gulf Bank has identified several priority areas for 2026, most notably the preparation of a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, the launch of the second phase of the Bank's ESG strategy implementation and monitoring, the issuance of the 2026 Sustainability Report, and the development of a sustainability initiatives register and screening document.

He affirmed that the Bank will continue to define its sustainability priorities in the coming period, while maintaining its commitment to delivering high quality services and products, strengthening governance and risk management practices, supporting Kuwait's economic and financial objectives, and contributing to the creation of a more sustainable and resilient future aligned with Gulf Bank's ESG 2030 strategy directions.

Well-timed Iran truce bets raise red flags

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): A group of new accounts on the prediction market Polymarket made highly specific, well-timed bets on whether the U.S. and Iran would reach a ceasefire on April 7, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits for these new customers.

These bets were made even though, in the hours before a two-week ceasefire was announced on Tuesday, President Donald Trump's rhetoric had escalated sharply and there were few signals that a ceasefire deal was imminent. Early in the day Trump had issued a warning on social media that "a whole civilization will die tonight" if Iran did not meet his demand to open the Strait of Hormuz by his 8 p.m. ET deadline.

An analysis of publicly available blockchain data from Polymarket, using the crypto analytics platform Dune, shows that at least 50 accounts, or wallets, placed substantial "Yes" bets Tuesday before Trump announced the ceasefire in a Truth Social post at around 6:30 pm ET. These were the first bets made by these particular wallets.

One of these wallets, created Tuesday around 10 am ET, placed roughly \$72,000 in bets at an average price of 8.8 cents. The buy-in for each betting event ranges from \$0 to \$1 each, reflecting a 0% to 100% chance of what users think could happen. This Polymarket user then cashed out for a profit of \$200,000.

Another, which joined the platform on April 6 and traded on this exact event, shows a win of \$125,500.

Another wallet, created 12 minutes before Trump's post, made \$31,908 of "Yes" bets at 33.7 cents, and is estimated to have earned a profit of \$48,500. The higher price for "Yes" at that time may have reflected the efforts late Tuesday by the government of Pakistan to get Trump to extend his deadline by two weeks.

There is also the possibility that these individual Polymarket users placed their bets expecting Trump to back down, given his habit during his second term to make bold threats only to retreat - a phenomenon his critics have derided as "Trump Always Chickens Out," or TACO.

While some users took handsome profits, others must wait for payouts because Polymarket has labeled the April 7 Iran-U.S. ceasefire contract as "disputed," given that Iran was

still placing restrictions on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz and missile attacks in the region continued. That dispute could take 48 hours to resolve.

Public blockchain data cannot identify who controls the new wallets. Polymarket uses proxy smart contract wallets, meaning a single user can create multiple accounts. Only Polymarket has the internal data needed to determine whether these were new users or existing users opening additional accounts.

Polymarket did not respond to a request for comment.

Rep. Blake Moore, R-Utah, who has introduced legislation to regulate prediction markets, released a statement Wednesday saying: "It's highly unlikely that these are good-faith trades; it's much more likely that these are insiders with access to information ahead of the public. Without some kind of restrictions, there is nothing stopping government or military officials from profiting from their positions."

The trading pattern of newly created Polymarket accounts placing strategic, well-timed bets mirrors earlier episodes on the platform. Newly created accounts placed large wagers hours before the January capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, and made hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit. Similar clusters of accounts have also repeatedly profited from well-timed bets on military actions involving Iran.

Such bets have repeatedly raised questions from the public as well as members of Congress about whether some traders are using inside information to profit in these prediction markets. Bipartisan groups of senators as well as representatives have introduced legislation that would broaden the definition of insider trading to include prediction markets.

Even the two biggest platforms in the industry, Kalshi and Polymarket, have said they see a need to broaden the definition of insider trading on their platforms.

"This is why these markets need regulation," said Todd Philips, a professor at Georgia State University who has written on prediction markets and the industry's regulations. "We can't have people trading with inside information and expect other traders are going to be OK being in these markets."

Full refunds offered to passengers on all affected flight bookings

Jazeera Airways cancels flights to 9 Indian cities

KUWAIT CITY, April 9: Jazeera Airways has announced the cancellation of flights to nine Indian cities due to operational reasons.

Effective 10 April, all Jazeera Airways flights to and from Coimbatore, Goa, Kannur, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Madurai, Mangaluru, Tiruchirappalli and Vijayawada, until 15 May, have been cancelled. Passengers holding bookings on affected flights will be given a full refund. For bookings made through travel agents, the amount will be put into a credit shell.

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

"We sincerely apologize to our customers for the inconvenience caused by this cancellation. These decisions are never taken lightly and are driven by operational circumstances beyond our control. Despite these challenges, our commitment remains unwaver-



A Jazeera Airways aircraft in flight.

ing. We continue to serve our eight destinations in India through our operational base in Dammam, supported by nearly 500 dedicated Jazeera employees who are working tirelessly to deliver a safe and reliable travel experience. Our focus remains on maintaining connectivity and providing the best possible service to our passengers during this time."

All passengers travelling on Jazeera Airways to other Indian destinations are advised to check their flight schedules before proceeding to check-in. This is to ensure a smooth travel experience amid ongoing operational adjustments.

For refunds, passengers can contact their travel agents or booking platforms. For bookings made through the Jazeera Airways website: jazeeraairways.com or app, refunds can be processed through the same.

Industry warns of lasting impact on leisure and family travel

Travelers face higher costs and fewer flight options as jet fuel prices swing

A new reality is setting in for travelers worldwide: rising fees, fewer flight options and difficult decisions about whether a trip is worth the cost.

The culprit is volatile oil and jet fuel prices, which have spiked sharply since the war in the Middle East began and fighting near the narrow Strait of Hormuz created a chokepoint for global oil supplies.

"Volatility is the real story here," said Shye Gilad, a former airline captain who now teaches at Georgetown University's business school. "Right now, the airlines are trying to make bets on what they think will happen in the future."

Airlines are responding cautiously, trimming schedules and adjusting prices in ways that experts say will ripple unevenly across the market but ultimately affect nearly every type of traveler.

Budget airlines and the price-conscious customers who rely on them are likely to feel the pinch first and most acutely, experts say, but even travelers in premium cabins won't escape the higher prices and less convenient schedules.

Oil prices have swung wildly in recent weeks, briefly topping \$119 a barrel at one point, and then plunging Wednesday below \$95 after President Donald Trump announced a two-week ceasefire in the Middle East that briefly reopened the Strait of Hormuz. But the uncertainty behind those swings remains, especially after Iran closed the key artery for global oil shipments again in response to Israeli strikes in Lebanon.

"When prices move quickly in both directions, it's very hard for airlines to make predictions," Gilad said. "That's why there's a lag between oil market moves and what passengers see in ticket prices."

In other words, even when oil prices drop, travelers may not see relief right away. Airlines can take months, sometimes even up to a year, to adjust fares and fees as they wait for energy markets to stabilize.

"At this level of fuel, it's hard to call anything temporary," Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian told reporters this week after the Atlanta-based carrier raised its checked baggage fees.

Bastian said Wednesday as Delta kicked off the earnings season for U.S. airlines that the higher fuel prices are expected to add \$2 billion in operating expenses in the second quarter alone.

United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby said in a recent memo to staff that if jet fuel prices stay elevated, it would mean an additional \$11 billion in annual costs. That's more than double what United earned in its most profitable year.

"For perspective," he said, "in United's best year ever, we made less than \$5 billion."

According to the International Air Transport Association, the average global jet fuel price rose to \$209 per barrel last week, up from roughly \$99 at the end of February when the war started.

Travelers from the U.S. to Hong Kong and New Delhi are paying the price. U.S. carriers are embedding the higher operating costs into ticket prices and add-on fees. Delta, United, Southwest Airlines and JetBlue have all increased their checked baggage fees.

United has moved beyond add-ons to adjust pricing in its front cabins. The carrier said last week that it is bringing the "pay for what you want" approach already

standard in economy to its premium cabins, turning perks like advanced seat selection and fully refundable tickets into optional extras.

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific recently bumped fuel surcharges by roughly 34% across all routes, while Air India on Monday added up to \$280 in fees to some flights. Emirates, Lufthansa and KLM have also adjusted fees or fares to keep pace with the price volatility.

For some travelers, it's not just the cost - it's the uncertainty that's changing how they plan trips.

Bill Moorehouse, 50, a solutions director at a global provider of business and technology services, routinely travels for work every four to six weeks.

"When you have business trips and you have a carefully coordinated schedule, you don't want unknowns and disruptions. And right now, it just feels like it's more likely that things could go wrong and throw your trip off course," the Cupertino, California, resident said.

For now, he's staying closer to home. "I think it's a good time to do your spring cleaning and reconnect with friends locally."

Airlines, meanwhile, are also adjusting how much they fly. BNP Paribas estimates that global schedules for April have been cut roughly 5% compared with earlier plans. Most reductions are in the Middle East, the global investment bank said, though smaller cuts were also emerging in Europe, Asia and North America.

United Airlines is cutting about 5% of its planned flights in the near term, trimming less profitable routes and suspending some international service temporarily rather than "burning cash" on trips that can't absorb the more expensive fuel costs. The airline's CEO said the cuts will target redeye flights and routes on historically slower travel days such as Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Delta is scrapping plans to add more flights and seats this summer, leaving about 3.5% fewer seats than originally planned.

These moves show why major carriers are better positioned to weather the spike in fuel prices than low-cost carriers, whose "no frills" model leaves them with less flexibility to absorb unexpected costs. Bigger airlines can lean on dynamic pricing, sell more seats at higher fares or swap in larger planes on certain routes, letting them cut flights without losing overall capacity.

"Leisure travelers and budget conscious travelers are going to absolutely feel it first because it may make the difference between going and not going," Gilad said.

It's already made the difference for Anna Del Vecchio. The 36-year-old Seattle resident has made it an annual springtime tradition to visit family in Philadelphia before flying to Paris to see friends she met as a teenager during a volunteer internship.

Her credit card points typically cover the roundtrip flight, but ticket prices now hover around \$1,400 - nearly double what she has paid in past years. "It wasn't even scratching the surface for the flight this time," she said, "so I decided to delay the trip."

But if airfare tops \$1,500, she might not be able to make a journey she hasn't missed in years. (AP)

High debt limits governments' ability to cushion economic blow

IMF head warns Iran war darkens global growth outlook

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): The Iran war is darkening the outlook for the world economy - whether or not a fragile ceasefire holds, the head of the International Monetary Fund warned Thursday.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the fund will downgrade its forecast for the world economy next week.

"Had it not been for this shock, we would have been upgrading global growth," Georgieva said in remarks ahead of next week's IMF-World Bank spring meetings. "But now, even our most hopeful scenario involves a growth downgrade."

The world economy had proven resilient in the face of President Donald Trump's decision to impose sweeping taxes last year on imports from most of the world's countries. In January, the 191-country IMF

had upgraded the global growth outlook to 3.3% and was poised to do so again when its new forecasts came out next Tuesday.

But the war, which began Feb. 28, changed everything. The conflict has driven up the price of oil and natural gas; damaged oil refineries, tanker terminals and other energy infrastructure; disrupted shipments of fertilizer the world's farmers depend on; and damaged the confidence of businesses and consumers.

The United States and Iran announced Tuesday they'd reached a ceasefire - after Trump warned that otherwise "a whole civilization will die tonight."

Still, the IMF's Georgieva said Thursday, "growth will be slower-even if the new peace is durable."

Sub-Saharan Africa and small island countries are most vulnerable to the energy shock, Georgieva said. Around the world, governments have only a limited ability to support their economies with spending increases and tax cuts because their debts are already so high.

She noted that many countries have taken steps to limit the damage from the energy shock such as urging or requiring people to work from home; encouraging more use of public transportation; and limiting travel by public officials.

Georgieva pleaded that policymakers "be careful not to make things worse" with "go-it-alone" moves such as limiting exports and imposing price controls. "Don't pour gasoline on the fire," she said.

Fed rate cuts remain unlikely as inflation stays above 2%

US jobless claims increase to 219,000 amid ceasefire-driven market swings

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): U.S. applications for unemployment benefits rose last week before Iran, Israel and the U.S. announced a two-week ceasefire deal that injected a degree of optimism into a still-clouded global economic picture.

The number of Americans applying for jobless aid for the week ending April 4 jumped by 16,000 to 219,000 from the previous week's 203,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's more than the 210,000 new filings analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet were expecting but within the range of the past several years.

Filings for unemployment benefits are considered representative of U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

Tuesday night's ceasefire announcement sent oil prices plummeting to \$95 a barrel, though they jumped back up near \$100 early Thursday over skepticism about the durability of the deal after Israel launched a wave of attacks on Lebanon and Iran re-closed the crucial

Strait of Hormuz, where 20% of the world's oil passes.

Financial markets also retreated Thursday following big gains a day earlier.

A barrel of U.S. crude had reached \$112 dollars before the ceasefire was announced, up from about \$67 in the days leading up to the conflict. Even with Wednesday's big decline, businesses and consumers are still saddled with higher energy costs as the price of oil and gas remain elevated.

This comes at a time when U.S. inflation was already above the Federal Reserve's 2% target, further diminishing the chances of an interest rate cut by central bank officials any time soon. The government issues its March consumer prices report on Friday.

