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Opinion

When Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was asked where his nation is, he replied, 'Wherever there is a mosque'

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

WHO are the people of Kuwait?

The people of Kuwait are her children. They are Kuwaitis, residents, illegal residents (Bedoun), and those whose Kuwaiti identity has been revoked and who remain without identity.

A Kuwaiti is everyone loyal to the nation and its

leadership, and therefore any resident living on its land and respecting its laws.

This truth has been clearly demonstrated over the past four centuries, especially during difficult times, when conspiracies were plotted, both before and after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The aforementioned truth was further proven when the Iranian regime began targeting the stability of the region, particularly Kuwait, as sectarian terrorist groups carried out attacks in Kuwait, bombing civilian facilities and attempting to assassinate the late Amir, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad (May God have mercy on him).

National loyalty has always been the solid foundation upon which many attempts at Iranian terrorism have failed. This terrorism coincided with Khomei-

ni's rise to power and his adoption of the slogan of exporting the sectarian revolution and forming terrorist organizations from all sects.

Kuwaitis have witnessed firsthand the harsh realities and destabilizing models linked to the Tehran regime in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and some Gulf states, aimed at undermining their security.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have consistently stood firm, successfully thwarting the Iranian regime's schemes.

Kuwait has endured a bitter experience. Nevertheless, it has emerged victorious each time thanks to its unwavering faith in the nation. Despite a few shortcomings, the vigilance of the security services and the strength of state institutions have repelled all attempts and defeated those who support and stand

behind these terrorist gangs.

Yes, this is the true Kuwait, where no one compromises their loyalty to this land and their loyalty to the political leadership.

The motto "God, Nation, Amir" is not just a slogan... It is a deeply held belief and a daily practice for everyone. I mean every person on this land, regardless of their faith, because they understand that loyalty is non-negotiable.

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DECREES STRIP KUWAITI CITIZENSHIP FROM 2,182

Revised law redefines who qualifies as Kuwaiti citizen

Major legal shift recasts family-based citizenship rights

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Three decrees on the revocation of the Kuwaiti citizenship of 2,182 individuals were published in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm', on Monday as follows:

- Decree No. 22/2026 revokes citizenship from two individuals and those who acquired it by dependency.

- Decree No. 23/2026 revokes citizenship from 1,104 individuals and those who acquired it by dependency.

- Decree No. 24/2026 revokes citizenship from 1,076 individuals and those who acquired it by dependency.

Meanwhile, Decree-Law No. 52/2026 amending certain provisions of Amiri Decree No.

15/1959 on the Kuwaiti Citizenship Law was published in 'Kuwait Al-Youm', specifically Supplement No. 2 of Issue No. 1786, on Monday.

The decree-law, which consists of five articles, along with its explanatory memorandum, is a revision of the legislative framework regulating Kuwaiti citizenship in a way that ensures balance between safeguarding the national fabric and humanitarian and social considerations, while ensuring that the State exercises its sovereign powers on granting, losing, withdrawing and revoking citizenship, but within clear limits and explicit legal controls.

It stipulates the replacement of several important articles in the existing law, amendment of some phrases that contradict the current regulations, and cancellation of some provisions that were found unnecessary or in contradiction with the new legislative framework.

Article One of the decree-law states the replacement of articles 1, 7, 7bis A, 10, 11, 11bis, 12, 13, 14, Paragraph Three of 16, Paragraph Two of 20, 21bis A, 21bis B, 22 and 23 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959.

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Ministry of Defense photos show Kuwait's Defense Minister visiting an injured service member.

Medical staff praised

Defense Minister visits victim of hostile attack

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Monday visited an injured member of the armed forces in a recent hostile attack to check on his health and the medical care provided.

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UK backs Kuwait defense readiness

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The British Embassy in Kuwait affirmed its unwavering commitment to maintain the security of the State of Kuwait, welcoming the ceasefire announcement and its positive implications for de-escalation.

In a statement published on its Instagram account, the embassy revealed that it hosted members of the Royal Air Force regiment last week who are supporting the deployment of the Rapid Sentry system, which contributes to enhancing the air defense capabilities of Kuwait, particularly against drone threats.

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St. Mark's Cathedral celebrates Easter amid prayers for Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: In a solemn and spiritually uplifting scene overflowing with faith and hope, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Kuwait held the Easter Mass on Saturday evening. Prayers and hymns rose, calling for peace and tranquility for all humanity.



Father Bishop

According to a press release issued by the church, the Mass was held under special organizational arrangements. The church limited the service to priests and church staff, without the presence of parishioners or receiving well-wishers or guests, either during the Mass or the following morning.

This decision was made in consideration of the current circumstances, in recognition of the national and humanitarian responsibility imposed by the current situation, and in line with a spirit of solidarity and awareness of

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Day by Day

OBVIOUS things can reveal hidden truths. For example, if your dog starts barking at you, it might mean someone else has been feeding it. Perhaps the other person is giving it better food, or maybe they treat it more kindly and don't harm it the way you might.

This suggests your dog feels more comfortable with someone else. That's life - give and take. And the best tends to go to the best.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Gulf Bank returns to creating millionaires and announces 272 winners in the postponed 2025 draws



KFW crowned Best and Safest Private Bank in Kuwait & Middle East Gulf Gulf



Warba Bank supports 'Zahrat Al Arfaj' initiative

NO BLIPS, JUST BLUE OVER KUWAIT

US military poised to blockade Iranian ports, Tehran threatens Mideast ports

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Interior affirmed on Monday that the country's airspace remains safe, noting that no threats or risks were detected over the past 24 hours.

Director General of the General Department of Security Relations and Media, Interior Ministry spokesperson Brigadier Nasser Bouslaib said during a media briefing that this comes amid high defensive readiness.

He added that the armed forces are closely monitoring regional developments within the framework



Oil tankers and cargo ships line up in the Strait of Hormuz as seen from Khor Fakkan, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, March 11, 2026. (AP)

of continuous coordination and full preparedness with relevant state entities, reflecting sustained presence and readiness.

Brigadier Bouslaib stressed the importance of preserving national unity as a fundamental pillar of security and stability, urging all to reject sectarianism, factionalism, and tribalism in all forms due to their negative impact on social cohesion and national unity.

He underscored that adherence to the law, rejection of hate speech, and cooperation with competent authorities

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PAM handles 2 worker gatherings in two days, refers case for legal action

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) announced that it dealt with two cases of worker gatherings on two consecutive days, as part of its ongoing efforts to protect workers' rights and regulate the labor market in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, represented by the Public Security Sector.

In a press statement, PAM explained that the relevant authorities received a report from the Public Security

Sector indicating a gathering of more than 400 workers.

A team from the Labor Relations Department and the team specializing in collective and field complaints went to the site and dealt with the situation, dispersing the gathering in coordination with security leaders.

PAM stated that it had interviewed several workers to determine the reasons for the gathering, and they revealed there were disagreements between them and their employers. Consequently, the employers were summoned, and the

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MEWRE on toes 24/7 to fix debris-hit electricity lines

Ministry staff hailed as 'beacon of light' in conflict

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEWRE) efficiently dealt with escalating regional tensions by immediately implementing its extensive emergency plan.

Since the initial hours of the conflict, the ministry followed high-level directives to safeguard essential services. It ensured its operational readiness by deploying rapid-response teams to pre-assigned strategic sites. This proactive approach allowed for an instantaneous response to regional developments, effectively stabilizing the electricity and water supplies of the nation.

The ministry's staff showcased exceptional preparedness, acting as 'beacons of light' for the nation during this period of conflict. Their tremendous efforts ensured that

critical services remained functional and uninterrupted. Acting Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan convened an emergency session with senior leaders on Feb 28. They evaluated the current situation and ensured the readiness of vital utility systems amidst sensitive regional changes.

On March 1, Al-Mashaan visited the National Control Center to assess the status of the power grid after drone interception debris caused several overhead power lines to malfunction.

During this inspection, the ministry reported that falling debris caused a minor fire on a fuel tank at the Doha West Power and Water Distillation Station.

The ministry indicated that on March 3 falling debris from drone



Dr. Al-Mashaan



Dr. Al-Mukhaizeem

interceptions disabled two more overhead transmission lines in the southern part of the country. On March 4, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem met with the Emergency Plan Implementation Committee to monitor the situation and review the sector-wide preparedness.

Simultaneously, the ministry confirmed that five of the nine damaged transmission lines were repaired and reactivated.

On March 5-6, Al-Mukhaizeem conducted repeated inspections in the shelters of the ministry to verify their readiness under the current conditions.

On March 7, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah, accompanied by Al-Mukhaizeem, inspected the National Water Control Center. His Highness

assessed the water system and was briefed on network stability and the teams' readiness to implement emergency and preventative measures.

On March 9, the emergency and safety teams quickly dealt with a minor fire at the Subiya Power and Water Distillation Plant's fuel tank. Al-Mukhaizeem later visited the plant to look into the technical damage.

On March 12, six overhead power lines were disabled by drone debris, causing power outage in some parts of the country, during which the ministry restored power in record time.

Technical teams restored three lines on March 14 and two more on March 15, putting five out of six damaged lines back into service and an additional line was reactivated on March 20.

On March 23, Al-Mukhaizeem reviewed the operations at the Doha East and West desalination plants to ensure their readiness.

On March 24, seven more transmission lines were disabled due to air defense debris.

On March 25, repairs were completed in several of these lines, with four resuming operations.



Capital Governorate photo
Capital Governor, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali, received the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Kuwait, Salah Al-Maliki, at his office at the Capital Governorate's headquarters.

Capital Gov., Bahrain envoy eye boost in ties between 2 nations

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Capital Governor, Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali, received the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Kuwait, Salah Al-Maliki, at his office at the Capital Governorate's headquarters, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the deep-rooted historical and fraternal relations between the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Bahrain, and discussed ways to enhance and develop joint cooperation in various fields.

Governor Sheikh Abdullah emphasized the depth and strength of the ties that bind the two leaderships and the two brotherly peoples, stressing the importance of continued coordination and the exchange of visits and expertise to contribute to strengthening joint

work and developing institutional performance.

Ambassador Al-Maliki expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Capital Governor, commending the efforts exerted by the governorate.

He praised the significant role played by the relevant authorities during the past period, thanks to the directives of the political leadership and the diligent follow-up of the government.

The ambassador emphasized that the Kingdom of Bahrain and the State of Kuwait are one country and one people. What affects Bahrain affects Kuwait, and what affects Kuwait affects Bahrain.

He prayed to God Almighty to protect the two brotherly countries and grant them continued security and safety.

'Avert using of public platforms'

Calls grow to respect privacy of 'niqab-clad' students

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Calls have resurfaced within academic circles to respect the privacy of female students who wear the 'niqab', particularly in light of the growing reliance on e-learning and remote examinations.

Experts stressed that safeguarding societal values does not contradict maintaining the integrity of the educational process, as this rather reinforces it.

Dean of the College of Life Sciences Ahmad Al-Lafi affirmed that respecting the privacy of female students who wear the 'niqab' is mandatory. He added that identity verification through secure platforms such as Moodle – under female supervision when necessary – is sufficient. He pointed out that on public platforms like Microsoft Teams, students are not allowed to reveal

their faces in the presence of male students or faculty members.

Meanwhile, academic sources stated that the privacy of female students who wear the 'niqab' is a fundamental right that must be protected within the educational environment, whether in person or online. They stated that verifying a student's identity can be conducted in a secure and organized manner without compromising this privacy. They explained that the use of accredited educational platforms such as Moodle offers appropriate verification mechanisms, particularly when the process is conducted under female supervision when required. They added this ensures a balance between the demands of academic discipline and respect for privacy.

On the other hand, the same sources warned against the use of public platforms in this context, especially those that do not offer adequate privacy, such as Microsoft Teams. They empha-

sized that female students should not be compelled to uncover their faces in the presence of male students or faculty members, as this is a breach of their privacy and contradicts societal norms.

Sources stressed that educational institutions are required to implement clear policies governing identity verification mechanisms in distance learning, taking into account cultural and social considerations while ensuring student privacy.

They also called for training faculty members in the use of appropriate technological tools that can achieve this balance without compromising either aspect, stressing that technological progress must align with respect for societal values.

They asserted that the success of digital education is measured not only by its efficiency, but also by its ability to accommodate all student groups within a secure environment, which respects their privacy and upholds their rights.

Surge in scam calls targeting phones in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: There has been a surge in suspicious international phone calls received by Kuwaiti citizens and residents in recent days, confirming that these calls are part of an organized global cyber scam, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to informed security sources, these calls often consist of a single ring followed by an immediate disconnection, a tactic known internationally as the "Wangiri Scam," meaning "one ring, then run."

Scammers use automated calling systems to contact thousands of numbers worldwide. When the victim answers or calls back, the call is redirected to expensive international numbers. The

scam takes several forms, including keeping the caller on hold through voice messages or automated transfers, resulting in exorbitant per-minute charges, sometimes reaching several dinars per minute, without the caller realizing it.

Some of these calls aim to record the victim's voice so it can be used later in other scams, such as obtaining voice approval for paid services or fake financial transactions.

Some fraudulent networks later send text messages containing fake links claiming to be related to mail shipments, account updates, or other information. Clicking on the link can lead to phone hacking or the theft of personal data.

The sources revealed that most of these calls appear to originate from numbers in neighboring countries, but they often actually originate from island nations in the Pacific Ocean, African countries, and some Eastern European countries.

They urged people not to answer calls from foreign numbers, especially if they do not have relatives in those areas. They advised ignoring calls that ring only once, not clicking on links from unknown numbers, and immediately blocking any suspicious numbers.

The sources emphasized that some calls may seem ordinary, but they could be the beginning of an organized cyber fraud operation.



Farwaniya Governorate photo
A girl student presents a model of the 'Al-Arfaj flower' to Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah.

School staff, students express support for 'Al-Arfaj' campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Farwaniya Governor, Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, received a teacher and a student from Khawla Bint Tha'labah Primary School for Girls on Monday morning at the Farwaniya Governorate headquarters.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, this visit was part of an initiative by the school, represented by its principal, Niran Rashid Al-Anzi, to support the national "Al-Arfaj" campaign.

The gifted students' team was represented by teacher Mona Al-Musailim, the team leader, and student Moudhi Mufrej Al-Musailim.

The student presented a model of the "Al-Arfaj flower," a symbol of resilience and steadfastness, in a powerful national mes-

sage. The governor also received an initiative from a teacher at Umm Amer Al-Ansariyah High School for Girls. She presented an artwork as part of the Ministry of Education's "From the Hearts of Our Children ... To the Heroes of the Nation" campaign, under the supervision of teacher Mai Al-Harshani and with the support of the school's principal, Salima Awad Al-Anzi.

The governor expressed his gratitude for these initiatives, praised the efforts of the schools and their teaching staff, and commended the messages of appreciation and dedication they convey, as they reflect their commitment to participating in such national campaigns.

Sleuths nab Asian expats for embezzling revenues

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Hawally detectives have closed a breach of trust case after arresting two Asian expatriates involved in embezzling the revenues of the company where they worked, before transferring the money abroad, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, the manager of a food company filed a report at Maidan Hawally police station, stating that the company had been the victim of embezzlement after the two suspects embezzled approximately KD 1,800 of the company's revenues over a two-month period.

Following investigations and information gathering, suspicions were confirmed regarding the accused, leading to their arrest. Upon questioning, they confessed to the crime, explaining that they had taken the money and not deposited it into the accounting department, but rather transferred it out of the country.

In the same context, a security source emphasized the importance of intensifying financial auditing and internal control procedures in companies, especially regarding daily revenue transactions, to reduce such crimes and ensure the quick detection of any irregularities.

Guardian authorized: Attorney Ali Al-Hussainan said the Family Court ruled in favor of a citizen acting as the legal guardian for her minor daughter, granting official authorization to sell the share of the minor in her late grandmother's real estate assets, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Al-Hussainan disclosed that the court emphasized in its reasoning that the transaction serves the interest of the minor by facilitating the dissolution of joint ownership among the heirs while safeguarding her financial entitlements.

The court stressed that the Kuwaiti law accorded special attention to protecting the assets of minors, establishing the necessary legal frameworks to ensure their properties are managed and preserved in accordance with the law.

Al-Hussainan commended the integrity and impartiality of Kuwaiti judiciary in resolving family-related cases, reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring the restoration of rights.

Trial postponed till May 4

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Court of Cassation postponed the trial of former Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled until May 4 to allow further discussion of the testimony of the witness in the two embezzlement cases, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The court made the decision after hearing the testimony of the witness on Monday.

The defense requested for more time to respond and comment on the statements of the witness. The court granted the request, setting the next session to continue hearing the case.

Other Voices

What does Trita Parsi say?

By Ahmad alsarraf

Trita Parsi is a political analyst and American writer of Iranian descent and Zoroastrian faith. He was born in Ahvaz in 1974 to a dissident family. His father was imprisoned during both the Shah's rule and later under Khomeini's rule.

The family fled to Sweden, and from there he moved to the United States, where he co-founded a Washington-based think tank that advocates for a less interventionist US foreign policy.

He also founded the National Iranian American Council and holds a PhD in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University.

Fukuyama and Brzezinski were among his mentors. He is known for his writings on Iranian-American-Israeli relations, including "The Treacherous Alliance: Secret Deals Between Israel, Iran, and the United States" and "One Throw of the Dice" about Obama's diplomacy with Iran. His books are widely cited.

In his book "The Treacherous Alliance," Parsi argues that Israeli-Iranian hostility is primarily driven by geopolitical shifts and power dynamics, rather than fixed ideologies or religions. According to this view, state policies are shaped mainly by strategic interests, while ideology plays a secondary role.

Parsi believes that the major transformations in Israeli-Iranian relations, from cooperation under the Shah to outright hostility under the Islamic Republic, coincided with significant changes in the regional order, rather than purely religious shifts.

The history of tacit cooperation between Israel and Iran is long. Parsi describes the Shah's Iran and Israel as an "alliance," given that they were both non-Arab, pro-Western states cooperating against common Arab adversaries.

Under the Shah, Iran cooperated with Israel on security and economic matters, including intelligence sharing, joint support for Iraqi Kurds, oil deals, missile programs, and Israeli training of Iranian forces. Relations were severed with Khomeini's rise to power in Iran, which adopted a strongly anti-Zionist stance. Iran subsequently tolerated and dealt with Israel when it served its own interests, as illustrated by the Iran-Contra affair.

Parsi argues that Iran's support for Palestinian militant groups was partly a means of gaining influence, rather than purely an act of ideological solidarity. With the end of the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Israel and Iran emerged as two major powers competing for regional influence.

He contends that Israeli governments, particularly since 1992, have actively worked to portray Iran as a global existential threat, driven by the need to establish a

central source of threat to solidify their relationship with the United States.

Parsi states that Israel has thwarted Iran's attempts at rapprochement with the United States, despite instances of Iran's cooperation with Israel on issues such as hostages in Lebanon and Afghanistan.