Also Thursday, in a report delayed due to the federal shutdown, government data showed that a key inflation gauge remained elevated in February, even before the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on Iran.

Fed officials voted to raise the rate three times to close 2025 out of con-

cern for a weakening job market but have held off lowering rates further this year.

The Labor Department reported last week that U.S. employers added an unexpectedly strong 178,000 new jobs in March, nudging the unemployment rate back down to 4.3%. That followed a surprisingly large loss of 92,000 jobs in February. Revisions also have trimmed 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls, a sign that the labor market remains under strain.

A number of high-profile companies have cut jobs recently, including the software maker Oracle, which according to media reports cut thousands of workers last week. The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday that The Walt Disney Co. is preparing to cull 1,000 positions from its workforce.

Others that have recently announced job cuts include Morgan Stanley, Block, UPS and Amazon.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since

the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's erratic tariff rollouts, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

Employers added fewer than 200,000 jobs last year, compared with about 1.5 million in 2024, according to the data firm FactSet.

The American labor market appears stuck in what economists call a "low-hire, low-fire" state that has kept the unemployment rate historically low, but has left those out of work struggling to find a new job.

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which evens out some of the weekly volatility, rose by 1,500 to 209,500.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending March 28 fell by 38,000 to 1.79 million, the fewest in nearly two years.

Consumer spending slowed to 1.9%

US economy growth slows to 0.5% after shutdown hit

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): The American economy, slowed by last fall's 43-day government shutdown, grew at a sluggish 0.5% annual pace from October through December, the Commerce Department reported Thursday in downgrade of its previous estimate.

U.S. gross domestic product - the nation's output of goods and services - decelerated in the fourth quarter after registering impressive growth of 4.4% from July through September and 3.8% from April through June. The latest number was marked down from the Commerce Department's previous estimate of 0.7% fourth-quarter growth.

Federal government spending and investment fell at a 16.6% annual pace because of the shutdown, lopping 1.16 percentage points off fourth-quarter GDP growth. Consumer spending expanded 1.9%, down a notch from the previous estimate and from 3.5% in the second quarter. Spending on goods - such as cars and clothing - grew just 0.3%, down from 3% in the July-September period.

For all of 2025, the economy grew 2.1% last year, slower than 2.8% in 2024 and 2.9% in 2023.

Business investment, excluding housing, increased at a 2.4% pace, likely reflecting money being poured into artificial intelligence, but the increase was down from 3.2% in the third quarter.

A category within the GDP data that measures the economy's underlying strength weakened from October through December, growing at a 1.8% clip, down from 2.9% in the third quarter. This category includes consumer spending and private investment, but excludes volatile items like exports, inventories and government spending.

The economic outlook for this year is hazy after the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran drove up energy prices and disrupted global commerce.

America's job market slumped last year - recording the weakest hiring outside a recession since 2002 - but has been up and down so far in 2026: Employers added a healthy 160,000 jobs in January, slashed 133,000 in February, then created a surprising 178,000 in March.

Thursday's report was the Commerce Department's third and final estimate of fourth-quarter GDP. The first look at January-March economic growth is due April 30.

Trump promised to cut electric costs in half, bills in energy-rich West Virginia now top mortgages

RAINELLE, April 9, (AP): Every month, Rebecca Michalski takes a deep breath before opening her electric bill. She lives on a fixed income, and heating her small house this winter has been staggering: Her February charge was \$940.08 - more than her check.

It makes no sense, she turns the lights off during the day and only burns one lamp with an energy-efficient bulb in the living room at night, but she keeps falling further behind on payments. In desperation, she took out a loan after getting a cut-off notice during an extended arctic blast that kept the state's heaters cranking when temperatures regularly dipped below zero.

"Every time you see that power bill, you're just sick," Michalski said, rifling through a stack of statements totaling thousands of dollars. "I already know before I open it. I just dread seeing how much."

She's taken to social media, demanding answers alongside thousands of other West Virginians who have been posting screenshots of their monthly charges. They are angry and perplexed over soaring utility costs that are surpassing rents and mortgages in one of the most energy-rich, yet poorest, corners of America, where some families have been forced to choose between paying for food or heat.

President Donald Trump, as part of his campaign pitch to "make America affordable again," promised to cut Americans' electricity bills by half during his first year to 18 months in the White House.

"And if it doesn't work out, you'll say, 'Oh well, I voted for him, I still got them down a lot,'" he said. "You will never have had energy so low as you will under a certain gentleman known as Donald J. Trump."

It hasn't worked out.

Instead, electricity increased 4.8% in February nationwide and piped natural gas prices rose 10.9%, both compared with a year earlier, according to the Labor Department's Consumer Price Index. That surpassed inflation even before the attacks on Iran by the U.S. and Israel sent energy costs ballooning.

It's becoming an increasingly aggravating issue for some voters. Rising electricity bills emerged as a campaign issue in recent elections, including during gubernatorial races won by Democrats in New Jersey and Virginia. Cost concerns are expected to surface during midterms this fall, and an analysis by the nonprofit PowerLines found residents are not likely to get a break any time soon because new gas and electricity rate hike requests could affect more than 80 million Americans. An AP-NORC poll conducted in March also found 35% of U.S. adults were "extremely" or "very" concerned about being able to afford electricity in the next few months.

Power

"It's breaking me. And there's nothing that can be done for it, unless the president does something," Michalski said about her skyrocketing power bills, adding she no longer supports Trump. "And I don't see him doing it. He's had plenty of time."

Increased demand, extreme weather and events, upgrading and maintaining aging infrastructure and rising natural gas prices are pushing electricity bills higher. Rising energy costs - including gas pump sticker shock now topping an average \$4 per gallon nationally - could further be exacerbated by the war in Iran along with the Trump administration's push to export higher volumes of liquefied natural gas - which, in turn, depletes domestic supply. Ratepayers are also wary as more power-gobbling data centers for artificial intelligence and cloud computing are being built or warmly embraced by politicians in places like West Virginia - where residents deep in Trump country have gone from having the cheapest electricity rate nationwide in 2005, to experiencing one of the fastest increases in the country, far outpacing the national average, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

All in a place where people are living atop vast deposits of coal, oil and gas. Coal remains king here, but it wears a pricey crown. The state is an outlier nationwide because of its stubborn resistance to adopting cleaner, cheaper sources of energy, such as nuclear power, natural gas - even though it's one of the nation's top producers - and renewables like wind and solar. Instead, West Virginia clings to aging coal-fired electric plants more than anywhere else in the country - about 87% of all production. Its supermajority Republican-led government - there are only 11 Democrats in the House and Senate - has doubled down on this reliance, blaming past Democratic administrations for a war on coal fueled by increased federal regulations and restrictions, while Trump poses for photo ops with coal miners at the White House and regularly touts "beautiful, clean coal."

"Lowering electricity prices is a top priority for President Trump," said White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers, blaming former President Joe Biden for the problem. "He is aggressively unleashing reliable energy sources like coal and natural gas."

Trump has forced unprofitable coal-powered plants to remain open, rolled back pollution standards for them and provided hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to improve them. He's also streamlined permitting and regulations to push for mining expansion when coal mines have been shutting down in the state, including several operations this year that eliminated more than 700 jobs.

"If you're not 100% in on coal, then you're a traitor. ... It's like a measure of patriotism," said Jamie Van Nostrand, policy director at the nonprofit Future of Heat Initiative and a former West Virginia University professor who wrote a book about the state's reliance on coal energy. "I think if you went to the average West Virginian and said, 'Yeah, we understand you want to support the coal industry, but do you want to support it to the extent that you're

OK paying twice as much as you should be for electricity?'"

The state's average household electricity rate per kilowatt-hour has surged 73%, natural gas has increased 51% per 1,000 cubic feet and water has risen 45% per 1,000 gallons from 2015 to 2025, according to West Virginia's Public Service Commission, a three-member panel. It includes a former power company lobbyist and the former head of the state coal association - appointed by the governor and charged with approving rate hikes.

Even though monthly bills remain higher in other states, salaries in West Virginia have simply not kept pace - it's the only place in the country where the median inflation-adjusted household income was lower in 2023 than it was in 1970, according to the Urban Institute. That means residents are seeing larger chunks of their paychecks going to utilities compared to people in other places.

Michalski, who's disabled and uses a walker to get around, said she tries not to run anything in her house that can suck electricity, including her air conditioning in summer. But she simply can't turn off the heater. During the past year, her statements totaled over \$5,000. She asked family for help paying the bill this winter, but said she's now out of options.

She knows what's next.

"They come and cut off your power. Then you're sitting in the dark. And I see that happening," she said. "And I think for a lot of other people, it's gonna happen too."

Residents

Isolated by its beautiful, rugged mountains, West Virginia sits entirely within Appalachia and has long been listed at the bottom of a laundry list of failings, including poor health and a lack of education. Many residents from rural areas have lived on the same land for generations, watching a cycle of outside companies profit from extracting the state's resources - from timber to coal and oil and gas - only to pollute and abandon communities afterward. Its people are known for being fiercely independent and proud despite their hardships, including a lack of clean drinking water that has persisted for decades in some areas, forcing residents in the southern coal fields to ferry jugs to and from roadside springs or abandoned mines while spending up to \$250 a month for bottled water to cook with and drink. They also pay for public water piped into their homes that often runs black, yellow and brown.

Some, including those living in scenic areas where tourism is a major revenue driver, are protesting Big Tech companies rushing to build enormous data centers, fearing they could lead to the next cycle of outsiders taking advantage of the state's resources. They have been loud over a lack of public input and transparency around plans to build the complexes, questioning noise pollution, huge water consumption and the effect on ratepayers' electricity prices.

"We just roll back regulations and we keep being promised that deregulating and privatizing our systems is gonna fix everything, and it never does," said Caitlin Ware, a pastor who advocates for clean water in southern West Virginia - her thoughts briefly interrupted as the electricity abruptly went off in her Sandville United Methodist Church. "It only makes the rich richer, and it only puts us in a worse situation."

In February, Gov. Patrick Morrisey proudly announced plans to build a data center on nearly 550 acres in Berkeley County.

"This \$4 billion investment is a historic win that proves West Virginia can compete at the highest level for the global tech economy," he said in a statement. It did not explain where the water or electricity would come from to run the 600 megawatt, 1.9 million square foot facility.

Morrisey's office did not respond to a request for comment. Skyrocketing electricity costs and the growth of data centers, which can use enough power to run 100,000 homes, faced voter backlash in Georgia last fall where Democrats ousted two Republicans on the state's utility regulatory commission for the first time in nearly two decades. Trump recently tried to ease Americans' concerns by announcing a "ratepayer protection" pledge at the White House with Big Tech companies promising to bear the cost and produce their own energy, though it's not clear how that would be enforced.

The reasons behind nationwide utility price hikes are complex and vary among regions. They include adding new transmission, distribution lines and power poles; increased brutal high and low temperatures; extreme weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires; and volatility in fuel costs such as surging gas prices during the war in Ukraine.

These all play a huge role in rising bills that have left some 80 million Americans struggling to pay their monthly gas and electric bills, said Charles Hua, founder of consumer advocacy organization PowerLines that found investor-owned gas and electric utility companies asked for nearly \$31 billion in increases last year nationwide, double the amount requested a year earlier. He said utility costs have become the new affordability issue akin to soaring egg prices that previously enraged consumers, making it a possible player in this fall's elections to control Congress.

"Electric bills have gone up 40% over the last five years," he said. "This is likely to continue to rise. This is definitely something that the Trump administration and President Trump are very concerned about."

In West Virginia, all 55 counties voted for Trump in 2024. But it was a Democratic stronghold for decades prior to the switch when coal mines were the lifeblood, and unions were virtually unbreakable. The state has struggled immensely under both parties: It has experienced a major brain drain, a devastating opioid epidemic, a growing elderly population and its coveted coal

industry jobs have dried up with nothing to replace them. That leaves people who work minimum wage jobs, those on fixed incomes and even college-educated middle-class families with two paychecks being pushed to the breaking point with affordability issues, including rising car insurance, grocery bills, health care and housing.

Ashley Nicole Dixon of Danese works as a manager at a Dollar General store and has a teenage daughter at home and another in college. She flipped through bills on her phone totaling more than \$5,000 charged last year for electricity in her house that's just over 1,000 square feet, even though her air conditioner didn't work last summer. She voted for Trump, but said she's done with him because he and other Republican politicians in West Virginia's Capitol aren't looking out for her interests.

"I love West Virginia because it's beautiful. But anymore, it's just a sham from the local government all the way up to Charleston," she said, adding she believes the state's Public Service Commission should be elected, and Trump should send her a check since he promised to cut electricity bills in half.

"I have no choice. It has to be paid," she said. "And that's what makes me sick because now I'm going to have to go ... take more money out of my savings account just to keep the lights on."

The coldest winter months were the hardest. Some people confined themselves to one room with small space heaters or used generators when they got behind on their electricity bills and were disconnected. Others were forced to choose between food, medicine and warmth, with some turning their thermostats down to 60 degrees and bundling up or coming out of retirement to take part-time jobs.

For some, the spiral began in November when their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits were put on hold due to the federal government shutdown. United Way's Central West Virginia helpline saw more than a 1,300% increase during that time, and calls for help paying utilities were second only to housing last year.

More than one in three West Virginia households is considered energy burdened, spending more than 6% of their income on electricity and other fuel costs. Of those, about 20% are low-income residents who shoulder some of the highest energy costs in the state.