From his academic website, Parsi wrote an article about the fragile ceasefire agreement, outlining Iran's conditions:

- A US commitment to guarantee non-aggression against Iran
- Continued Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz
- Acceptance of Iran's uranium enrichment
- Lifting all sanctions imposed on Iran
- Lifting of sanctions imposed on parties cooperating with Iran
- Cancellation of all UN Security Council resolutions targeting Iran
- Cancellation of all IAEA resolutions concerning its nuclear program
- Payment of compensation to Iran
- Withdrawal of US forces from the region
- A ceasefire on all fronts, including Lebanon

Parsi noted that the US did not agree to the aforementioned conditions, but their mere existence as a basis for negotiations constitutes a diplomatic victory for Tehran, especially given the recognition of Iran's continued control over the Strait of Hormuz during the ceasefire.

Parsi predicted the failure of the upcoming talks in Islamabad between the two sides, arguing that Trump's backing away from the use of force has undermined the credibility of his military threats. While acknowledging that Trump can still brandish the threat of force, he is no longer in a position to dictate terms.

Parsi believes any agreement must be based on genuine compromises, which requires diplomacy, patience, and discipline - qualities not typically associated with Trump.

He also suggests that other powers, such as China, may need to join the negotiations. The sustainability of the ceasefire will depend on Trump's ability to prevent Israel from undermining the diplomatic process, especially after senior Israeli officials described the agreement as a political disaster.

Parsi argues that even if the talks collapse, and even if Israel resumes its bombardment of Iran, Trump will not necessarily return to war. There is no reason to believe a second round of war would produce a different outcome, or that it would not once again leave Iran in a position to hold the global economy hostage.

Parsi asserts that this war was a strategic mistake. Instead of accelerating regime change, it gave the regime a new opportunity to survive, similar to how Saddam Hussein's war in 1980 helped consolidate Khomeini's power.

I believe that, in any case, the region will remain unstable as long as the Iranian regime continues its hostile policies.

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diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Self-reliance is crucial to safeguard GCC interests

"ALTHOUGH the war is not completely over, there are many lessons to be learned that should help reshape future strategy at various levels - domestic, Gulf, regional, Arab, and international. These lessons must remain in the minds of national and Gulf decision-makers," columnist **Sheikh Eng. Fahad Dawood Al-Sabah** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"First, Kuwait demonstrated a remarkable ability to confront aggression with strong national steadfastness. This unity, despite some shortcomings, forms the cornerstone of Kuwait's firm stance against any enemy, regardless of its source.

Second, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states demonstrated solid unity in confronting the aggression. This unified stance is based on a rich cultural and social heritage that has shaped a shared destiny over decades. This heritage can be built upon and serve as the foundation for unified strength in several areas that cannot be overcome individually.

"The unity of the Gulf states will be a decisive factor in future equations, both economically and politically. Another lesson to be learned is the importance of strategic independence, as the Gulf states have realized that traditional alliances are no longer sufficient. Therefore, in the post-war period, it is necessary to seek new foundations for alliances based on a careful balance that prioritizes Gulf interests above all else.

"Another lesson is the importance of balanced diplomacy and avoiding direct involvement in conflicts, while focusing on playing a mediating role to de-escalate tensions and protect national gains. Despite being subjected to attacks, the Gulf states acted as impartial mediators among all disputing parties. This is an advantage that enables them to address problems calmly and earn the trust of all parties.

"Although the Gulf states incurred significant losses due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, this may also prove to be an advantage, prompting them to seek alternative energy supply routes to the world without losses or obstacles, and away from the tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. The development of alternative pipelines and logistical ports overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea should be expedited to secure oil and gas flows and bypass these bottlenecks.

"During this war, the most important lesson learned was that relying on imports for up to 90 percent of our needs is a security vulnerability. Therefore, developing economic efficiency through improved local storage and increased domestic production has become essential. The crisis demonstrated that total dependence on the tourism or real estate sectors can be quickly shaken by any regional conflict, prompting the strengthening of technology, innovation, and artificial intelligence as alternative pillars of national stability.

"Today, there is a conviction that security threats affect everyone without exception. Strengthening the trend toward structured integration rather than loose cooperation should be a goal. This integration should cover important areas such as electrical interconnection, harmonized customs policies, water security, and the financial and banking sectors. Cybersecurity has become a top priority, no less important than military defense."



Al-Sabah

during peak agricultural seasons.

"The recent emergency situation in the region, particularly in Kuwait, highlighted the importance of local agricultural production. Farmers have recognized the significance of their work and their crucial role in securing the most essential element of life, which is food. They have taken the initiative to demonstrate the value of their production and its role in mitigating the crisis and stabilizing markets, competing to increase output and ensure availability.

"Such crises underscore the need to review the vital agricultural sector, conduct studies, and implement measures to strengthen both the plant and animal sectors. This includes providing all forms of support and assistance, especially following the remarkable success of farmers in transforming the desert into productive farms, abundant with high-quality fruits and vegetables at prices more affordable than those offered by foreign traders and suppliers.

"Through these field visits conducted under challenging circumstances, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources highlights the importance of the agricultural sector in both its plant and animal components. It reaffirms its commitment to supporting local farmers and producers, ensuring their role as guarantors of local food security and as a crucial resource during crises and disasters."

"During the recent war involving the United States and Israel on one side and Iran on the other, it was expected that Tehran would retaliate against Israel. However, it instead attacked the Arab Gulf states under the pretext of the presence of American bases," Eng. **Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi** wrote for *Al-Seyassah* daily.

"Iran targeted civilian and economic facilities, demonstrating a premeditated intent against the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The response of the Gulf armies was notable, marked by significant courage and a strong capacity to counter Iranian aggression. The Gulf states did not target the sites from which the Iranian bombardment originated, as they are defensive states rather than offensive ones, and they do not pursue regional political projects like Tehran.

"The Gulf states adhere to international law and maintain good-neighboring relations, principles that Iran and its proxies in the region have violated. Today, our issue is not only Iran, but also its proxies in several Arab countries. We believed that these countries were sovereign, but they have proven otherwise. Iran's proxy forces have caused havoc in the region and continue to threaten regional security.

"There is no doubt that these Iranian proxies do not act without instructions from Tehran, which seeks to limit any truce to itself, the United States, and Israel. This is a serious matter that the GCC states must take into account. They must be key players in the new regional equations and must not accept negotiations without their participation.

"We must examine the slogans that the Iranian regime has been promoting since 1979, particularly the "liberation of Palestine" and the mobilization efforts surrounding it. The ten points currently under discussion in Islamabad make no mention of Palestine; rather, they focus solely on Iran's own interests. Arabs who still believe these Iranian slogans are ignoring the obvious reality. Despite being Arabs, some have stood against other Arabs in confronting Iranian aggression.

"For 47 years, Iran has continued its brainwashing campaigns aimed at shaping the views of many elites throughout the Arab world. During the last war, I encountered many Arabs who were strongly supportive of Iran, to the extent that they launched campaigns accusing the Gulf states and their people of treason for defending themselves. We must work to challenge the political and cultural theories that have prevailed for five decades, and even before that.

"The Gulf states are often blamed, while the other side is portrayed as innocent, when in reality the opposite is true. Iran has raised slogans without making any real effort to implement them, instead continuing to mislead the short-sighted in order to promote its own regional projects.

"Where is Palestine on the negotiating table now, between Tehran and Washington in Islamabad? Have the Arabs who stood with Iran in the last war realized the situation? Iran continues its aggression against the Gulf states despite the ceasefire. Does this serve the Palestinian cause? What has the Iranian regime offered Palestine, while the Gulf states have made the establishment of a Palestinian state the first condition for peace with Israel since the 1980s, long before the current Iranian regime came to power?

"Is the Palestinian cause and the suffering in Gaza on the mind of the Iranian negotiator? Today, the Gulf states are concerned with all these details. Moreover, the Gulf states should adopt a different approach to inter-Arab relations. What transpired in the recent war demonstrates that present-day Iran is solely concerned with preserving its proxies, such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iraqi militias. This underscores Iran's adherence to the so-called principle of exporting the revolution."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty

Construction sites under stringent scrutiny

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Public Relations Department of Kuwait Municipality announced that safety inspection teams in all governorates conducted field visits to inspect construction work, ensure the availability of safety and security measures, and monitor

violations at construction and renovation sites, reports *Al-Seyassah* daily.

In a statement, the department explained that the safety inspection team in Farwaniya Governorate carried out field campaigns that resulted in the issuance of 13 safety warnings

after inspecting 20 sites in various areas of the governorate. The aim of these intensive field visits is to inspect construction work, ensure compliance with safety regulations and standards, identify violators, and take all necessary legal measures against them.

Legal bodies to declare 'assets'

MoCI gears up for new rule

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) is moving to introduce a new regulation requiring all legal entities to submit annual financial statements, reports *Al-Rai* daily.

It stressed that legal action will be taken against non-compliant companies and institutions, including the revocation of licenses, after three years of non-compliance.

In this regard, informed sources explained that there are companies and sole proprietorships that are not currently required to submit annual financial statements to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. These include limited partnerships, limited partnerships by shares, and general partnerships.

The ministry's previous non-enforcement of this requirement for certain sole proprietorships, despite their exemption under the Companies Law, is linked to the fact that the rights of limited and general partnerships extend to the assets of the guarantor (the sole proprietor). This allows enforcement of judgments beyond company capital to include personal assets, as the proprietor's private property and accounts can be legally seized to settle debts. This contrasts with limited liability companies and both public and closed joint-stock companies, which are therefore subject to different regulatory requirements regarding the submission of financial statements.

The sources revealed that a regulatory change appears to have been introduced, and under the new procedure, all legal entities, including sole proprietorships of all types, will be required to prepare financial statements at the end of each fiscal year in accordance with approved accounting standards and submit them to the ministry as a mandatory, not optional, requirement.

They said the main purpose of this change is the ministry's efforts to develop the local business environment by provid-

ing regulatory bodies and investors with a clear financial picture of the actual, rather than estimated, performance of the country's commercial sectors. This will facilitate more informed government and investment decisions that reflect the true state of the business environment.

The sources indicated that this move stems from the ministry's commitment to verifying the annual financial statements of companies and sole proprietorships, and establishing an accurate and transparent database that all stakeholders can use in making their decisions.

They stressed that the required regulatory approval of sole proprietorships' financial statements contributes to ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the financial database for all legal entities, while maintaining a complete electronic record of financial data for all entities licensed by the ministry.

It is worth noting that the total number of commercial entities is approximately 151,200.

In order to facilitate services and as part of the ministry's move to digitize all its services, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has begun piloting the XBRL system for the electronic submission of budgets and financial statements. This will become mandatory starting January 1, 2027, as part of efforts to digitize the submission of company budgets through the Kuwait Business Center website, which began with partnerships last July.

Implementing the digitization of company budget submissions at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will lead to the standardization of financial disclosure forms for all companies and improve the quality and accuracy of submitted financial data. It will also facilitate oversight and financial analysis by the relevant authorities, in addition to aligning practices in Kuwait with international standards for electronic financial reporting. Once the XBRL system is officially activated, paper submission of company budgets will be discontinued.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives Farwaniya Security Director Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab.

Governor focuses on local security

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received the Farwaniya Security Director Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governor, during the meeting, was briefed on the most prominent security efforts exerted in the governorate during the current period, and the active role played by the security institutions in maintaining security and order.

The governor commended the huge efforts exerted by security personnel, and appreciated their role in enhancing security and stability and their commitment to performing their duties with utmost efficiency and competence.

Brigadier General Mohammad Eid Al-Ghasab affirmed that the security forces continue to perform their duties with full readiness, monitoring the security situation and taking all necessary measures to ensure everyone's safety.

He praised the governor's support and his keen interest in overseeing various aspects of the security situation.

Kuwait eyes GCC grid power, bill to SAB for review

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy referred the electricity import contract with the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) from May 2026 to March 2027 to the State Audit Bureau (SAB) for review.

This step aims to maintain the stability of the national power grid and prepare for the expected increase in electricity demand, particularly during the summer months.

The electricity import plan, which started in April last year, is one of the precautionary measures being taken to guarantee the availability of electricity during peak periods, taking into consideration the rapid increase in electricity demand.

It includes the implementation of periodic maintenance programs for some power generating units to support local production.

The GCC interconnection projects are among the important regional integration projects in the energy sector, as they make possible the efficient exchange of electricity between GCC countries and serve as the foundation for developing a common Gulf electricity market in the coming years.

Expat manpower

Employer acquitted in case of labor law

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Misdemeanor Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by a lower court which acquitted an employer in a case of labor law violations in the private sector. The charges included bringing in and employing expatriate workers without a genuine need for them.

The acquittal was based on the lack of sufficient evidence.

The case revolved around an employer accused of bringing in expatriate workers from outside Kuwait and employing them despite a lack of actual need for them, in violation of Articles 2/10 and 138 of Law No. 6/2010 concerning labor in the private sector and its amendments.

The charges were based on an inspection report indicating that the registered establishment had no physical location, despite having registered employees on its file.

The defense counsel lawyer Mohammad Al-Jassem maintained the validity of his client's legal position, presenting defenses and evidence that the court deemed sufficient to support the acquittal. The case file lacked conclusive evidence to substantiate the charges.

The court affirmed the validity of the appealed ruling and its conformity with the law. Accordingly, the court decided to reject the appeal and uphold the acquittal.

KPC warns against fake accounts posing as CEO

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has urged the public to be wary of fake accounts impersonating its CEO on some social media platforms, reports *Al-Jarida* daily.

The corporation confirmed that it has no connection whatsoever to these accounts and disclaims any responsibility for any transactions or dealings conducted through them.



Adel Al-Kharafi

being Arabs, some have stood against other Arabs in confronting Iranian aggression.

"For 47 years, Iran has continued its brainwashing campaigns aimed at shaping the views of many elites throughout the Arab world. During the last war, I encountered many Arabs who were strongly supportive of Iran, to the extent that they launched campaigns accusing the Gulf states and their people of treason for defending themselves. We must work to challenge the political and cultural theories that have prevailed for five decades, and even before that.

"The Gulf states are often blamed, while the other side is portrayed as innocent, when in reality the opposite is true. Iran has raised slogans without making any real effort to implement them, instead continuing to mislead the short-sighted in order to promote its own regional projects.

"Where is Palestine on the negotiating table now, between Tehran and Washington in Islamabad? Have the Arabs who stood with Iran in the last war realized the situation? Iran continues its aggression against the Gulf states despite the ceasefire. Does this serve the Palestinian cause? What has the Iranian regime offered Palestine, while the Gulf states have made the establishment of a Palestinian state the first condition for peace with Israel since the 1980s, long before the current Iranian regime came to power?

"Is the Palestinian cause and the suffering in Gaza on the mind of the Iranian negotiator? Today, the Gulf states are concerned with all these details. Moreover, the Gulf states should adopt a different approach to inter-Arab relations. What transpired in the recent war demonstrates that present-day Iran is solely concerned with preserving its proxies, such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iraqi militias. This underscores Iran's adherence to the so-called principle of exporting the revolution."



Al-Jassem



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Yousef Al-Hajri



Mohammed Al-Rantisi

Tributes pour in for Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Al-Seyassah continues to receive congratulations on 57th Anniversary

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Al-Seyassah newspaper continued to receive congratulatory messages on its 57th Anniversary. The messages included praise for the newspaper and its long history, with several political, media, and economic figures affirming that it represents a well-established model of responsible journalism, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Khaled Amer Al-Ajmi, extended congratulations on the 57th Anniversary of Al-Seyassah's founding, emphasizing that the newspaper has solidified its position as one of the most prominent media platforms in Kuwait and has contributed to strengthening national awareness and conveying the truth with professionalism and balance.

Al-Ajmi pointed out that Al-Seyassah represents a model of responsible media based on credibility and objectivity.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Retired Officers Association, re-

tired Major General Faisal Al-Jazzaf, affirmed that Al-Seyassah is one of the most prominent media institutions that has contributed to shaping awareness and consolidating the values of national belonging.

He highlighted the newspaper's role in supporting national and Arab causes and presenting a professional model based on credibility and boldness.

He also praised the career of Editor-in-Chief Ahmed Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah.

Businessman Saad Sartib Al-Shammari stated that Al-Seyassah newspaper's continued publication for over five decades confirms that free speech can shape history and influence public opinion.

He highlighted Al-Seyassah's role in supporting political dialogue and promoting moderate thought, noting that its journalistic experience represents a distinguished model of boldness and clarity.

Media personality Waleed Al-Mutairi congratulated Al-Seyassah newspaper, prais-

ing its excellence in addressing issues at the local, Arab, and international levels, and commending its commitment to truthfulness, balanced reporting, and breaking news.

Dr. Saad Abdullah Al-Jadaan affirmed that Al-Seyassah newspaper has, for decades, served as a platform for truthful expression, contributing to the consolidation of national values and the professional and responsible dissemination of facts, thus becoming a prominent landmark in Kuwaiti and Arab media.

Lawyer Yousef Rashid Al-Hajri lauded Al-Seyassah newspaper's standing, emphasizing that it represents a genuine national voice and a reputable media platform that has successfully conveyed the truth, enriched public awareness, and strengthened professionalism and objectivity in journalistic work.

Journalist Mohammed Al-Rantisi expressed his appreciation for Al-Seyassah newspaper's role in supporting the Palestinian cause, stressing its continued commitment to highlighting just Arab causes and giving them the necessary space.



Sheikh Jarrah



Jaishankar

Kuwait, India FMs tackle evolving regional issues

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received a phone call Monday from Indian counterpart, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

The two examined regional developments and efforts exerted in that regard.

PAAET launches 'Safety Guide'

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) confirmed the issuance of its comprehensive 'Safety Guide.'

This initiative is part of the continuous efforts of PAAET to improve institutional preparedness and raise awareness on security and safety procedures in light of the current regional conditions.

Sheikha Al-Azmi, Director of the Public Relations Department at PAAET, stated that the release of the guide proves the commitment of PAAET to protect its employees and maintain a secure and

stable educational and training environment.

She explained that the guide was prepared in line with the regulations and directives set by the General Directorate of Civil Defense. She said the guide functions as a complete reference that outlines clear mechanisms for handling emergency situations.

She added that the guide includes preventive measures and instructions designed to enhance the field readiness of the staff. "This, in turn, helps ensure the smooth continuation of the educational and training process, while putting the safety of everyone as the top priority under all circumstances," she affirmed.

She pointed out that the Public Relations Department, alongside the launching of the guide, initiated an awareness campaign that includes simplified informational posters. "These materials focus on proper response actions, preventive practices and communication channels, helping to reinforce a culture of awareness and institutional responsibility," she added.



Al-Azmi



KUNA photo

Damietta port is receiving European shipments destined for Gulf markets.

Egypt remains transit point for EU goods entering GCC markets

CAIRO, April 13, (KUNA): Egypt continues to receive European shipments heading to markets in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states through a key trade route connecting Cairo and Italy, the ministry of transport said on Monday.

A shipment laden with some 295 tons of varied goods crossed through a freight route between Egypt's Damietta Port and

Italy's northern Trieste port as part of the joint "Roro" service, enroute to Gulf Arab markets including Kuwait, UAE, Oman and Qatar, according to a ministry statement.

The process has been operating smoothly since its launch in November of 2024 as part of efforts to expedite the trade of produce and goods between Egypt and Europe, it added.