Last year, Trump fired the staff of a federal program that assists millions of low-income Americans with heating bills in the winter and proposed eliminating all of its funding in his budget - a move repeated this year. Congress allocated money for it, but billions of dollars were delayed due to the shutdown. However, many West Virginians falling behind on bills are not eligible to apply because they make just a little too much money.

Funded

Jennifer Brown of Kingwood lands in that category. She's employed at West Virginia's federally funded Head Start program for low-income children and her husband is a postal worker. They have four kids and during the winter months, their combined utilities can climb to \$1,000 a month, eclipsing their \$798 mortgage. They were on a payment plan for their gas this winter after receiving a shut-off notice, and she said they were still paying off a water bill from their previous home.

"Every month we get our utility bills, I'm so angry. I'm like, 'Why is this so high?'" she said, adding it's not unusual to pay \$200 to \$300 for electricity and the same for water, sewage and garbage combined every month. "And we can't figure it out. Nothing seems to be wrong ... and we're not wasteful."

Bills introduced that would have temporarily frozen electricity rates in West Virginia or helped those who are most vulnerable went nowhere this year in the state legislature even though increased energy costs are often passed on to ratepayers. The Public Service Commission has approved a flurry of rate hikes in recent years as private utilities grapple with maintaining profits while improving infrastructure in a mountainous, sparsely populated state.

It's been a particularly tough burden for some small businesses to carry. In the western town of Ravenswood, just across the river from Ohio, some shop owners were forced to shut down this winter because they couldn't pay their electric bills. Heather Santee said the power at her bakery was abruptly terminated just ahead of Valentine's Day. She was behind on her bill, but said she would have been able to pay the necessary chunk of the \$4,000 she owed if she could have stayed open long enough to fulfill the holiday orders. Instead, the shut-off forced her out, leaving the tenants living in apartments upstairs without heat too.

"Once I started getting those high electric bills in the winter, I was like, 'This will be what closes me down,'" she said, adding the bakery was her dream and the loss has her thinking maybe it would be better to just leave the state altogether. "West Virginia is holding back a lot of people because they are allowing these bills to be so high."

She's not alone. Just a couple blocks down the street, Anthony Crihfield Jones packed up his overstock retail shop, JCD Bargain and Trade, moving inventory to another warehouse because he can no longer afford to pay thousands of dollars in electricity charges for his home and businesses.

Even though he still supports Trump, after leaving the Democrats to vote Republican, he's becoming increasingly concerned that neither party cares about struggling people in America.

"All I heard was ... 'Drill, baby, drill,'" he said, repeating Trump's popular catch phrase to encourage domestic energy production. "OK. Well, they're drillin'. Why's my bill the same?"

Soderbergh's film probes legacy, creativity and right to judge art

McKellen and Coel are razor-sharp in art comedy 'Christophers'

LOS ANGELES, April 9, (AP): "The Christophers" looks like an art heist movie at first. A couple of wannabe heirs (James Corden and Jessica Gunning) hire a restoration specialist (Michaela Coel) to finish a series of paintings by their famous father (Ian McKellen), who wants nothing to do with them or the uncompleted works that would surely command an astronomical price tag.

The offspring, whom McKellen's Julian Sklar vividly describes as wrecks - one a train wreck, one a shipwreck - feel they deserve an inheritance they're smart enough to know they won't receive through any will - or talent of their own. The specialist and sometimes forger Lori (Coel) has other motives. There's the promise of paying rent, yes, but there's also an element of revenge. Lori and Julian have a kind of history that the movie will reveal in time. She's also been publicly critical of his later works.

But "The Christophers" is not an



This image released by Neon shows Michaela Coel, (left), and Ian McKellen in a scene from 'The Christophers.' (AP)

"Ocean's" movie or a "Logan Lucky," which is to say it's not really a heist.

There's the tease of one, right up until the end, and the promise of the con.

This latest film by the great and astonishingly prolific Steven Soderbergh is not out to give the audience what they think they want from him. Instead, it's a meditation on art, legacy, creativity and the oh-so-touchy subject of who has the right to critique. It might sound a bit dreary, but Ed Solomon's razor-sharp script and the brilliant pairing of McKellen and Coel make this lean two-hander breeze by.

You can read however much you want into how much Soderbergh (or Solomon) may or may not relate to Julian, who is determined to burn, bury and shred the unfinished "Christophers," a series of paintings of a former boyfriend that became his most famous. It's a fun and prickly exercise for any creative person to reconcile with the peaks and lulls of a long career in the arts - and Julian is luckier than most. He actually got famous and relatively wealthy from his paintings.

Julian huffs that "to judge art one must possess the skills to make said

art." It's the kind of statement that, if given in an interview, might launch a thousand think pieces. Julian is both old and a devout rebel, with a lifetime's worth of wisdom, wit and burned bridges in his arsenal. It's a potent combination ripe for internet virality, but at the moment his online presence is mostly relegated to something akin to Cameo messages for 149 pounds a pop (249 if he mimes a signature).

When Lori arrives, he suddenly has an audience for his theatrical, nonstop musings: fun for McKellen, his character and the audience, but not so much for Lori, who absorbs the monologues with steely indifference until she decides to take more control of the situation. There's a bit of the generational disconnect that happens, but it's somehow never cliché or predictable. The story zigs and zags with its characters as they work through the situation at hand and the larger issues both seem to be plagued by. The script throws a lot of ideas out there and, refreshingly,

none of them is to be taken as dogma, especially not Julian's comment about who has the right to judge art. Like many things he says, it's probably just the most withering thing he could think of at the moment.

It is a funny thing, though, to critique a movie that does have so much to say about criticism, about what the person behind the keyboard might actually have the guts to say out loud to the person courageous enough to make something and put it out in the world. Perhaps it's not actually that hard when the movie is as solid as "The Christophers," or when the filmmaker in question is on a roll like Soderbergh with both "Presence" and "Black Bag." His movies may have gotten smaller, but the verve remains.

"The Christophers," a Neon release in New York and LA on Friday and nationwide on April 17, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "language." Running time: 100 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Judge cites drug dealings

'Ketamine Queen' jailed for 15 yrs in Perry's death

LOS ANGELES, April 9, (AP): A federal judge on Wednesday handed down a sentence of 15 years in prison to a woman who pleaded guilty to selling actor Matthew Perry the ketamine that killed him in 2023.

"You're going to have to show some epic resilience," Judge Sheryllyn Peace Garnett said to Jasveen Sangha, echoing the defendant's words earlier in the hearing about her self-improvement.

Citing the unique role Sangha admitted to playing in Perry's death and her broader drug-dealing business, the judge gave the 42-year-old a sentence that will almost certainly be more than all four of her co-defendants combined.

The hearing Wednesday in a Los Angeles courtroom was in many ways the pinnacle of the 2 1/2-year investigation and prosecution that followed the overdose death of the 54-year-old actor, whose role as Chandler Bing on NBC's "Friends" in the 1990s and 2000s made him one of the biggest television stars of the era.

Keith Morrison, Perry's stepfather and correspondent for NBC's "Dateline," told the judge that he and Perry's mother, Suzanne, feel a "daily, grinding sadness and sorrow."

"There was a spark to that man I have never seen anywhere else," Morrison said. "He should have had another act. Two more acts."

Just before she was sentenced, Sangha told the judge she wears her shame "like a jacket."

"These were not mistakes. They were horrible decisions," Sangha said, which "shattered people's lives and the lives of their family and friends."

Prosecutors secured the exact sentence they asked for after casting Sangha as a "Ketamine Queen" who had an elaborate drug operation catering to high-end clients to give herself a jet-setting lifestyle.

Sangha's attorneys argued the time she has spent in jail since her August 2024 indictment should be sufficient, pointing to her good behavior behind bars and lack of prior arrests.



Suzanne Morrison, mother of Matthew Perry, leaves the court after a federal judge handed down a sentence of 15 years in prison to Jasveen Sangha, who pleaded guilty to selling 'Friends' star Matthew Perry the ketamine that killed him in a 2023 overdose, Wednesday, April 8, in Los Angeles. (AP)

Perry was found dead in the hot tub at his Los Angeles home in October 2023. The medical examiner ruled that ketamine, typically used as a surgical anesthetic, was the primary cause of death - and drowning was a secondary cause.

Mark Geragos, Sangha's attorney, said "pernicious" addiction was truly responsible for Perry's death, not his client.

"There was nobody who was going to stop Mr. Perry from doing what he was going to do," Geragos said.

In September, Sangha became the last of five co-defendants to plead guilty, admitting to one count of using her home for drug distribution, three counts of distribution of ketamine, and one count of distribution of ketamine resulting in death.

Geragos denounced the prosecution's use of the moniker "Ketamine Queen," blaming it on E. Martin Estrada, the U.S. attorney when the case was filed.

"That was not her name, that was his very clever name to draw media attention this case," Geragos said.

Perry had been using the drug through his regular doctor as a legal off-label treatment for depression. But he sought more than the doctor would give him. That at first led him to Dr. Salvador Plasencia, who admitted to illegally selling Perry ketamine and was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison. And, days before his death, it led Perry to Sangha, and a \$6,000 cash buy that included the lethal dose.

Another doctor, who admitted to providing Plasencia the ketamine he sold to Perry, was sentenced to eight months of home detention. Perry's assistant and his friend, who admitted acting as the actor's middlemen, are awaiting sentencing.

The judge said she was trying to carefully calibrate the sentences for the five defendants. She expressed concern about the balance during the hearing, asking lawyers why Sangha deserved so much more time than Plasencia or Perry's assistant, Kenneth Iwamasa, who obtained and injected the drugs at Perry's request and injected them into him.

Geragos seized on this and said the disparity was outrageous.

"The person who supplies the ammunition, they're more culpable than the person who pulls the trigger?" he asked.

Television



Christopher Masterson, (from left), Justin Berfield, Vaughan Murrae, Jane Kaczmarek, Frankie Muniz, Bryan Cranston, Keeley Karsten, Kiana Madeira, Caleb Ellsworth-Clark, Emy Coligado, and Craig Lamar Traylor attend the premiere of Hulu's 'Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair' at the DGA New York Theater on Tuesday, April 7, in New York. (AP)

Hulu revival mixes old chaos with new generation

'Malcolm' returns with questions of legacy

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): A very grown-up Malcolm turns to the camera at the beginning of the new "Malcolm in the Middle" revival and, weirdly, has nothing to complain about.

"Yeah, I look different, but, hey, everything about me is different. I'm happy. I'm successful," he says. "My life is fantastic now. You want to know how I did it? All I had to do is stay completely away from my family."

That's going to be very hard to do in Hulu's four-part return to "Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair," which reunites one of the zaniest and chaotic families ever on prime time. The episodes premiere Friday.

Twenty years after the last episode aired, we learn that Malcolm - a nervous, sputtering Frankie Muniz - is now a father of a teen and desperate to shield her from his dysfunctional parents and siblings.

"I cannot go back to the way I was before and I'm not going to risk you," Malcolm tells her. "You have to think of it like they're the full moon and we're werewolves."

Original series creator Linwood Boomer and his co-producer-wife, Tracy Katsky Boomer, batted ideas on how to get the gang back together for years. Both weren't willing to make just anything for a "shameless cash grab."

Linwood Boomer recalls a light bulb went on when his wife wondered what would it be like if Malcolm had a daughter who was exactly like him. "I was just like, 'Oh my God, that kid would be miserable,'" he says.

In addition to Muniz, Bryan Cranston and Jane Kaczmarek are back as the barely-holding-it-together parents and Christopher Kennedy Masterson and Justin Berfield return as brothers Francis and Reese, respectively.

Newcomers include Keeley Karsten as Leah, Malcolm's deeply empathic daughter, and Vaughan Murrae, Mal-



This image shows Jane Kaczmarek and Bryan Cranston, (right), in a scene from 'Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair.' (AP)



Bryan Cranston in a scene from 'Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair.' (AP)

colm's whip-smart youngest sibling, who we last saw as a baby, Caleb Ellsworth-Clark takes over the role of Dewey.

Director Ken Kwapis, one of the original directors of the show, was tapped to return and was impressed with how the old and new cast members handled the physical and emotional tasks.

"The original cast slipped back into their roles effortlessly. But equally important is they embraced the new members of the cast very quickly," he says.

"There's a performance level that some people have described as high octane. And so for the new members of the ensemble, they had to like, 'OK, I'm going to step up and do it.' And

they all hit it out of the park."

Malcolm may desperately want to keep his distance from his family, but the 40th wedding anniversary of his parents has a gravitational pull, putting everyone on a collision course, albeit a hysterical one.

"It's hard to do a straight comedy right now because everything's very serious in the world," says Katsky Boomer. "It feels nice to just unleash good vibes so people can just take a breather." "Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair" joins a list of new and upcoming reboots and revivals from the late 1990s and early 2000s, including "Scrubs," "King of the Hill," "Prison Break," "Baywatch" and "Phineas and Ferb."

The Boomers credit Cranston for keeping the flame of a revival alive, staying in touch with the actors and crew. And he's jumped back in boldly, despite becoming a huge star in the intervening years. In the first episode back, Cranston stands completely nude as Kaczmarek's Lois shaves his back and nether regions.

"Malcolm in the Middle" originally aired on Fox and ended its seven-season run in 2006. It won seven Emmy Awards - including one for best writing for a comedy series - and currently streams on Hulu and on Hulu on Disney+, where the revival will also live.