Continued from Page 1

UK backs

It added that the visit included an exchange of views on the system's operation and the level of close cooperation with Kuwaiti partners, reflecting the depth of military coordination between the two sides.

The embassy emphasized that despite the improved security situation, readiness remains crucial, stressing that the United Kingdom continues to support Kuwait in bolstering its defense capabilities and maintaining its security.

Al-Arfaj

the nation brighter and more prosperous, she explained.

Sheikha Nofah reiterated that the initiative aims to express gratitude and appreciation to all Kuwaitis, especially those on the frontlines who formed the first line of defense against challenges.

Such initiatives seek to highlight the values of solidarity and unity that characterize Kuwaiti society, pass them on to future generations as part of the enduring national identity, and deepen feelings of loyalty and devotion to the homeland, she added.

Defense Minister

In a press statement, the Ministry of Defense said that Sheikh Abdullah received briefings from the medical team on the condition of the injured member, commending the efforts of healthcare workers in delivering the necessary treatment.

The minister wished the wounded a speedy recovery and continued health and well-being.

St. Mark's

ongoing events. Father Bigoul Anba Bishoy began his message by emphasizing that this year's celebration comes amid delicate circumstances in the region, which underscores the importance of adhering to the values of faith and hope.

He said the State of Kuwait, throughout its history, has been able to overcome numerous challenges thanks to the wisdom of its leadership, the soundness of its approach, and its well-known balanced stance and values of tolerance, which have earned it respect and a distinguished position on both the humanitarian and international levels.

Father Bishoy affirmed that the Church offers its prayers for God to protect Kuwait and grant it continued security and stability.

He expressed his sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (May God protect and preserve him), for his noble patronage of the values of tolerance and fraternity that characterize Kuwaiti society.

Father Bishoy also expressed his deep appreciation to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah (May God protect him), and to the government of the State of Kuwait, led by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah, for their sincere efforts in consolidating the foundations of security and stability and enhancing the development process.

He commended the wisdom of the Kuwaiti leadership and its balanced approach in dealing with current regional developments, emphasizing that this sound approach reflects a profound vision and a strong sense of responsibility in protecting the homeland and reinforces Kuwait's position as an oasis of security and stability in a region witnessing rapidly evolving challenges.

The Patriarch of St. Mark's Cathedral offered his greetings and appreciation to the souls of Kuwait's martyrs, acknowledging their valuable sacrifices in protecting the homeland and preserving its security.

Father Bishoy saluted the Kuwaiti Armed Forces and the National Guard for their role in defending Kuwait.

He praised the efforts of the Ministry of Interior personnel and all security agencies, whose distinguished performance reflected a high level of readiness, vigilance, and commitment to the safety of all.

Father Bishoy also expressed his appreciation for the efforts of various state institutions working in an integrated and harmonious manner to serve society and meet its needs.

He affirmed that the unity of the home front and the unity of the leadership and the people represent the true protection against challenges, and reflect a deep sense of responsibility and belonging to this beloved nation.

In his sermon titled "Tranquility" on this occasion, Father Bishoy emphasized that true tranquility is not tied to external circumstances, no matter how difficult they may be, but rather stems from within and from one's trust in God.

He explained that a person can live in peace even during times of war and challenges, because their life is in God's hands.

Faith grants a person inner peace that makes them steadfast regardless of the changing circumstances. The future is not unknown to those who place their trust in God, because tomorrow is in God's hands.

Anxiety and fear dissipate when a person realizes that God is the Almighty who is capable of protecting them in all circumstances, and that everything God allows is for their good.

Tranquility is a profound inner state stemming from faith, and those who hold fast to God fear neither circumstances nor the future, for God is stronger than all things and is the protector and guardian of human life.

Father Bigoul Anba Bishoy concluded by offering a prayer that God protect the State of Kuwait, its leadership, and its people, and grant them continued security, stability, and prosperity, and that peace may prevail throughout the region and the world.



Weekdays (Saturday - Wednesday)		Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast		BHD 53.361 / Net
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast		BHD 119.173 / Net
Weekends (Thursday & Friday)		Price
One night stay in a Queen Bed Cabana for 2 persons with inclusive of Breakfast		BHD 61.000
One night stay in a Two Bedroom Chalet for 4 persons inclusive of Breakfast		BHD 136.198 / Net

Terms & conditions apply

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When Jamal

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was living in Egypt, where he was resisting British colonialism. When the British authorities decided to expel him, he was asked, "Where is your homeland?" He replied, "My homeland is wherever the mosque is."

This answer carried many meanings that transcend any specific religious identity. Faith is not limited to religious affiliation... it includes a connection to the land and the community.

Nations encompass many people of different religious, ethnic, and racial identities, but in the modern era, all are united within a single nation.

People of different faiths, ethnicities, and religions live in Kuwait, but their loyalty is to this blessed land, which deserves the ultimate sacrifice.

The river's current pays no heed to obstacles, and no one can stop it.

Nevertheless, mistakes sometimes happen. The important thing is that there is always a way to rectify them.

Therefore, those who commit forgery to obtain Kuwaiti citizenship should not be shown leniency.

However, punishment should not extend to innocent individuals simply because they are related to the perpetrator. These people bear no responsibility for what their fathers or grandfathers did.

Allah says in His Holy Book, "Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burdens. If one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load, not the least portion of it can be carried by the other, even if he should be a near relative."

Thus, those who live on this land deserve care because they belong to this land and have no other refuge.

Those who have wronged will be held accountable by God. Those involved in illegal activities should be held accountable individually, and punishment should not extend to the community to which they may belong. Members of a community should not be punished for the mistakes of some of its members. Throughout history, no community has been without individuals committing errors.

Revised law

Article One of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 was replaced after incorporating the provision in Article Two of the same Amiri Decree. The revised article stipulates that Kuwaitis are the founders who resided in Kuwait before 1920 and who stayed there until Dec 14, 1959.

This article also indicates that a Kuwaiti by origin is someone born to a Kuwaiti father, and this includes all those born later, whether the place of birth is inside or outside the State of

Kuwait.

The amended Article Seven does not state that the foreign spouse automatically becomes Kuwaiti upon the foreigner's acquisition of Kuwaiti citizenship under any circumstances. This article deems the minor children to be Kuwaiti by naturalization and allows them to choose their nationality within the year of reaching the age of maturity.

As for children born to the naturalized person after he acquires Kuwaiti nationality, they are considered Kuwaiti by naturalization pursuant to this article, whereas the previous law considered them Kuwaiti by origin.

Article 7bisA states that the Minister of Interior can make a decision to treat a minor born to a Kuwaiti mother as a Kuwaiti until he or she reaches the age of maturity if he or she stayed in Kuwait and if his or her foreign father is imprisoned, or divorced his mother, or passed away.

This article grants the Minister of Interior power to decide to treat as Kuwaiti until reaching the age of maturity anyone born in Kuwait, or abroad, to a Kuwaiti mother, whose father is unknown or whose paternity was not legally established, in addition to anyone born in Kuwait to unknown parents.

Revised Article 10 states that a Kuwaiti woman does not lose her Kuwaiti nationality upon marrying a foreigner unless she obtains her husband's nationality.

Regarding a Kuwaiti woman who is naturalized on the basis of her marriage to a Kuwaiti man, her Kuwaiti citizenship is revoked after the death of her Kuwaiti husband or the termination of the marital relationship for any reason if she has no children.

A woman who has children with her Kuwaiti husband does not lose her Kuwaiti citizenship as long as she does not remarry a non-Kuwaiti. Her citizenship is revoked if she reclaims her original nationality, acquires another nationality, or carries a passport of another country.

Revised Article 11 stipulates that a Kuwaiti -- whether based on Article One of this decree-law or through naturalization -- loses Kuwaiti citizenship if he voluntarily acquires a foreign nationality. Consequently, his wife loses the citizenship if she is a Kuwaiti by naturalization, unless she informs the Minister of Interior of her desire to retain her Kuwaiti citizenship only within a year when she found out about her husband's naturalization. Minor children also lose their Kuwaiti nationality if they are included in their father's new nationality under the law of that nationality, provided that the minor is Kuwaiti as per Article One of this decree-law. They must inform the Minister of Interior of their desire to keep their Kuwaiti citizenship only one year after reaching the age of maturity.

The final paragraph of this article allows the issuance of a decree, based on the proposal of the Minister of Interior and with the approval of the Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigations, to restore Kuwaiti citizenship to any Kuwaiti who lost it, under Article One of this decree-law, provided they stayed legally in Kuwait for at least one year, ask to regain their Kuwaiti citizenship, and relinquish their foreign nationality.

Article 11bis states that those who obtained Kuwaiti nationality through naturalization must renounce their foreign nationality, if they hold another nationality, within three months from the date of obtaining Kuwaiti nationality and must submit proof of this to the Ministry of Interior within that period. Otherwise, the granting of Kuwaiti nationality shall be deemed null and void as of the date of granting.

The amended Article 12 permits the reinstatement of Kuwaiti nationality to a Kuwaiti woman who lost it as a result of acquiring her foreign husband's nationality, in accordance with Article One of this decree-law. The reinstatement is granted by decree upon the termination of the marriage, provided that she requests it and that her usual residence is in Kuwait, or she has returned to reside in Kuwait.

The amended Article 13 specifies the cases in which Kuwaiti nationality may be withdrawn from a foreigner who obtained it through naturalization. The withdrawal shall be issued by decree, based on the proposal of the Minister of Interior and with the approval of the Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigations.

Article 14bis permits the revocation of Kuwaiti nationality by decree, based on the proposal of the Minister of Interior and with the approval of the Supreme Committee for Nationality in the cases specified in this article.