Linwood Boomer based "Malcolm" on his own nutty family, and it struck a chord, depicting childhood as a constant power struggle - with bigger kids, teachers, parents and siblings. There were squabbles with a ferocity rare on TV, and it was funny because it was so grounded in truth. It was TV's most comically accurate view of child-rearing since "Roseanne."

"There was a line in the pilot I would say to myself all the time - 'I want a better family!' - and it turns out most families aren't any better," says Boomer.

Variety

DALLAS: A federal judge in Texas on Wednesday ordered rapper Pooh Shiesty to remain in custody on kidnapping charges after allegedly pulling a gun during a contract dispute involving rapper Gucci Mane's record label.

Pooh Shiesty, whose legal name is Lontrell Williams Jr., appeared before US Magistrate Judge Renee Harris Toliver during a hearing in Dallas. Prosecutors have also charged eight others over the alleged January confrontation at a music studio, where the victims were allegedly robbed at gunpoint.

Prosecutors have declined to name the victims, and an FBI affidavit attached to a criminal complaint only refers to them

by their initials. One victim, R.D., is described as the owner of 1017 Records, the label belonging to Gucci Mane, whose legal name is Radric Delantic Davis.

"I find that the weight of the evidence against you is strong," Toliver told Pooh Shiesty during the hearing.

She noted that the rapper had a criminal history and had violated a home confinement order following a prior firearms conspiracy conviction in Florida.

During the hearing, Bradford Cohen, the rapper's attorney, raised questions about much of the prosecution's evidence. "The FBI doesn't take three months to arrest someone if they believe everything that was said on the night that it occurred," Cohen said.

Prosecutors have accused the rapper, who was arrested last

week, of arranging the music studio meeting in Dallas to discuss the terms of his contract with 1017 Records. (AP)

NEW YORK: Sean "Diddy" Combs' lawyers are poised to try to persuade federal appeals court judges that the hip-hop mogul was treated unfairly at the trial that sent him to prison on prostitution-related charges, and that the First Amendment should win his freedom.

Combs, currently in federal prison in New Jersey, won't be at Thursday morning's arguments before a panel of three federal appellate judges. He's challenging his conviction and more than 4-year prison sentence. His attorneys say Combs' conviction should be reversed, or he should at least be freed and resentenced

to less time. Prosecutors oppose the arguments.

In written arguments, Combs' lawyers repeated claims they made before the trial judge, including an assertion that Combs' films of sexual encounters between his girlfriends and male sex workers amounted to "amateur pornography" and was protected by the First Amendment. The attorneys said the term "prostitution" should be interpreted narrowly to exclude what they portray as voyeuristic and expressive activity.

The lawyers also argue that Combs' sentence was too harsh, saying the trial judge wrongly based it in part on a conclusion that the crimes involved fraud and coercion and that Combs was a leader or organizer of criminal activity. Combs was acquitted of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that carried the potential for a life sentence. (AP)

Experts urge families, schools to ensure safe and stable environment

Psychological support for kids in crises builds a resilient generation

KUWAIT CITY, April 9, (KUNA): The importance of strengthening psychological awareness and stability for children is increasing in crises and wars, given the psychological pressures and behavioral impacts these conditions impose, which may affect their development, emotional and social balance.

Specialists told the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that children were the most affected group during emergencies due to their incomplete emotional and psychological maturity, making them more vulnerable to fear, anxiety and behavioral disorders compared to adults.

They added that creating a safe environment for children in such circumstances requires coordination among families, educational and health institutions, along with the role of relevant authorities in providing psychological support and awareness, helping reduce negative effects and enhance feelings of reassurance and stability.

Dr. Wa'el Abu Al-Ezz, Head Psychotherapist at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health and member of the Child Protection Team, told KUNA crises and wars leave direct psychological effects on children.

"In the short term, these appear as fear, anxiety, sleep disturbances and increased attachment to parents, especially when



Dr. Wa'el Abu Al-Ezz, Head Psychotherapist at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health and member of the Child Protection Team.

hearing alarm sounds," he said.

He added that these effects may develop in the long term into anxiety disorders or post-traumatic stress disorder if early intervention is absent, negatively impacting the child's concentration, academic performance and social relationships.

He explained that there were behavioral indicators families should monitor, such as sudden changes in behavior, loss of appetite, anger or crying episodes, social withdrawal



Mariam Al-Bloushi, Senior Social Specialist at the Ministry of Education.

and regression such as bedwetting or reverting to earlier behaviors.

He noted that treatment relies on scientific interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy and play therapy, with the necessity of involving the family as the child's primary support system, alongside the importance of coordinated roles between the family, school and health institutions to provide a safe and stable environment.

For his part, Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Falah, Associate Professor in the De-



KUNA photos of Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Falah, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at the College of Social Sciences at Kuwait University.

partment of Psychology at the College of Social Sciences at Kuwait University, stated to KUNA children were more affected by crises than adults because they were still in a stage of emotional development and have not yet fully developed the ability to understand events or regulate their emotions.

Al-Falah explained that differences in children's responses depend on several factors: age, personality, family environment and the intensity of expo-

sure to events, noting that a supportive family significantly reduces psychological impact and enhances feelings of safety.

He added that fostering a sense of tranquility in children depended on simple practices such as maintaining calm, sticking to daily routines, emotional communication, reducing exposure to negative news and providing simplified, age-appropriate information.

He also explained that psychological resilience is built gradually by teaching children to express their feelings and training them calming techniques such as deep breathing, as well as engaging in positive activities, emphasizing that resilience means the ability to deal with fear in a healthy way.

Meanwhile, Mariam Al-Bloushi, Senior Social Specialist at the Ministry of Education, emphasized the importance of enhancing stability and psychological safety among learners, especially children, during crises and wars.

She noted that such conditions directly affect students' behavior, where anger and emotional reactions may appear due to psychological pressures.

Crises could also affect academic performance through poor concentration, distraction, lack of attention and lower achievement, noted Al-Bloushi, adding "These effects are natural under current circumstances and require

continuous psychological and educational support." She explained that the Ministry of Education placed great importance on this aspect by developing educational, social and psychological strategies, and providing social and psychological specialists to support affected students.

Al-Bloushi pointed out that the Ministry has provided the electronic platform "Estashir" (Consult), supervised by a group of specialized national professionals in social and psychological fields, ensuring access to counselling and the provision of psychological and social support.

"This helps assist students in overcoming various challenges confidentially and contributes to enhancing their psychological balance and sense of safety and stability during this period," said Al-Bloushi.

She appreciated efforts of teachers in implementing educational strategies through distance learning.

Al-Baloushi concluded with a message to every family in the country: "mental health is no longer optional but a necessity for maintaining balance and stability. It is one of the most important responsibilities of families in building a strong, confident generation capable of taking responsibility and contributing to the progress of Kuwait."

Premieres



Carey Mulligan (left) and Seoyeon Jang arrive at the premiere of 'Beef' season two on Wednesday, April 8, at The Egyptian Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Elle Fanning (left) and Nicole Kidman attend the Apple TV series premiere of 'Margo's Got Money Troubles' at Regal Union Square on Wednesday, April 8, in New York. (AP)



K-pop band BTS fans from Philippines take a souvenir photo at the venue for the BTS World Tour Arirang in Goyang, South Korea, Thursday, April 9, (AP)

First after 4-year break

Fans gather as BTS starts world tour in South Korea

HATTIESBURG, Miss., April 9, (AP): In the cramped backroom of a theater, Vicki Taylor glues together tiny figurines that peer over electrical boxes, canoe down drainage pipes and hide in nooks and crannies waiting to be found by someone curious enough to get on their hands and knees to search.

Taylor and her husband, Rick, opened the Hattiesburg Pocket Museum - also known as "Mississippi's Tiniest Museum" - in 2020, hoping to bring joy and traffic to the city's downtown during the COVID-19 shutdown. The surreal scenes she creates have helped transform a gray, smelly alley into a major community hub and tourist destination.

"You may come feeling down, but you're going to leave excited," said Brianna Moore, who lives in Hattiesburg and routinely brings her two sons to the free museum. "My boys love it."

The museum started as a small window display facing into the alley behind Hattiesburg's Saenger Theater. It has since grown to include a tiny art gallery, a movie theater, colorful murals, a keychain and DVD exchange, a rainbow bridge for the collars of departed pets, and a motion-activated dance spot that plays music along with disco lighting.

"It is the average alley that is in everyone's town," Taylor said. "It just took, like, looking at it in a different way to envision what it could be."

Taylor's husband is the executive director of the Hattiesburg Convention Commission, which runs the museum and the theater. The organization estimates more than 300,000 people have visited since the museum opened, coinciding with a more than 40% increase in Hattiesburg's tourism economy, according to Visit Hattiesburg CEO Marlo Dorsey.

Dorsey credited the growth to a concerted effort by city leaders to develop and promote the city's culture, recreational activities and art scene, including an initiative to paint 100 murals across the city. Unique attractions like the Hattiesburg Pocket Museum and the nearby Lucky Rabbit, a massive vintage store known for its creative displays, also attract visitors, Dorsey said.

Tony Lymon, who has lived in Hattiesburg since 1990, said he has watched a "monumental rebirth" in the city's downtown over the past decade. He recently opened eYrthBeat Coffee Company a short walk from the museum, and believes the downtown attractions help bring customers to his shop.

The pocket museum has also served as a proving ground for local artists. Gabby Smith, who has painted several murals in the alley, said it helped her build confidence as she was pivoting to pursue art as a full-time career. She now watches her children run through the alley, pointing at various murals and asking, "Mommy, did you paint that one too?"

"This is a city that believes in art and believes in artists," said Shaw Ingram, who opened Wax Fantastic Records downtown in November. "There's nowhere else I would want to open this business."

Stage

Herding calls, mocking songs captivate audience

Jää brings Finnish folk to Met's 'Innocence'

NEW YORK, April 9, (AP): When Vilma Jää enrolled at the Sibelius Academy to study folk music she never expected to end up playing a major role in one of the 21st century's most acclaimed operas.

Kaija Saariaho, Finland's leading opera composer, was working on a piece called "Innocence" and wanted one of the characters to sing in a style based on Finnish folk music rather than with a traditional operatic sound. She had heard Jää's work on YouTube and asked her to make an audition tape.

"I said yes, that's cool," Jää said. "Everyone knows Kaija in Finland, so I knew her name, but I hadn't listened to her music because I wasn't into classical music."

She grew up in Helsinki with a father who loved opera, but her musical tastes were more influenced by her mother. "Her side of the family has been into folklore for I don't know how long," Jää said. "My mother did folk dancing, taught it, and organized festivals of folk music and costumes."

On the audition tape, she offered Saariaho samples of four different folk traditions - two of which ended up in the opera. "She liked what she saw," Jää recalled. "And that's how I found my way into this."

Her role as Markéta thrust Jää into the international opera scene, starting with the world premiere of "Innocence" at the Aix-en-Provence festival in France in 2021, then productions in London, Amsterdam, San Francisco, and now New York, where "Innocence" is playing at the Metropolitan Opera through April 29.

The opera, which runs just under two hours with no intermission, takes place in two time periods 10 years apart that - in director Simon Stone's production - play out simultaneously on a split-level revolving set.

In the present is a wedding banquet, where the characters include a waitress whose connection to the groom's family gradually becomes clear. In the past is an international school that was the scene of a horrific shooting. There are roles in Sofi Oksanen's libretto for 13 characters, who sing or speak in a variety of languages.

Susanna Mälkki, who led the premiere in Aix and is conducting at the Met, said Saariaho wanted to have "a multitude of musical elements. ...



This image released by the Metropolitan Opera shows mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, (left), and folk singer Vilma Jää during a rehearsal for Kaija Saariaho's 'Innocence,' at the Metropolitan Opera in New York on March 31, 2026. (AP)

Even the spoken parts have different qualities. ... It's an extraordinary variety, and of course the most striking part is indeed Vilma's because it's unexpected."

Saariaho, who died two years after the premiere, had already written some music for Jää's first scene, but once she got involved the two of them worked on the role together.

"Everything after she wrote for my voice and the techniques I introduced to her," said Jää, whose character is a pupil in the school and also the daughter of the waitress.

"I showed her which vowels to use, how high you can do each technique," Jää said. "Whenever she composed something for me she would send it over and ask, Does this work? How does this sound? How would you sing this?"

"Kaija was aware that she wasn't the expert in that Finnish folk tradition," said Stone. "So of course she was leaning into someone who had just spent

years at university studying it."

One of the folk traditions that figure in Markéta's music is the herding call or Karjankutsu, which Jää describes as "very high-pitched, very straight, no vibrato."

"It's a call, so it's not trying to be beautiful," she said. "It's trying to be loud so that your herd will hear you, like 5 kilometers away when they're roaming around the forest."

The other tradition is Vienna Karelian yoik. "Most of them are mocking songs toward young men," she said, "so they have this voice-breaking technique. Whenever there is the letter H you would break your voice, and you also add syllables so you can use the voice-breaking in the middle of a word. Then you have a part where you just improvise with the voice breaking ... very few notes, maybe only three pitches."

Stone said there is "a kind of innocence to her as a character who didn't ever grow up into adulthood. Which

means that her almost naive folksing style allows it to feel slightly free of the very complex psychological burden that a lot of the rest of the music has."

Mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, who portrays Markéta's mother, said, "it's almost like having Kaija in the room with us because it's such a unique portrayal. ... Vilma has this beautiful presence and serenity about her, and it makes the closing scene of having to let her go terribly poignant."

When Jää isn't performing in "Innocence" she pursues a busy career as singer, composer, fiddler, researcher and recording artist. Her 2023 debut album "Kosto" blended Finnish folklore with electronic music.

Does she imagine herself ever performing in another opera? "Sure, if a composer would write a role for me," she said. "Nothing compares to singing live with a full orchestra ... because the music lives and breathes. It's something pop music can never do."

About 80% of breast cancer biopsies turn out benign

New scan promises clearer cancer diagnoses, fewer biopsies

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

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By Quing Zhu

Washington University in St. Louis

Ultrasound is widely used in breast cancer diagnosis. While it can effectively show that a lump is filled with fluid - indicating it is unlikely to be cancer - it cannot reliably determine whether a solid mass is benign or cancerous. This often leads doctors to order breast biopsies to confirm the presence of cancer.

However, most breast biopsies do not detect cancer. In the US, more than 1 million breast biopsies are performed each year, and about 80% of them are benign. Unnecessary biopsies are linked to potential harms, including increased anxiety, complications from the procedure and medical costs. Despite advances in breast imaging, breast biopsy remains the only definitive method to determine whether a suspicious lump is cancerous.

My work as an engineer focuses on improving imaging technology to detect and diagnose cancer. Breast cancer grows when the tumors form new blood vessels and consume more oxygen. This makes examining blood vessels and oxygen levels potential biomarkers that could improve breast cancer diagnosis.

Diffuse optical tomography, or DOT, is an imaging technology that uses near-infrared light to measure total blood hemoglobin concentration and oxygen levels - key indicators of tumor activity - in the breast lump. It does not require patients to be injected with contrast dyes to make the image clearer.

My team and I found that combining ultrasound with DOT can improve the accuracy of breast cancer diagnoses and reduce unnecessary breast biopsies. The ultrasound provides information about the structure of a breast lump, while DOT provides information about its function, and this data together can improve breast cancer diagnosis.

In our study, we imaged 226 patients recommended for routine breast biopsy using our new hand-held imaging technology, which combines ultrasound with diffuse optical tomography. These patients had either breast cancer or benign lumps, and their final diagnosis was confirmed with a biopsy.

Radiologists initially evaluated each patient using standard imaging methods, such as ultrasound and mammography. They then reviewed additional information from DOT images. Importantly, the radiologists and engineers were blinded to the biopsy results when determining diagnoses.

We observed significant biological differences between cancerous and benign lumps. Cancerous lesions had significantly higher levels of hemoglobin and lower levels of oxygen than noncancerous tissue. More aggressive cancers showed even higher hemoglobin concentrations and lower oxygen levels than less aggressive

tumors.

When radiologists were able to review DOT measurements, biopsies of benign lumps decreased by approximately 25%. The false-negative rate was 1.8%, which aligns with medical guidelines that recommend monitoring rather than an immediate biopsy.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women worldwide. There were approximately 2.3 million new cases and 670,000 deaths reported in 2022. If these rates continue, researchers project around 1.1 million breast cancer-related deaths will occur in 2050.

More accurate, noninvasive diagnostic tools can not only reduce unnecessary biopsies but also lead to more precise and efficient diagnoses. Beyond ultrasound, researchers have also explored combining other imaging techniques with DOT, including X-ray mammography, 3D mammography

and MRI. However, DOT systems combined with mammography and MRI are more difficult for routine use in the clinic compared to ultrasound. My team is working to further refine our technology, including incorporating AI tools to help process imaging data.

Minimizing avoidable procedures can help preserve a patient's quality of life and reduce health care costs. I believe these improvements can collectively have a meaningful and far-reaching effect on patient care and the broader health care system. (AP)

Science behind brief pause

Why sitting in car before, or after work is common

NEW YORK, April 9. (AP): Have you ever pulled into the driveway of your home or a parking lot spot and just ... stayed there?

Maybe it's a few minutes, or half an hour. You might be scrolling on your phone, belting out a favorite song or just staring into the distance.

Scroll through TikTok and you'll find countless videos of people wondering aloud why they're doing the same thing: arriving at work, home, the gym, and then just sitting in their car. Some get there early on purpose. Others stay long after they've parked.

The behavior is so common it's become its own kind of ritual, one people are increasingly recognizing and sharing online.

It turns out, science has a few ideas for why people do this. Whether in a car, on a sidewalk or just outside a door, that temporary pause can act as a buffer between one part of the day and the next. And while there isn't an extensive body of research to back it up, experts say this can be good for you - if you keep a few things in mind.

"A lot of times we're just going 100 miles an hour," said Jenny Taitz, a clinical psychologist who runs her own practice in Beverly Hills. "But if we can literally stop, like slow down, take a step back, observe, proceed mindfully, maybe like a few minutes to reset between activities, it kind of gives you an ability to be intentional."

Brief moments alone can help reset emotions when moving from one thing to another - like leaving work stress behind before coming home.

"By taking a brief little break, you can at least take a moment to relax and prepare before moving forward," said psychologist Anthony Vaccaro with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Vaccaro sits in his parked car for a few minutes after arriving home from work, turning up the speakers to listen to just one more song.

People seek out these breaks to process, recalibrate and shake off the gloom. And doing it in a car make sense because "it's an in-between space," according to psychologist Thuy-vy Nguyen with Durham University in England and founder of Solitude Lab, which studies how being alone affects and rejuvenates us.

The car is an environment people can have total control over, from the temperature to the music.

Scientists say taking brief moments to decompress during the workday and after can improve mood, sharpen focus and boost energy levels.

When it comes to breaks in the car, though, whether that pause helps - or hurts - depends on how the time is spent.

"If you're in your car scrolling and thinking about something that's upsetting to you or ruminating, you know, in your head spiraling, the parked car is not a reset. It's the stressor," said Taitz.

Scrolling on your phone can pull your attention toward what's happening on the screen, which can in turn make it harder to decompress.

If sitting in a parked car has become a habit, be mindful of how you're spending the time. Take a few moments to slow your breathing, listen to a familiar song or make a simple plan for how you want to show up next - whether that's feeling calmer, more patient or more focused. Even a short pause can shift your state.

"You could change your blood pressure in five minutes," Taitz said, referring to simple techniques like slowing your breathing or relaxing your body.

There's a difference between a helpful reset and avoidance. If the parked car breaks are making you late for important meetings or dinner with friends, or it feels difficult to get out of the car and confront the rest of the day, they may do more harm than good - or indicate that something more serious is going on.

"It's really about why you're doing it, and whether it's interfering with other aspects of your life. That's really what's going to determine whether this is a good or bad behavior for you," Vaccaro said.

Decompressing in a car can be about more than just shaking off stress. The sheer volume of information people take in every day can make a quiet pause even more essential and rewarding.

"We're always juggling so much, not taking a lot of time to slow things down," Taitz said. "Trying to find those moments can allow for things to be happier and more joyful and fulfilling."

Think of it less like stalling, and more like refueling.



A driver sits in his car in an empty parking lot in Calama, Chile, Friday, April 14, 2023. (AP)

New hope for cancer patients

China to launch world's first CAR-T therapy for solid tumors

SHANGHAI, April 9. (AP): A groundbreaking new CAR-T cell therapy for advanced gastrointestinal cancers is expected to become available in China in the first half of 2026, marking a major step forward in cancer treatment. Jiahui International Cancer Center will be among the leading medical institutions offering access to this innovative therapy for eligible patients.

The therapy, known as satri-cel (CT041), is the world's first CAR-T treatment specifically developed for solid tumors targeting Claudin18.2, a biomarker commonly found in gastric (stomach) and pancreatic cancers.

A New Era in Cancer Treatment

CAR-T therapy is a highly personalized treatment that uses a patient's own immune cells, reprogrammed to recognize and attack cancer cells with precision. Unlike traditional therapies, CAR-T cells can expand inside the body and continue to fight cancer over time.

While CAR-T has already transformed outcomes in blood cancers, this new therapy represents a major breakthrough in treating solid tumors, where effective options have historically been limited.

Clinical studies conducted in China have demonstrated encouraging outcomes for patients with advanced gastric and gastroesophageal cancers: These results have been presented at leading international conferences and published in top-tier medical journals, highlighting the global significance of this therapy.



This image from video provided by NASA shows the Artemis II crew, from left, Commander Reid Wiseman, mission specialist Christina Koch, pilot Victor Glover and Canadian astronaut and mission specialist Jeremy Hansen as they answer media questions during a video conference Wednesday, April 8. (AP)

Emotional lunar tribute

Artemis II crew follows Apollo tradition, names lunar features after loved ones

HOUSTON, April 9. (AP): Lunar love knows no bounds.

Now hurtling home from the moon, the Artemis II astronauts took a poignant page from Apollo 8 earlier this week, proposing deeply personal names for a pair of lunar craters.

Commander Reid Wiseman and his crew asked permission to name one small, fresh crater after their capsule called Integrity and another after his late wife, Carroll, Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen made the request right before Monday's lunar fly-around. Wiseman was too emotional to talk.

Carroll Wiseman, a neonatal nurse, died of cancer in 2020.

"Just for me personally, that was kind of the pinnacle moment of the mission for me," Wiseman said from space Wednesday night.

During Apollo 8 in 1968, astronaut Jim Lovell bestowed his wife's name upon a prominent lunar peak: Mount Marilyn. It was humanity's first trip to the moon and she anxiously awaited his return back home in Houston.

The three Americans and one Canadian of Artemis II are the first lunar visitors since Apollo 17 closed out that grand epoch in 1972, and their crater-naming request temporarily left ground controllers speechless.

"It was definitely a very emotional moment. I don't think most of us knew it was coming," NASA lunar scientist Ryan Watkins told The Associated Press on Wednesday from Johnson Space Center in Houston. "There was

not a single dry eye."

Mission Control's lead scientist Kelsey Young worked with the Artemis II astronauts before launch, quietly helping them choose the two bright, relatively young craters, which they quickly spied once they were close enough to the moon through zoom lenses as well as their naked eyes.

Wiseman said his crewmates came up with the idea and approached him about it while they were in quarantine a few days before liftoff. His response: "Absolutely, I would love that. I think that's just the best. And I said, 'But I can't give the speech, I can't give the talk,'" he recalled during a crew news conference, saying he was too overwhelmed.

Proposed Carroll Crater is at the moon's left limb on the boundary of the moon's near and far sides, and occasionally visible from Earth. It's rather shallow and approximately 3 miles (5 kilometers) across, according to Watkins. The slightly bigger Integrity crater is completely on the lunar far side.

Their request came shortly after they broke Apollo 13's distance record for deep-space travelers. All four astronauts wept as they embraced in a group hug.

"We lost a loved one. Her name was Carroll, the spouse of Reid, the mother of Katie and Ellie," Hansen radioed, his voice breaking. "It's a bright spot on the moon and we would like to call it Carroll."

Mission Control fell silent for nearly a minute before replying: "Integrity and Carroll crater, loud and clear."

The emotion-drenched scene was vastly different from the 1960s and 1970s Apollo moonshots in more ways than one. NASA's Apollo all-male test pilots were for the most part all business and tear-free.

"This is no fault of Apollo," Watkins said. "I think we're seeing just a more human aspect."

Once back on Earth later this week, the crew will submit the two proposed names to the International Astronomical Union.

Nearly a half century passed between Apollo 8 and the union's sign-off of Mount Marilyn in 2017.

The IAU's Ramasamy Venugopal promised a decision on Carroll and Integrity in about a month, the norm "for straightforward requests."

There already are 81 astronaut-named lunar features on the group's approved list, including Apollo 16's Baby Ray and Gator, and Apollo 17's Lara named for the lead female character in the 1965 film "Doctor Zhivago."

Some Apollo-era nicknames didn't make the cut.

Apollo 17 commander Gene Cernan, the last astronaut to walk on the moon, dubbed a split boulder "Tracy's Rock," after his young daughter in 1972.

And in 1969, Apollo 12 commander Pete Conrad nicknamed his touchdown spot "Pete's Parking Lot."

To expose 'lies' that have made Americans sick

HHS podcast to focus on public health, policy

NEW YORK, April 9. (AP): Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is launching a new podcast that he says will begin "a new era of radical transparency in government," according to a teaser video first obtained by The Associated Press.

The show, titled "The Secretary Kennedy Podcast," will launch next week and feature Kennedy, a longtime anti-vaccine crusader who has reshaped the country's health policy, in conversation with doctors, scientists and agency staff, US Department of Health and Human Services officials told the AP ahead of the launch. In the teaser video, in a slick HHS-branded studio with ominous music playing in the background, Kennedy bills it as a new way to expose corruption and lies that have made Americans sick.

"We're going to name the names of the forces that obstruct the paths to public health," Kennedy says in the nearly 90-second clip.

Joining the Trump administration last year gave Kennedy a new platform for his views, some of which contradict the overwhelming consensus of scientists. A podcast could further elevate those ideas, and further remove HHS agencies from their long-held reputation as a "safe harbor for information," said Lawrence Gostin, a public health law expert at Georgetown University.

Administration officials say the show will help spread an important message about chronic disease and improving health to a wider audience.