The amended third paragraph of Article 16 stipulates that a person who lost Kuwaiti nationality, or from whom it was withdrawn or revoked, shall be deprived of all the benefits he enjoyed as a result of his acquisition, if the loss, withdrawal or revocation occurred in accordance with Articles 10, 11, 11bis, and Article 13 clauses 2, 3, 5 and 6.

In order to ensure the affirmation of national identity and to eliminate any doubt in matters of nationality, the amended second paragraph of Article 20 permits the use of scientific methods, including DNA testing and biometric identification, in cases of loss, withdrawal or revocation of nationality, in accordance with the rules and regulations as per a decision issued by the Minister of Interior.

The amended Article 21bisA provides for the withdrawal of a Kuwaiti nationality certificate if it is proven that it was granted unlawfully due to

fraud, false statements or incorrect testimonies. Such withdrawal shall be made by decree, based on the proposal of the Minister of Interior and with the approval of the Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigations. This article also provides for the withdrawal of Kuwaiti nationality from any person who acquired it by dependency on the holder of such a certificate.

The amended Article 21bis B imposes a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years and a fine not exceeding KD3,000 on any person who provides incorrect information to the administrative authorities responsible for investigating Kuwaiti nationality, or to committees formed for this purpose, whether to establish nationality for themselves or others or to facilitate its acquisition, whether such statements are made orally or in writing, if it is not proven that they made a reasonable effort to verify the accuracy of the information. The penalty is aggravated to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years if the person knowingly provides false information, with the possibility of imposing a fine not exceeding KD5,000, in addition to imprisonment.

To prevent differing interpretations and disputes regarding the possibility of challenging decrees and decisions related to nationality, the amended Article 22 stipulates that all such matters are considered acts of sovereignty and are not subject to judicial review.

The amended Article 23 grants the Public Prosecution exclusive jurisdiction over the investigation, disposition and prosecution of all crimes related to nationality matters.

Article Two of the decree-law states replacement of the terms 'Minister of Interior' and 'Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigations', with 'Head of Police and Public Security Departments' and 'Supreme Committee' wherever they appear in the provisions of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959.

Article Three affirms that anyone granted Kuwaiti nationality by dependency on a person under Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 before this decree takes effect shall be deemed a naturalized Kuwaiti.

Article Four repeals Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7bis of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959, as well as Law No. 44/1994 (which added a new clause to Article Seven of the same decree), and Law No. 32/1995 (which amended certain provisions of the decree), and also repeals any provision that conflicts with this decree.

Article Five obliges the Prime Minister and the ministers, each within their respective jurisdiction, to implement the decree, and stipulates that it shall take effect from the date of its publication in the official gazette, 'Kuwait Al-Youm'.

US military

constitute a national duty that contributes to protecting society and maintaining its security and stability.

He concluded by praying for the continued protection of Kuwait, its people, and leadership from all harm.

Elsewhere, the U.S. military vowed to blockade all Iranian ports starting Monday, part of efforts to force Tehran into agreeing to open the crucial Strait of Hormuz and accepting a peace deal. Iran responded with threats on all ports in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, taking aim at U.S.-allied countries.

That set the stage for an extraordinary showdown that contains serious risks for the global economy and raises the specter that a ceasefire that is currently holding could collapse and the war could resume. Talks aimed at permanently ending the conflict - which began Feb. 28 with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran - finished without an agreement this weekend, and there has been no word on whether negotiations will resume.

Iran's effective closure of the strait, through which 20% of traded oil passes in peacetime, has sent oil prices skyrocketing, pushing up the cost of gasoline, food and other basic goods far beyond the Middle East. Tehran has allowed some ships perceived as friendly to pass while charging considerable fees, leading to accusations it is holding the global economy hostage.

Some analysts are doubtful that the U.S. can restore normal shipping through force alone - and it's not clear how a blockade would work or what the dangers might be to U.S. forces. The question is essentially who can endure the most pain: Could a blockade make Iran's economic situation untenable and force it to concede? Or will it drive global oil and other prices so high that U.S. President Donald Trump is forced to back down?

The U.S. military's Central Command announced that from 10 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT) the blockade would be enforced "against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas." It said that would include all of Iran's ports on the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman.

CENTCOM said it would still allow ships traveling between non-Iranian ports to transit the Strait of Hormuz, a step down from Trump's earlier threat to blockade the vital waterway.

Iran responded with threats of its own.

"Security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is either for everyone or for NO ONE," the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported

Monday. "NO PORT in the region will be safe," read a statement from the Iranian military and the Revolutionary Guard.

The threats halted the limited ship traffic that resumed in the strait since the ceasefire, according to a report from Lloyd's List Intelligence. Marine trackers say over 40 commercial ships have crossed since the start of the ceasefire last week, down from roughly 100 to 135 vessel passages per day before the war.

The blockade is likely intended to pile pressure on Iran, which has exported millions of barrels of oil since the war began, much of it likely carried by so-called dark transits that evade Western sanctions and oversight.

But the effects will be felt far beyond Iran. The price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 7% to hover around \$102 per barrel on Monday. It cost roughly \$70 per barrel before the war.

PAM handles

necessary procedures and precautionary measures were implemented.

The following day, PAM reported another gathering of approximately 300 workers in front of the administration building. This gathering was also dispersed in coordination with the relevant security authorities. Investigations are ongoing, with statements being taken from the remaining workers to ascertain the circumstances of the dispute and the nature of their complaint.

The employer and relevant company officials, in addition to the head of executive management, were summoned. The incident was referred to the General Department of Criminal Investigation's Residency Affairs Investigation Department after indicators and suspicions related to the employment relationship, recruitment, and use of workers were detected, in preparation for taking the necessary legal measures.

PAM affirmed that its emergency and collective complaints teams operate around the clock to receive reports and emergency cases, in coordination with the relevant authorities in the Ministry of Interior, to ensure a rapid response and protect the rights of all parties.

It called on employers and workers to adhere to signed contracts and applicable laws, emphasizing the need to resort to official channels in case of disputes and to refrain from collective work stoppages or violations of regulations.

PAM confirmed its continued pursuit of legal action against violators and the completion of investigations.



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Rivals seek supporters

Rep Swalwell exits California governor's race

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP): US Democratic Rep Eric Swalwell's abrupt exit from the race for California governor left his rivals scrambling to lock down his former supporters in a crowded contest with no clear leader, injecting more turmoil into the campaign to lead the nation's most populous state.

Swalwell's decision to suspend his campaign Sunday followed allegations that he assaulted a woman twice, including when she worked for him, that were published Friday in the San Francisco Chronicle and later by CNN. While pulling out of the race he remained defiant in a post on the social platform X, saying, "I will fight the serious, false allegations that have been made - but that's my fight, not a campaign's."

For rival candidates in a wide-open race, the key issue is where Swalwell's supporters will go. He was among the most prominent Democrats in the contest, with mail ballots scheduled to go to voters in early May in advance of the June 2 primary election.

Katie Porter, one of the leading Democrats, posted a line from a San Francisco Chronicle column on X, "Democrats can pull victory from the jaws of defeat by coalescing around Porter."

Billionaire hedge fund manager-turned-liberal activist Tom Steyer said he secured the support of Rep. Jared



California gubernatorial candidate Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., speaks at a town hall meeting in Sacramento, Calif on April 7. (AP)

Huffman, a Democrat from the San Francisco Bay Area.

With seven established Democrats and two leading Republicans on a primary ballot with more than 50 candidates, the race remains fluid. While Swalwell has suspended his campaign, his name cannot be removed from the ballot.

"Nobody has really caught fire," said Democratic consultant Andrew Acosta, who is not involved in the campaign. Swalwell's supporters "will scatter out to other candidates."

Swalwell is perhaps best known nationally as a House manager in President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial during his first term in early 2021. But in a media environment dominated by Trump, the race remains distant from many California voters.

After the publicity about sexual misconduct allegations, "I think there are probably more people who know who Eric Swalwell is than can articulate a Tom Steyer position paper," Acosta added.

America

1 killed and 6 injured in NJ shooting: In New Jersey, police say one person was shot and killed and six others were injured in what they call a mass shooting at a Chick-fil-A in Union, New Jersey.

Investigators do not believe the attack at about 9 p.m. Saturday was random, according to a press release issued Sunday from the Union County Prosecutor's Office. No arrests have been made, but the office said "there is no immediate ongoing threat to the general public."

The injuries are not believed to be life-threatening, the release said. A ride share driver told WABC that he heard more than seven shots from close range as he approached the restaurant.

New Jersey Gov **Mikie Sherrill** said Sunday on social media: "Our hearts go out to the victim's loved ones, and we are hoping for the full recovery of those who were injured."

She urged people with information to contact authorities investigating the shooting.

A spokeswoman for Chick-fil-A declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

The Homicide Task Force at the county prosecutor's office is investigating. (AP)



Sherrill

Man running for Florida governor accused of battery: A man running for Florida governor has been arrested on charges he battered two older people in a home.

Kevin Cichowski, 46, was charged with multiple counts of aggravated battery, tampering with a witness and robbery, according to the Flagler County Sheriff's Office.

Cichowski is listed as a Democratic candidate for governor with the Florida Division of Elections and previously ran for Palm Coast mayor in 2021. The primary is scheduled Aug. 18, and the race to replace Gov. Ron DeSantis includes dozens of candidates.

In body camera footage shared with The Associated Press, Cichowski claimed his parents were going through a mental health problem and that his father tried to kill him.

"I haven't done anything wrong," Cichowski said as officers escorted him to a patrol vehicle. "This is insane."

The sheriff's office said in a statement that deputies responded to a call in Palm Coast on Friday morning after receiving a report that a man battered two people, hitting one with a cane and throwing a cellphone at the other.