"This is part of our larger strategy to bring the Make America Healthy Again message to as wide an audience as we can," said Liam Nahill, HHS digital director.

The new communication effort from HHS comes as the department has faced a bevy of recent setbacks, including widespread criticism of its vaccine policy changes, a federal ruling last month blocking several



Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. speaks during a fireside chat with CPAC Senior Fellow Mercedes Schlapp at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas, Saturday, March 28, 2026. (AP)

of those moves, and resistance from key Republican senators that has kept President Donald Trump's surgeon general pick from taking office. In that way, it could be seen as part of a rebranding strategy as the agency focuses less on vaccine efforts and more on a less contentious healthy food agenda ahead of November's midterm elections.

The show, which has been in the works since early in the second Trump administration, also reflects Kennedy returning to a format where he has long felt at ease. He hosted his own podcast before entering office, and has appeared on dozens to share his perspectives in longform interviews.

Tyler Burger, HHS digital communications manager and the producer of the new podcast, said while Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Marty

Makary has a podcast, officials believe Kennedy's will be the first to be hosted by a sitting cabinet secretary.

"We're kind of bringing podcasting into the government as an official form and arm of our messaging," Burger said. He said the set for the show was pieced together largely with items the agency already had, and has the capacity for a total of four people to sit in conversation together.

Because podcasts are now commonly made not only on audio but video, they are regularly clipped and shared across social media platforms, giving them "massive" reach, according to Melina Much, a postdoctoral fellow for New York University's Center for Social Media and Politics.

Much said podcasts also tend to be more intimate, conversational and friendly than a traditional interview, allowing administration officials to promote themselves without facing as much pushback.

Critics suggested the show would be used to spread falsehoods. It's "just another official channel to spread misinformation that will inject more dangerous conspiracy theories into the mainstream," said Grace Silva, spokesperson for 314 Action, a left-leaning political action committee aimed at electing scientists in Congress.

New episodes are expected to drop every other week, Burger said. Though officials wouldn't share a list of upcoming guests, Kennedy let one slip when he appeared as a guest on a recent episode of "The Bosssticks." He said he recorded an episode with Robert Irvine, the celebrity chef who has been tasked with revamping U.S. Army meals.

While Kennedy's teaser focuses on uncovering lies, HHS spokesman Andrew Nixon said the show will aim to cover affordability and other topics that polls show are salient for voters.

Global action

France hosts One Health summit

PARIS, April 9. (KUNA): France hosted the One Health Summit in Lyon to strengthen international cooperation in addressing health, food, and environmental risks, the Elysee said in a press statement Monday.

The statement said, "The One Health approach aims to sustainably balance and optimize the interdependent, inseparable, and closely connected health of people, animals, plants, and ecosystems."

The One Health Summit will bring together, for the first time, heads of state and government from around the world, representatives of relevant international and regional organizations, parliamentarians, scientists, as well as representatives from the private sector, civil society, local authorities, development banks, and youth organizations, to accelerate the implementation of the "One Health" approach.

Commenting on the occasion, French President Emmanuel Macron said, "we have no time to lose. We urgently need to find coordinated responses based on science and prevention to restore hope for progress. We urgently need to take action in light of these principles, factoring in the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and pollution on both human and animal health. We need to lean into these urgent challenges as we have done with the One Planet summits for the last nine years."

France stands firmly by its intention to build effective multilateralism to protect our global public goods.

We will work with all stakeholders to do so, including heads of international and regional organizations, representatives of the scientific and academic community, the private sector, civil society, young people, local government bodies, development banks and philanthropic actors. This Summit will be first and foremost a summit of action. We will take action with the One Health approach as our guiding principle. With a simple idea: protecting health and nature must be addressed together.

As we know from the COVID-19 pandemic, our health depends on protecting the living world.

Only on this condition will we be able to understand, predict, control and thereby prevent numerous diseases, infectious and non-communicable, and protect our societies from the political, economic and social impacts of these shared challenges. We will take action with clear objectives.

First of all, investing in prevention. Science is categorical: it is approximately a hundred times less expensive to invest in prevention than to handle the repercussions of a health emergency.

We need to strengthen our prevention systems by leveraging science, research and education for all. We also need to find new cooperation solutions, as we did during the COVID-19 pandemic, by means of coordinated international action, innovative public-private partnerships and involvement of all players prepared to engage to take concrete action.

SPORTS

OKC locks up No. 1 seed for third straight season

Suns clinch 7th spot in West

INGLEWOOD, Calif., April 9, (AP): Chet Holmgren had 30 points and 14 rebounds, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 20 points and 11 assists, and the Oklahoma City Thunder clinched the NBA's best regular-season record with a 128-110 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday night.

Jalen Williams scored 18 points for the NBA champion Thunder (64-16), who will have homecourt advantage throughout the post-season in their title defense after holding off San Antonio (61-19), which is on an 18-2 run since February. Oklahoma City has won seven straight and 19 of 20 to earn the West's No. 1 seed for the third straight season.

Kawhi Leonard scored 20 points and Brook Lopez added 16 for the eighth-place Clippers, who had won seven of nine. Los Angeles is 35-18 since shortly before Christmas, but still must win one of its final two games to extend this once-moribund franchise's streak to 15 consecutive winning seasons.

The Clippers head to Portland on Friday for a crucial game. The winner almost certainly will finish eighth in the Western Conference, while the losers will slip to ninth, where they'll need two wins in the play-in tournament to make the playoffs.



Oklahoma City Thunder center Chet Holmgren, left, shoots as Los Angeles Clippers guard Kobe Sanders defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)

Suns 112, Mavericks 107

In Phoenix, Devin Booker scored 37 points, Dillon Brooks added 28 and the Phoenix Suns edged the short-handed Dallas Mavericks.

The Mavericks pulled within 110-107 on John Poulakidas' 3-pointer with 1:08 left and had a chance to get even closer on their next possession but Oso Ighodaro blocked Moussa Cisse at the rim to stop the rally.

Brooks made a driving layup with 13.7 seconds to finally put the game away. The Suns clinched the No. 7 spot in the Western Conference playoff race, meaning they get two chances at home to win one game in the play-in tournament.

Poulakidas - a 6-foot-5 undrafted rookie who played at Yale - scored a season-high 23 points. Rookie of the Year front-runner Cooper Flagg had a tough game, scoring 11 points on 4 of 19 shooting.

Spurs 112, Trail Blazers 101

In San Antonio, De'Aaron Fox had 25 points and the San Antonio Spurs kept rolling even with Victor Wembanyama and Stephon Castle sidelined by injuries, defeating the Portland Trail Blazers.

San Antonio (61-19) is 28-3 since Feb. 1 and has its best record since 2017, its last appearance in the Western Conference finals during a 22-year post-season run that included five NBA championships.

Deni Avdija scored 27 points and Scoot Henderson added 20 for the Trail Blazers, who have lost two straight after a three-game winning streak.

Portland (40-40) remains ninth in the West, just 2 1/2 games ahead of Golden State (37-42) heading into the final weekend of the regular season.

San Antonio had six players in double figures to offset the absence of the NBA's past two Rookie of the Year winners. Keldon Johnson scored 20 points and rookie forward Carter Bryant added a season-high 17.

Nuggets 136, Grizzlies 119

In Denver, Nikola Jokic had 14 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists for his 34th triple-double of the season, and Denver beat the Memphis Grizzlies for the Nuggets' 10th straight win.

Denver (52-28) increased its hold on the No. 3 seed in the Western Conference with its first double-digit winning streak since getting 15 in a row Feb. 23-March 23, 2013. The Nuggets lead the reeling Los Angeles Lakers by 1 1/2 games and finish the regular season with games against



Denver Nuggets guard Jamal Murray, right, drives to the rim as Memphis Grizzlies guard Lucas Williamson defends in the second half of an NBA basketball game in Denver. (AP)

the top two teams in the conference.

Jamal Murray scored 26 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 14 points in his 1,000th career game.

The wins during the streak haven't been easy. Memphis needed to rally from double-digit deficits in the fourth quarter twice, winning both in overtime.

Cade Cunningham has double-double in return from injury as Pistons rout Bucks 137-111

Detroit, Cade Cunningham had 13 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in his return from injury as the Detroit Pistons beat the Milwaukee Bucks 137-111 in their home finale on Wednesday night.

Cunningham hadn't played since sustaining a collapsed lung in a win against the Washington Wizards on March 17, but appeared comfortable while playing 26 minutes in short stints. He hit six of 11 field goal attempts, including one 3-pointer, and pulled down five rebounds.

Jalen Duren added 21 points and nine rebounds as the Pistons won for the sixth time in eight games. Duncan Robinson scored 20 points on a night where J.B. Bickerstaff kept all five starters under 30 minutes.

Detroit (58-22) can win 60 games for the first time since 2005-06 by winning against the Charlotte Hornets and Indiana Pacers in their final two games.

Jericho Sims had a triple-double - 11 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists - while Ryan Rollins scored 23 points for Milwaukee, which has lost 10 of its last 13 games.

Cavaliers 122, Hawks 116

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 31 points, Evan Mobley had 22 points and tied a career high with 19 rebounds, and the Cleveland Cavaliers defeated the Atlanta Hawks.

James Harden added 21 points for the Cavaliers, who have won four straight and seven of eight. Cleveland

(51-29) can finish no lower than fourth place in the Eastern Conference and is 1/2 game behind New York for the third seed.

Nickel Alexander-Walker scored 25 points and Jonathan Kuminga had 24 off the bench as Atlanta was unable to clinch a playoff berth with the loss. The Hawks (45-35) have dropped their last two after winning four straight. They are one game ahead of Toronto for the fifth seed but only 1 1/2 in front of Orlando to avoid being in the play-in tournament.

It was Mitchell's 200th regular-season game with at least 20 points in four years with the Cavaliers. He is the fifth player in franchise history to reach that milestone.

Magic 132, Timberwolves 120

In Orlando, Paolo Banchero had 20 points and eight rebounds, Desmond Bane added 18 points and six assists and the Orlando Magic beat the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Franz Wagner scored 17 points and Goga Bitadze came off the bench with 14 points and 15 rebounds for the Magic, who have won four straight.

The win pulled the Magic (44-36) up to seventh place in the tight race for playoff/play-in positions. With two road games remaining (Chicago on Friday and Boston on Sunday), they could finish anywhere between six and ninth in the Eastern Conference.

Terrence Shannon Jr. led the Timberwolves with a career-high 33 points. Jaden McDaniels, back in the lineup after missing six games with a left knee injury, added 18 points in 19 minutes.

The Timberwolves, who have lost five of seven, played without Anthony Edwards (right knee injury) and four players who started Tuesday night's win at Indiana that clinched their Western Conference playoff spot.

Gill anchors Titans to strong total

Gujarat survives Miller's late blitz for 1-run win over Delhi

NEW DELHI, India, April 9, (AP): Gujarat Titans withstood David Miller's late onslaught to record a one-run victory over Delhi Capitals on the final ball in the Indian Premier League.

Needing two runs off Prashidh Krishna's last ball, Miller missed the slower short ball and wicketkeeper Jos Buttler hit the stumps at the striker's end with Kuldeep Yadav well short of his crease as Delhi finished at 209-8.

Earlier, half-centuries from Shubman Gill (70), Washington Sundar (55) and Buttler (52) led Gujarat to 210-4 after Axar Patel won the toss in Delhi's home game and elected to field.

Gujarat was in control when Lokesh Rahul (92 off 52 balls) missed out on a century and Mohammed Siraj had him caught behind in the 17th over.

With Delhi still requiring 45 of the last three overs, Miller returned to the crease after the South African left-hander had got retired hurt in the 12th over after a hand injury during batting.

Kagiso Rabada conceded just nine runs in the 18th over before Miller hit Siraj for 23 runs in the penultimate over, reducing the target to 13 of Krishna's last over.

Vipraj Nigam smacked Krishna's first delivery over mid off for a boundary before he got

caught off the next ball, but Miller's big six off the fourth ball reduced the target to two runs from the final two balls.

Miller could have tied the score, but he didn't run a single off the fifth ball as he pulled to deep backward square leg before he missed out the final ball and Yadav got run out as Gujarat finally got its first points this season after losing twice.

Rashid Khan's superb spell of 3-17 in the middle overs brought Gujarat back into the leg-spinner chipped in with the wickets of Nitish Rana (5) and Sameer Rizvi for nought in one over before rounding out his spell with the wicket of Patel (2).

Earlier, Gill anchored Gujarat to a strong total with two solid partnerships. Buttler smashed five sixes and three fours in his 27-ball blitz before he was undone by Yadav and got clean bowled in the eighth over.

But Sundar and Gill kept the momentum going with a 104-run stand as Sundar completed his maiden IPL fifty. Lungi Ngidi, who consistently deceived batters with slower deliveries, had Gill caught at mid-off with a ball that lacked pace.

Sundar fell in the last over to Mukesh Kumar, who finished with expensive figures of 2-55 after conceding 12 runs of his final over.



Gujarat Titans' Jos Buttler plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Gujarat Titans and Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh, India. (AP)

Usyk foresees trilogy bout with charismatic Englishman

Fury faces bear-wrestling Makhmudov in latest comeback to heavyweight boxing

LONDON, April 9, (AP): Tyson Fury's latest comeback has revived the prospect of a long-awaited showdown with Anthony Joshua.