One of the victims called 911 and claimed Cichowski threatened to kill them and said he would kill law enforcement if they were called, according to the sheriff's office. Officers arrived on the scene and evacuated the two people, one of whom was bedridden. The sheriff's office did not specify the ages of two people, other than they are older than 65.

Cichowski was taken into protective custody after making suicidal statements, the sheriff's office said.

It was not immediately clear if Cichowski had legal representation Sunday. (AP)

N.Carolina authorities seek arson suspect: North Carolina authorities were seeking a possible arson suspect Sunday after a woman with serious burns told authorities a man had doused her with gasoline at her home and set her on fire.

Firefighters and deputies were called to a structure fire Saturday night in the town of Roseboro and found a woman with burns over about two-thirds of her body, the Sampson County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

The woman said a man had forced his way into her home, and that the suspect left the scene on a bicycle, according to the sheriff's statement. The woman was taken to a trauma center for treatment. Her condition wasn't immediately disclosed.

After consulting with the local prosecutor's office, the sheriff's office said, documents were obtained accusing a named suspect of first-degree arson, first-degree burglary and other charges. The person was still at large Sunday afternoon, the sheriff's office said.

Roseboro is a small community about 65 miles (105 kilometers) south of the state capital of Raleigh. (AP)

At 100 days rally, Mamdani celebrates and charts course toward city-run grocery stores

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani rallied Sunday to celebrate 100 days in office, touting his early accomplishments and charting future goals as he pledged to lead with a relentless focus on the city's working class.

In front of a crowd just days after reaching an early milestone of his first term, Mamdani said he took office promising "that City Hall would hold a singular purpose, to make this city belong to more of its people than it did the day before."

"For 102 days, we have endeavored to do exactly that," he said.

After highlighting the early accomplishments of his administration, he then turned to a few new plans.

The first, he said, would be to inch toward one of his major campaign promises: opening a slate of city-run grocery stores. The initial store, he said, would open next year, with the remaining shops - eventually one in each of the city's five boroughs - opening by the end of his four-year term.

"At our stores, eggs will be cheaper.

Bread will be cheaper. Grocery shopping will no longer be an unsolvable equation," said Mamdani, a Democrat.

In addition, the mayor announced plans to expand the city's covered trash bin program - "Say goodbye to black bags and say hello to the bins," he said, vowing to spread the initiative citywide by the end of 2031.

And he reiterated his campaign promise to make buses faster and free of cost, saying he would move to speed up bus services along some routes. It remains unclear how he would make good on eliminating bus fares.

"Tonight, we're delivering the fast, and we're excited to keep working with Albany to deliver the free," he said, referencing the governor and the state Legislature, which hold considerable sway over parts of his agenda.

Before Mamdani spoke, the crowd heard from a city transportation department staffer to hear about Mamdani's pothole filling blitz; a tenant organizer who praised the mayor's focus on renters; and a mother who boosted his push to expand child care programs

in the city.

"No longer will city government be afraid of its own shadow," Mamdani told the crowd shortly after taking the stage. "If anyone should be afraid it is those who take advantage of working people."

Mamdani, 34, took office in January after a campaign centered on making New York City a more affordable place to live, centering his agenda on refocusing the vast power of government toward helping the city's struggling working class.

A few weeks ago, alongside Natasha Cloud of the New York Liberty, Mamdani announced a bracket-style competition where people could vote on small projects for him to come and personally fix on his 100th day.

On Friday, Mamdani selected a winner - a garbage-filled lot in the Bronx - and helped pick up some of the junk with a sanitation crew, following a celebratory event that featured an overflowing trash can mascot and a cheer-leading squad.

"I think every single day it's an op-

portunity to meet the needs of New Yorkers," he said. "And what we've seen over the course of this 100 days is that New York City wants to see a city government that is able to meet the biggest needs and the smallest needs."

The celebrity status, though, can also prompt backlash. During a bitter cold snap, his surprise appearance on "The Tonight Show" with Jimmy Fallon was seen by some as insensitive at a moment when the death toll of homeless New Yorkers was rapidly rising.

"Too much styling and profiling," said Curtis Sliwa, a Republican who ran against Mamdani during last year's election, noting longstanding problems with street homelessness, public housing and infrastructure.

Still, Sliwa, who hammered Mamdani during the campaign but recently appeared in a comedy skit with the mayor during the City Hall press corps' annual roast, appeared to give Mamdani some credit, even if it came with a caveat.



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani speaks during an address marking his first 100 days in office at the Knockdown Center on April 12 in New York. (AP)

Europe

Donaldson, father of Denmark's Queen Mary, dies: The father of Denmark's Australian-born Queen Mary, John Donaldson, has died in Tasmania, the royal house in Copenhagen said Sunday. He was 84.

Donaldson died in Hobart, a royal statement said, without giving further details. It said that his health had been declining over the past few years, and that the queen last visited him at the end of March.

John Dalgleish Donaldson, born in Scotland on Sept. 5, 1941, was a professor of applied mathematics.

Mary became Denmark's queen in January 2024 after two decades as crown princess when her husband became the Scandinavian country's monarch. He was proclaimed King Frederik X following the abdication of his mother, Queen Margrethe II.

Frederik and Mary met during the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. They married in 2004.

Sunday's statement quoted Mary as saying that "my heart is heavy." "But I know that when the grief settles, the memories will brighten my day, and what will remain strongest is love and gratitude for everything he gave me and taught me," she added.

Mary's mother, Henrietta Clark Donaldson, died in 1997. Her father married Susan Moody in 2001. (AP)

Tourist bus crash kills 1, injures 27 in Spain: A bus carrying tourists in Spain's Canary Islands fell down a ravine Friday, killing one person and injuring 27 others, local emergency services said.

Most of the passengers were British nationals.

The incident took place in La Gomera, one of the eight islands that make up the Spanish archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean off the western coast of Africa.

The injured were transferred to a local hospital on the island, emergency services said, and were being treated for injuries.

La Gomera is among the smallest of the Canary Islands, with steep terrain marked by volcanic mountains, dense forest and cliffside villages. The islands, known for their year-round warm temperatures, are popular holiday destinations for many Britons and Europeans. (AP)

UK puts Chagos Islands handover deal on hold: Britain's agreement to hand Mauritius the Chagos Islands that are home to a strategic UK-American military base is on indefinite hold because U.S. President Donald Trump's administration has withdrawn its support for the deal.

The British government acknowledged Saturday that legislation to ratify the agreement for the islands in the Indian Ocean has run out of time in Parliament.

It's the latest fallout from souring relations between Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government and the Trump administration.

Trump initially backed the deal, but changed his mind in January, calling a deal to transfer sovereignty of the islands, home to the joint military base on Diego Garcia, "an act of GREAT STUPIDITY" in a social media post.

The UK put the bill's progress on hold, and the government now concedes it will run out of time to become law before the current session of Parliament ends in the next few weeks. It is not expected to be included in the list of bills announced by King Charles III for the next session of Parliament, which begins May 13.

Despite British frustration with the US change of stance, officials still hope the deal can be revived.

"Diego Garcia is a key strategic military asset for both the UK and the US," the British government said in a statement. "Ensuring its long-term operational security is and will continue to be our priority - it is the entire reason for the deal. (AP)



Rescuers work at the scene of a bus crash near San Sebastian de La Gomera, in Spain's Canary Islands on April 10. (AP)



Supporters of Peter Magyar, the leader of the opposition Tisza party celebrate after a parliamentary election in Budapest, Hungary on April 12. (AP)

Prime Minister Orbán ejected after 16 years in power

EU leaders celebrate Magyar's victory in Hungary election

BUDAPEST, April 13, (AP): From the jubilant crowds along the Danube in Budapest to executive offices in Brussels, praise and even glee abounded for Hungary's next leader, Péter Magyar. But the outpouring after his stunning election focused mainly on who he's not: outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who many saw as a threat to Europe's peace and prosperity.

From Madrid to Helsinki, many hope that Magyar's win will help unshackle the 27-nation European Union as it faces hybrid warfare attacks from Moscow, an antagonistic Washington and Beijing's economic pressure. EU leaders had been increasingly frustrated with Orbán over his takeover of democratic institutions and vetoing of strategic action like a 90-billion-euro loan for Ukraine.

It remains to be seen whether those hopes will be fulfilled. Magyar avoided talking about Ukraine or divisive issues on the campaign trail, and was previously a long-time conservative insider in Orbán's party. He told The Associated Press that he would work more closely with the EU and the 32-nation NATO military alliance that was forged to thwart aggression from Moscow.

"All Hungarians know that this is a shared victory. Our homeland made up



Peter Magyar, leader of the opposition Tisza party, speaks to his supporters following the announcement of the partial results of the parliamentary election, in Budapest, Hungary on April 12. (AP)

its mind. It wants to live again. It wants to be a European country," Magyar said during his victory speech on Sunday.

Olga Oliker, the director of European Security at the International Crisis Group, said that "where Orbán slowed actions and blocked consensus, Magyar, as he defines Hungary's relationships with its European allies, to say

nothing of those with Ukraine, Russia and the United States, can help shape the future of Europe."

Magyar called Monday on the country's president to convene the parliament to form a new government "as quickly as possible," in hopes that he can take over from Orbán as prime minister as early as May 5.

Speaking at a news conference after his Tisza party's victory Sunday, Magyar said they received "a never-before-seen mandate." That super-majority would allow Tisza to embark on ambitious program and reforms.

"The Hungarian people didn't vote for a simple change of government, but for a complete change in regime," he said.

Magyar thanked Moscow and Beijing for offering their congratulations and willingness to work with Hungary's new government.

"Hungarians said yesterday they will write their history, not in Moscow, not in Beijing, not in Washington," he added.