First, though, the self-described "Gypsy King" needs to deal with a Russian-born heavyweight who wrestled a bear for fun. Arslanbek Makhmudov is Fury's opponent in their 12-round fight Saturday at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Fury, the former two-time heavyweight champion, came out of retirement for the fifth time because he wants to "punch men in the face and get paid for it."

The 37-year-old Fury had called it quits shortly after losing to Oleksandr Usyk in December 2024 for a second time - his only two professional defeats.

IBF holds the WBC, WBA and IBF titles and at age 39 has indicated he only has a few fights left in him. The Ukrainian's next bout, though, has taken everyone by surprise - he's set to face kickboxing star Rico Verhoeven in May at the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt.

Also in May, WBO title holder Fabio Wardley faces Daniel Dubois in Manchester.

Usyk told The Associated Press in a recent interview he foresees a trilogy bout with the charismatic Englishman: "In my head, Tyson Fury, it's the last dance."

In their first meeting, Fury had lost his WBC title to Usyk via split



In this file photo, Britain's Tyson Fury, right, punches Ukraine's Oleksandr Usyk during their undisputed heavyweight world championship boxing fight at the Kingdom Arena in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

decision in May 2024. The rematch was a unanimous decision for Usyk.

Fury (34-2-1, 24 KOs), if he can take care of business Saturday, has his sights set on Joshua, telling DAZN: "That's the fight we're looking to make next."

The 36-year-old Joshua had called out Fury after breaking Jake Paul's jaw in a stoppage victory in December. Days later, though, Joshua was involved in a fatal car crash in Nigeria. He was a passenger in the vehicle and two of his

close friends were killed.

Fury has said the tragedy is part of what motivated him to come out of retirement.

Joshua appears set to resume fighting. Last weekend, he attended the Deontay Wilder vs. Derek Chisora bout in London and had a brief exchange with Wilder after the American beat Chisora.

The 36-year-old Makhmudov (21-2, 19 KOs) has created some buzz by posting a video that showed him wrestling a bear. He explained

in a Feb. 21 social media post that "the goal was to overcome the threshold of fear and learn to control yourself in critical situations."

Makhmudov hails from the Russian southern republic of Dagestan but lives in Canada. His most recent fight was a 12-round unanimous decision over Dave Allen in October.

Makhmudov's left eye was swollen shut in a loss to Guido Vianello in 2024. He was felled by Agit Kabayel's body shots in a fourth-round stoppage in 2023.

Conor Benn (24-1, 14 KOs) returns to Tottenham after two middleweight slugfests there against Chris Eubank Jr. in 2025. He lost the first one but dominated the rematch in November.

In the highlight of Saturday's undercard, the Briton faces Regis Prograis in a bout at a catchweight of 150 lbs. The 37-year-old Prograis (30-3, 24 KOs) is a former two-time world champion at super lightweight (140 lbs).

Both men are hoping for a title shot later this year. The 29-year-old Benn has traded verbal jabs with WBC welterweight champion Ryan Garcia.

The event begins at 7 p.m. local time (2 p.m. ET) and is available on Netflix.

Fury's ring walk is expected at 10:30 p.m. local time (5:30 p.m. ET), about one hour after Benn vs. Prograis.

Global women's sports revenue to top \$3 billion in 2026

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): Global women's sports revenues are projected to exceed \$3 billion in 2026, a significant increase over the \$2.4 billion in revenues generated in 2025, according to a report released.

The report produced by accounting firm Deloitte said women's sports revenues internationally have increased 340% over the last four years. That has spurred investment in the women's sports ecosystem, which in turn drives further growth but also raises the expectations of fans, athletes, investors and business partners.

"Women's sports are entering a new phase - one defined by scale, structure, and sustained investment," Alicia Hatch, Deloitte's U.S. Sports chief commercial officer and women's sports leader, said in a statement. "Rising valuations and expanding revenue streams are consistent with a maturing market where leagues, sponsors, and media partners are building for long-term success."

The report, "Game Changers: Unlocking the Potential of Women's Sports," looks at three main types of revenue: commercial, broadcast and matchday. Commer-

cial revenue makes up the greatest share at 45%.

Soccer and basketball are expected to be the top revenue-generating women's sports, with each accounting for 35% of overall revenues. New competitions, like Unrivaled Basketball, and new leagues, including the Canadian Northern Super League in soccer, are driving growth.

Most of the revenue globally in 2025 was generated by North America (53%), followed by Europe (16%) and that trend was expected to continue this year.

But Deloitte also cited the 2025

Women's Rugby World Cup, which drew a record 82,000 fans to the final in London, as well as last year's Women's Cricket World Cup. In North America, eight new women's leagues have been launched since 2020.

"Women's sports are thriving and defined by real, transformative growth and a rapidly expanding global fan base," said Lara Abrash, chair of Deloitte US. "With global revenue on track to top \$3 billion this year, the conversation has moved beyond proving value to intentionally building a lasting, world-class foundation for the future."

SPORTS

Wolfsburg has another tough task at home to Frankfurt

Bayern about to break all-time Bundesliga goals record

MUNICH, April 9, (AP): One more goal to tie. Two more goals to break a Bundesliga record which has stood for 54 years.

Bayern Munich's game against St. Pauli on Saturday isn't just about taking care of business in between two high-pressure Champions League quarterfinal games against Real Madrid. This is a chance for Vincent Kompany's team to go down in history.

Lennart Karl's last-gasp winner for Bayern in a 3-2 comeback win over Freiburg last week was Bayern's 100th Bundesliga goal of the season.

With six games to go, Kompany's team is one shy of the league record of 101 goals that Bayern scored in 1971-72. That was an era when greats like Franz Beckenbauer and Gerd Müller propelled Bayern to a famous 11-1 demolition of Borussia Dortmund.

Averaging 3.57 goals per game puts Bayern ahead of the pace of some all-time great teams, like the Manchester City squad featuring Sergio Agüero which set a Premier League record of 106 goals in 2017-18, or Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid team which scored 121 in La Liga in 2011-12.

Chasing down either of those targets would be all the more impressive because Bayern has four fewer games to do it in, thanks to the Bundesliga's 34-game schedule.

The all-time record in Europe's top five leagues is 125 goals for Torino in Serie A back in 1947-48 in a 40-game season.

St. Pauli has plenty to play for against Bayern on Saturday, too. It's in 16th in the 18-team Bundesliga and would have to go through a relegation playoff if it finishes there.

Nine points behind with six games to go, it would take a miracle for Dortmund to stop Bayern. A tricky home game against Champions League-chasing Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday only makes things harder.



Bayern's Jonathan Tah, center, Real Madrid's Antonio Rudiger, right, and Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Real Madrid and Bayern Munich in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

Wolfsburg has been in the Bundesliga since 1997 but is in grave danger of relegation, four points from any chance of safety after a 6-3 loss to Leverkusen in arguably the most entertaining game of last week.

Wolfsburg now has another tough task at home to Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

Harry Kane had looked like breaking Robert Lewandowski's single-season goals record of 41 but fitness concerns kept him out of two of Bayern's last four Bundesliga games. With 31 goals already but Madrid looming on Wednesday, Kompany needs to decide whether to risk Kane.

Full-back Julian Ryerson has flown under the radar but his 12 assists for Dortmund are second only to Bayern's Michael Olise, and one more than Luis Diaz. That could bode well for linking up with Erling Haaland for Norway at the World Cup.

The 19-year-old Yan Diomande has 10 goals and seven assists already for Leipzig and Saturday's game against Borussia Moenchengladbach offers him another chance to shine ahead of Ivory Coast's World Cup run.

Leverkusen defender Jarell Quansah is a doubt after missing his team's last game with a thigh injury on England duty. Winger Martin Terrier is ruled out for the rest of the season.

Dortmund midfielder Felix Nmecha remains out with a knee ligament injury that could risk his place in Germany's World Cup squad.

Leipzig defender Castello Lukeba is out for an indefinite period after injuring his adductor muscle in last week's 2-1 win over Werder Bremen.

Dortmund has confirmed interest in signing Jadon Sancho for what would be a third time. The former England winger is due to become a free agent at the end of the season when his Aston Villa loan from Manchester United ends.

Crowd trouble involving dozens of fans from both teams at a second-division game last week could prompt a harder line on fan issues from German authorities.

Toluca, Tigres take advantage in CONCACAF Champions Cup



Joao Klauss of the United States' LA Galaxy is challenged by Luan of Mexico's Toluca during a CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal first leg soccer match in Toluca, Mexico. (AP)

Paulinho scores hat-trick

MEXICO CITY, April 9, (AP): Portuguese striker Joao Paulo Fernandes Paulinho scored a hat-trick and Mexican reigning champion Toluca had a 4-2 victory over MLS side LA Galaxy in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal series.

Nicolas Castro open the scoring in the 12th minute and Paulinho added goals in the 43rd and sealed the win in the 73rd and 85th minutes for the Diablos Rojos.

The 33-year-old Paulinho, who played for Sporting Clube before joining Toluca in the summer of 2024, has won three scoring titles in Mexico and recently was called up by Portugal for friendly matches against Mexico and the

United States ahead of the World Cup. Gabriel Pec in the 66th minute and former Borussia Dortmund forward Marco Reus in the 77th scored for the Galaxy which has not won in Mexico in this tournament since 2008.

The teams will play again next Wednesday in California.

Midfielder Ozziel Herrera scored a first-half goal and the UANL Tigres defeated the Seattle Sounders 2-0 in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup quarterfinal.

Herrera put the home side ahead in the 51st minute before center back Jackson Ragen scored an own goal in the 76th minute.

The second leg will be played next Wednesday in Seattle. The winner will face either Nashville or Club America in one of the semifinals.

Tigres could have taken the lead toward the end of the first half, but former Atletico Madrid player Angel Correa missed a penalty, sending it over the

crossbar.

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The second leg will be played next Wednesday in Seattle. The winner will face either Nashville or Club America in one of the semifinals.

Tigres advanced after staging a comeback victory, winning 5-4 on aggregate against FC Cincinnati in the Round of 16. The Sounders progressed to the quarterfinals with a 5-1 aggregate victory over the Vancouver Whitecaps FC, the runner-up in 2025.

Tigres could have taken the lead toward the end of the first half, but former Atletico Madrid player Angel Correa missed a penalty, sending it over the crossbar.

Antonio is never one to sit still

Conte hints at Napoli exit and return to Italy job

ROME, April 9, (AP): Win and then move on to the next challenge.

Antonio Conte never seems to stay too long in one place and now the fiery coach appears ready to leave Napoli less than a year after guiding the southern club to its fourth Serie A title.

Conte is openly campaigning for the vacant Italy job after the Azzurri failed to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup. Such a move would mark a return for Conte, who already coached Italy at the European Championship a decade ago.

"If I were the federation president I would consider myself," Conte said after Napoli's 1-0 victory over AC Milan on Monday. "I've already been with the national team and I know what it's like."

Currently, though, the Italian soccer federation has only a lame duck president after Gabriele Gravina announced that he is resigning, with new elections called for June 22.

Gennaro Gattuso, who coached Italy in the World Cup qualifying playoff loss to Bosnia and Herzego-



Napoli's Kevin De Bruyne, right, and AC Milan's Adrien Rabiot battle for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Milan in Naples, Italy. (AP)

vina, also resigned.

In the meantime, Conte can focus on Napoli's late-season surge after leapfrogging Milan into second place with a visit to Parma coming up on Sunday.

Still, Napoli trails Italian league leader Inter Milan by seven points with seven rounds remaining and Conte is not expecting another title.

"It's not a question of believing or

not; it's about being realistic," Conte said. "We would have to be perfect and Inter would have to make several missteps. And from what we've seen, that seems unlikely because Inter is strong."

If Conte does leave Napoli, it would follow similar exits immediately after or soon after titles at Bari (he left immediately after a Serie B title in 2009), Juventus (he left immediately after winning a third straight Serie A title in 2014), Chelsea (he left immediately after winning the FA Cup in 2018 and a year after a Premier League title) and Inter (he left immediately after a Serie A title in 2021).

Inter visits neighboring Como on Sunday for its shortest trip of the season.

Inter's Appiano Gentile training center north of Milan is located less than 20 kilometers (slightly more than 10 miles) from Como's Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia.

That's about half as far as the trip from Appiano Gentile to the San Siro.

NCAA panel to review new age-based eligibility rules

WASHINGTON, April 9, (AP): An NCAA panel is scheduled to discuss potential changes to eligibility rules that would incorporate age into the process, two people with knowledge of the situation said.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the NCAA hasn't publicly discussed the proposal. They said the matter was scheduled to be reviewed and discussed by the Division I Cabinet next week, but not voted on for implementation.

Yahoo Sports was first to report the proposal. An NCAA spokesman did not immediately return a message left by AP.

The proposal, which mirrors language written into the executive order issued

by President Donald Trump last week, would give athletes five years of eligibility with the clock starting at the earliest of two dates: either when they turn 19 or graduate high school. There would be limited exceptions but they would not involve injuries, which has been a common reason for players to ask for extra eligibility.

Still unknown is whether the rule would shield the NCAA from lawsuits over eligibility. Dozens of players have sued for extra years, claiming injuries and other circumstances made them candidates for extra eligibility. The NCAA is seeking a limited antitrust exemption from Congress to prevent these lawsuits.

Speaking at the Final Four over the weekend, NCAA President Charlie Baker said Trump wanted to figure out a way to "get something on the books that works and represents what most people are looking for at this point, which is a much simpler eligibility process, which we've been talking to our committees about."



Baker

Best of the Rest

Li agrees qualifying offer with Dallas Wings: The Dallas Wings announced Wednesday that Chinese center Li Yueru has accepted a qualifying offer with the WNBA side.

In 2025, Li averaged 6.0 points and 4.5 rebounds playing for the Wings and the Seattle Storm in her third WNBA season. She posted a career-high 20 points in the Wings' 81-80 win over the Indiana Fever on August 12.

However, Li suffered an anterior cruciate ligament sprain in her left knee several days later and was sidelined for the remainder of the season.

Upon her recovery, Li helped Mist BC capture the 3x3 Unrivaled league title.

In March, Li helped China secure a spot at the FIBA Women's World Cup with an average of 8.2 points and 5.0 rebounds across five qualifying games.

The qualifying offer signed between Li and the Wings is on a training camp basis. The Wings will play their first pre-season game against the Fever on April 30. (Xinhua)



Fire breaks out at Rio de Janeiro Olympic Park: Fire broke out Wednesday morning at Rio de Janeiro's Olympic Park velodrome, prompting a major emergency response involving about 80 firefighters and 20 vehicles, authorities said.

Rio state military fire department said the blaze was under control and largely confined to the venue's fabric roof. There have been no reported injuries, and the interior of the building - including the Olympic Museum - remained untouched.

While the cause of this latest incident is currently under investigation, the facility has a history of roof fires. Two similar blazes occurred in 2017, both caused by falling paper sky lanterns.

Since hosting track cycling during the 2016 Summer Games, the Velodrome has served as a primary training base for Brazil's national cycling and weightlifting teams. (AP)

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PSG's Warren Zaire-Emery, left, and Liverpool's Ibrahima Konate challenge for the ball during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool in Paris. (AP)

Sports

Kvaratskhelia dazzles as PSG leaves Liverpool reeling

Salah watches from sidelines

PARIS, April 9, (AP): Ousmane Dembélé had an off night, but Khvicha Kvaratskhelia added another solo goal to his collection as Paris Saint-Germain beat Liverpool 2-0 in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

The Georgia star cut in from the left flank midway through the second half and, with typically quick feet, skipped past a defender and the goalkeeper before stroking in his team-leading eighth goal of the competition. "We had chances to score more," Kvaratskhelia said. "But I think it's OK, 2-0 is good, but we have to stay concentrated."

Désiré Doué put the defending champions ahead in the 11th minute with a deflected effort. The Ballon d'Or winner Dembélé then spurned three chances at Parc des Princes. PSG coach Luis Enrique said his side should have scored more.

"It's a pity, clearly, we played very well and deserved more goals," he said, adding that he was surprised that Liverpool played so defensively. "It's the first time under Arne Slot that they have played with five defenders this season."

Accepting his team was outplayed, Slot explained his decision to be so cautious.

"They have pace from everywhere all over the pitch, no matter where you look," he said. "They have so many weapons, and the times when we tried to play high and aggressive, they ripped us apart."

When the two teams met last season in the round of 16, PSG advanced on penalties after losing 1-0 at home and winning 1-0 at Anfield.

The task seems less difficult for PSG this time, with Liverpool facing a trophyless season. However, six-time champion Liverpool overcame a 3-0 first-leg loss to Barcelona in the 2019 semifinals, then won 4-0 at home.

The second leg is next Tuesday at Anfield.

"I've been through many special evenings at Anfield," Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk told TNT Sports. "Our fans are the backbone of the club, and hopefully they can be there for us again."

It could be another busy night for Liverpool, even at home.

"We're not going there to defend, that's not in our mentality," Luis Enrique said. "But we know there will be moments when we will suffer at Anfield. I know that, having been there many times as a player and a coach."

Slot's team was reeling from a crushing 4-0 FA Cup defeat to Manchester City, but was better led in defense. With Allison still injured, Giorgi Mamardashvili - Kvaratskhelia's teammate on the Georgia national team - continued in goal for Liverpool.

Dembélé showed great technique on the edge of the penalty area before flicking the ball left to Doué, whose deflected shot looped over Mamardashvili and under the crossbar.

Mamardashvili atoned with a fine close-range save late in the first half from Doué, again set up by Dembélé.

Another flowing PSG move moments later ended with Dembélé fluffing



PSG players celebrate at the end of the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Liverpool in Paris. (AP)

his shot. But a worse finish followed, and Dembélé held his head in his hands after blazing over from close range in the 53rd following a cut back by Nuno Mendes.

Dembélé hit the post late on.

Slot made five substitutions but kept Mohamed Salah on the bench the whole game.

"In the last part of the game, it was about surviving for us," Slot said, explain-

ing why Salah did not come on. "Mo has so many qualities, but to be defending 25 minutes inside his own box, Mo should save energy for matches to come."

Hugo Ekitiké led the attack against his old club and shot wide early in the second half.

Liverpool striker Alexander Isak - the British-record signing for 125 million pounds (\$170 million) - came on in the 78th on his comeback from a broken ankle.

Barcelona faces uphill task in Madrid to end 11-year European Cup drought

Atletico silences Camp Nou to seize advantage

BARCELONA, Spain, April 9, (AP): Atletico Madrid scored twice after Barcelona was reduced to 10 men to earn a valuable 2-0 road win and take the advantage in their Champions League quarterfinal.

A superb free kick by Julián Álvarez and a second goal by Alexander Sorloth gave Diego Simeone his first win at Camp Nou since Atletico's long-standing coach started his stint with the club 15 years ago.

"I don't think my Atleti had ever won at Camp Nou," said Simeone, whose Atletico had won at Barcelona when it played at the Olympic Stadium in 2024 but never at Camp Nou.

"They're arguably the best team in Europe, along with Paris (PSG) and Bayern (Munich). Through good teamwork, we were able to capitalize on key moments in the match."

Barcelona had hemmed Atletico into its box when the hosts received a double blow that left Hansi Flick's team down a man and behind a goal just before halftime.

The game-changing sequence started when Atletico's Giuliano Simeone broke free to latch onto a rare long ball and Barcelona defender Pau Cubarsí knocked him down on the edge of the area with only goalkeeper Joan García to beat. After initially showing Cubarsí a yellow card, the referee changed it to a red following a video review.

It got worse for Barcelona seconds later when Álvarez curled the resulting free kick around the defensive barrier and past a flying García for the 45th-minute lead.

Lamine Yamal and Marcus Rashford tried to rally Barcelona at Camp Nou and kept the pressure on Atletico de-

spite being undermanned.

But that fightback effort was undone when substitute Sorloth shrugged off a challenge by Gerard Martín as he moved to the near post and tapped in a cross from Matteo Ruggeri to double the lead with 20 minutes to play.

Barcelona's hopes of ending an 11-year wait to add to its five European Cups now rest on mounting a big win in Madrid on Tuesday.

Barcelona has won five European Cups, and Atletico has lost three finals, and the Catalan club has a better overall head-to-head record over Simeone's team. Yet when it comes to the Champions League, Atletico has found the edge. Simeone's bunch got the better of a star-studded Barcelona led by Lionel Messi at the same stage in the competition in 2014 and 2016.

And another masterclass in Sime-

one's bend-but-don't-break soccer has stumped a Barcelona led by a Yamal who drew oohs and aahs from Barcelona's fans with his fancy dribbling, but was visibly frustrated he couldn't conjure up that shooting angle or perfect pass.

Atletico remained disciplined in defense, happy even when up a man to let Barcelona maintain possession, and made the most of its chances.

Barcelona generated 19 shots to Atletico's five, which included just one in the second half - when Sorloth rumbled past his marker to double the lead.

A clean sheet and two goals in the bag.

"We are heading home happy for the win, but we still have a long way to go. There are 90 minutes ahead," Atletico forward Antoine Griezmann said.

Atletico lost central defender David Hancko - the team's most used player this season - to what looked like a leg injury on the half-hour mark. He was replaced by Marc Pubill, and the defense didn't notice the difference.

Rashford couldn't make the most of his start in place of the injured Raphinha despite generating the most dangerous opportunities of either side with the score still 0-0. The on-loan Manchester United forward had three shots inside the area that were saved by goalkeeper Juan Musso, before Atletico went ahead, and a free kick in the second half that grazed the bar.

Barcelona midfielder Pedri González was replaced at halftime, Flick said, for precautionary reasons without specifying his complaint.

Álvarez's goal was his 15th in his last 18 matches in Europe's elite club competition.

It was also the Argentina striker's ninth goal in the competition this campaign, making him the highest scoring Atletico player in a single Champions League season.

The game at Camp Nou was the second of three meetings between Barcelona and Atletico in 11 days. Barcelona won 2-1 away in the Spanish league to strengthen its league lead on Saturday. In February, Atletico also edged Barcelona in the Copa del Rey semifinals.



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, left, challenges for the ball with Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez during the Champions League quarterfinal first leg soccer match between Barcelona and Atletico Madrid in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Real coach defends players ahead of Girona game

MADRID, April 9, (Xinhua): Real Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa defended his players' attitude and announced changes to his starting lineup ahead of Friday night's La Liga game at home to Girona.

Real Madrid goes into the match after Tuesday night's 2-1 home defeat to Bayern Munich in the Champions League and a 2-1 La Liga loss in Mallorca last weekend, which left Arbeloa's side seven points behind Barcelona in the standings with eight games to play.

Asked whether another defeat would effectively end his side's title hopes, Arbeloa insisted the players "know that every game is vital and there is less margin for error." Arbeloa said the importance of next

Wednesday's trip to Munich would not distract from Friday's game against a rival that still has work to do to secure safety from relegation.

"The players are the first who want to play, because they know Tuesday's result wasn't what we expected. I have spoken to most of them and they want to play and offer a win to the fans," he insisted.

The Real Madrid coach also rejected suggestions that some players lacked commitment.

"It is vital in life to have a good attitude and commitment. The players are the best in the world, but talent alone isn't enough if we want to be consistent," he said.

The coach also had special words for midfielder Eduardo Camavinga, who was singled out for criti-

cism after the last two defeats.

"He has played a lot under me and he will start tomorrow (Friday). He is an important player for me and for the club, and he has shown the quality he has. He has the confidence of everyone at the club, including the coach," said Arbeloa.

Finally, Arbeloa announced changes to Friday's side, with Jude Bellingham and Eder Militao coming into the starting lineup, although he explained that Ferland Mendy's muscle injury meant he would have to "wait until Wednesday." Girona won at home to Villarreal Monday night, but will be without top scorer Vladislav Vanat, who will miss the rest of the season after tearing a hamstring.

Al-Ittihad stumbles in Saudi League

Al-Hilal routs Al-Kholood to close gap on Al-Nassr



Karim Benzema celebrates after scoring against Al-Kholood.

RIYADH, April 9: Al Hilal delivered a commanding 6-0 victory over Al-Kholood in a rescheduled match from the 29th round of the Saudi Professional League.

The win boosted Al Hilal to 68 points, just two behind league leaders Al Nassr, who face Al-Kholood on Saturday. The victory also allowed Al Hilal to leapfrog Al Ahli, who dropped to third after a 1-1 draw with Al-Fayha, now ninth with 34 points.

Muteb Al-Harbi opened the scoring in the 7th minute, and French star Karim Benzema quickly added a second goal. Benzema completed his hat-trick with a third in the 31st minute and scored a fourth in first-

half stoppage time. Captain Salem Al-Dawsari extended the lead in the 55th minute, with Brazilian Marcos Leonardo adding a sixth in the 76th minute.

Al Hilal will now prepare to face Al Sadd from Qatar on Monday in the Round of 16 of the AFC Champions League Elite. Al-Kholood remains 14th with 26 points following the heavy defeat.

Elsewhere, Neom secured a thrilling 4-3 win over Al Ittihad in another rescheduled 29th-round clash. The victory moved Neom up to eighth with 39 points, while defending champions Al Ittihad remain sixth with 45 points.

Best of the Rest

First world champ in men's discus dies: Imrich Bugár, the first world champion in men's discus and an Olympic medalist for Czechoslovakia, has died. He was 70.

His former club, Dukla, said he died Wednesday but did not disclose the cause of death.

Bugár was born in Ohrady on April 14, 1955 to a Hungarian family in what is now southern Slovakia and was a leading figure in discus in the 1980s.

He won gold at the inaugural IAAF world athletics championships in Helsinki in 1983 with a throw of 67.72 meters. That year, he cleared 70 meters at a different event and his personal best of 71.26 from 1985 still stands as the Czech record.

A silver medalist at the Moscow Olympics in 1980, he was denied the chance of another medal at the 1984 Los Angeles Games because of a boycott by the Soviet Union and its satellites behind the Iron Curtain.

Bugár learned about the decision at a training camp in California. "I was not ready to take it," the Dukla announcement quoted him as saying. "I was the best in the world then."

The Soviet Union said the safety of its athletes was a reason for the move generally understood to be a revenge for the U.S. boycott of the Moscow Games.

Bugár remembered he challenged the propaganda and told a communist leader that "the only thing I saw in the United States linked to the Soviet Union was an ad for the Russian vodka." He was advised not to talk about it.

He retired in 1995.

In 2006, he denied media reports he was involved in the state-sponsored doping program under communism and that he had tested positive for anabolic steroids in secret testing before the 1987 world championship in Rome.

He finished seventh at that worlds. (AP)