In his campaign, Magyar pledged to end Hungary's drift toward Russia and restore its ties with European allies. He promised voters that after 16 years of autocratic governance and the erosion of the rule of law under Orbán, he will root out corruption and create a "peaceful, functioning and humane" Hungary.

But what those changes will look like remains to be seen. During his long time in office, Orbán ruled with the power of a two-thirds parliamentary majority, allowing him to pass a new constitution, rewrite the electoral system and reshape the judiciary.

INTERNATIONAL

Philippine president debunks health rumors with jumping jacks

MANILA, Philippines, April 13, (Agencies): An annoyed Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. did a few rounds of jumping jack exercise and jogged briefly outside his office in front of journalists Monday to disprove rumors of his failing health.



Marcos

Wearing formal office wear, reading glasses and leather shoes, the 68-year-old leader said he did the impromptu workout to ease any worry about his health at a time when people were already beset with problems sparked by the war in the Middle East.

"I challenge anyone who are saying that I am sick, that they come and exercise with me," Marcos told reporters. "You come to the gym with me. Let's see who can lift the weights better."

"Those people who tell you that I'm sick, that I'm paralyzed, they're all liars," Marcos said.

Rumors about the president's deteriorating health and even death have swirled on social media after he briefly vanished from public view in January then later acknowledged in a video

message that he was taken to a hospital for an abdominal ailment that he ascribed to stress and age.

Marcos then laughed off rumors of his demise and said he had been diagnosed with diverticulitis. The condition involves inflammation of small pouches in the digestive tract, usually in the colon, that causes pain, fever, nausea or constipation.

His last hospital checkup a couple of months ago showed he had been cured of that ailment, Marcos said, and added that he was back on normal diet and was regularly exercising.

When asked if he was taking any maintenance medicine, Marcos said he was taking medication for gout and for high blood pressure.

Since taking office in mid-2022, Marcos has grappled with multiple complex problems and political dilemmas.

Also:

MANILA: Four people were killed after a cargo truck plowed into a village gymnasium and several parked vehicles in **Davao City**, the southern Philippines, local authorities said.

The Davao City Police Office said the incident occurred shortly after 10 am when a tire on the 10-wheeler truck burst, causing the driver to lose control of the vehicle. Police said the driver, his helper and two pedestrians died at the scene.

Premier Sánchez returns to China as Spain seeks deeper ties amid Iran war tensions

MADRID, April 13, (AP): Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is in China again this week, his fourth trip in just over three years to the world's number two economy as Spain seeks to strengthen its political and commercial ties with Beijing.

His visit comes at a complex geopolitical moment as European leaders try to influence an end to the US-Israeli war in Iran, and as Spain's relationship with the US has been strained by Sánchez's vocal disapproval of the conflict.

On Monday, Sánchez urged China to assume a larger role in a multipolar world, speaking at Beijing's Tsinghua University a day before he is set to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"China can do more. For example, by demanding ... that international law be respected and that the conflicts in Lebanon, Iran, Gaza and the West Bank and Ukraine cease," Sánchez said.

Here's what to know about the Spanish leader's visit.

Spain says it wants to diversify its political relations with the world's large powers, including Beijing. Spanish officials have said the gov-



Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, center left, and his wife Begona Gomez arrive at the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing on April 13. (AP)

ernment wants to shore up more Chinese investment, and boost exports to the country, even though trade is conducted by the European Union, which negotiates on behalf of all 27 member states.

The southern European nation, which generates more than half its

electricity from renewable sources, needs Chinese critical raw materials, solar panels and green technologies - similar to other European countries transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Politically, the trip comes as Spain has stuck its neck out in Europe as the continent's loudest critic of the US and

Israel's military actions in the Middle East, with the Sánchez government recently declaring its airspace closed to U.S. planes being used in Iran, and refusing the US the use of jointly operated military bases in southern Spain.

"Given the increased frictions with the US administration, these annual meetings have taken on an increased importance," said Eric Sigmon, a Madrid-based political analyst and a former US national security adviser, about Sánchez's latest trip to China.

Sánchez is in China from April 13-15, and will hold talks Tuesday with Xi, Premier Li Qiang and China's top lawmaker, Zhao Leji, the third-ranking leader of its ruling Communist Party.

Spain, the eurozone's fourth-largest economy, has been less adversarial toward China than other EU countries in recent years. It has sought to reposition trade relations with China, whose exports to Spain are far greater than those of the Iberian nation of 49 million people to China, which has a population of more than 1.4 billion people.

Sánchez's government has had little success, with China accounting for about 74% of Spain's overall trade gap.

100 dead in Nigeria after air force 'misfire' on market, sources say

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria, April 13, (AP): A Nigerian Air Force strike targeting jihadi rebels hit a local market in northeastern Nigeria, killing over 100 civilians including children and injuring many others, a rights group and local media reported on Sunday. Officials confirmed a misfire without providing details.

Amnesty International cited survivors as saying that at least 100 people were killed in the airstrike on Saturday on a village in Yobe state, near the border with Borno state, which is the epicenter of the jihadi insurgency that has ravaged the region for over a decade.

"We have their pictures and they include children," Isa Sanusi, Amnesty International's Nigeria director, told The Associated Press, referring to the casualties.

"We are in touch with people that are there, we spoke with the hospital," he said. "We spoke with the person in charge of casualties, and we spoke with the victims."

A worker at the Geidam General hospital, in Yobe, said at least 23 people injured in the incident were receiving treatment. The worker spoke anonymously as he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Such misfires are common in Ni-



In this photo taken on April 22, 2017, Nigerian Air Force officers display ammunition next to a fighter jet during an event in Makurdi, Nigeria. (AP)

geria, where the military often conducts air raids to battle armed groups who control vast forest enclaves. At least 500 civilians have died since 2017 in such misfires, according to an AP tally of reported deaths. Security analysts point to loopholes in intelligence gathering as well as insufficient coordination between ground troops, air assets and stakeholders.

The large, remote market lo-

cated near the Borno-Yobe border is known to be often used by Boko Haram jihadis to buy food supplies.

Abdulmumin Bulama, a member of a civilian security group working with the Nigerian military in the northeast, said there was intelligence that Boko Haram terrorists had gathered very close to the market and were planning an attack on nearby communities.

Trump lambasts pontiff

Pope Leo XIV visits Algeria to open Africa trip

ROME, April 13, (AP): Pope Leo XIV embarked Monday on the first-ever papal trip to Algeria, aiming to promote Christian-Muslim coexistence at a time of global conflict and honor the locally born inspiration of his religious spirituality, St. Augustine.

Leo's two-day stop in Algeria opens an intense 11-day tour of four African nations - Algeria, Cameroon, Angola and Equatorial Guinea - that will bring history's first US-born pope deep into the growing heart of the Catholic Church.

The US-Israeli war against Iran cast a cloud over the trip, after President Donald Trump issued an extraordinary broadside against Leo on Sunday night, saying he should "stop catering to the Radical Left." Leo had blasted the "delusion of omnipotence" fueling the war during a peace prayer service.

Leo responded on the plane en route to Algeria, saying the Vatican's appeals for peace and reconciliation are rooted in the Gospel, and that he didn't fear the Trump administration.

Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune greeted Leo upon his arrival at Algiers' international airport before they were to meet formally at the El Mouradia presidential palace.

Later Monday, Leo was to address Algerian authorities and visit the city's



Pope Leo XIV is welcomed by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, (right), upon his arrival at Algiers' Houari Boumediene International Airport on April 13 at the start of an 11-day apostolic journey to Africa. (AP)

Great Mosque. He was finishing the day with a gathering at the Our Lady of Africa basilica, and then prayers at a nearby monument for migrants killed in shipwrecks trying to reach Europe.

The gathering at the basilica, a Roman-Byzantine structure built in the late 1800s during France's colonial rule, will feature testimony from

a Catholic nun, a Pentecostal believer and Muslim, as well as remarks by the pope.

The official motto of the Algeria trip is Leo's opening line wherever he goes - "Peace be with you" - and the Vatican says a general message of peace and Christian-Muslim coexistence will be the major theme.

Cuba warns US against attacking island or trying to depose leader

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, April 13, (AP): Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said the US has no valid reason to carry out a military attack against the island or to attempt to depose him.

Speaking in an interview on NBC News' Meet the Press program, the president said an invasion of Cuba would be costly and affect regional security. But should it happen, Diaz-Canel said, Cubans would defend themselves.

"If the time comes, I don't think there would be any justification for the United States to launch a military aggression against Cuba, or for the US to undertake a surgical operation or the kidnapping of a president," Diaz-Canel said, speaking through a translator.

He added: "If that happens, there will be fighting, and there will be a struggle, and we will defend ourselves, and if we need to die, we'll die, because as our national anthem says, 'Dying for the homeland is to live.'"

His comments come as tensions between Cuba and the US remain high despite both sides acknowledging talks, although no details have been shared.

Diaz-Canel has accused the US government of implementing a "hostile policy" against Cuba and said it has "no moral to demand anything from Cuba." He noted that Cuba is interested in engaging in dialogue and discussing any topic without conditions, "not demanding changes from our political system as we are not demanding change from the American system, about which we have a number of doubts."

Cuba blames a US energy blockade for its deepening woes, with a lack of petroleum affecting the island's health



Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel delivers a welcome speech to participants of the 'Nuestra America' or 'Our America Convoy' at the Convention Palace in Havana, Cuba, on March 20. (AP)

system, public transportation and the production of goods and services.

Cuba produces only 40% of the fuel it consumes, and it stopped receiving key oil shipments from Venezuela after the US military attacked the South American country in early January, seized President Nicolás Maduro and took him to New York to face drug trafficking charges. Then, with cooperation from ruling party leaders, the Trump administration began implementing a phased plan to end Venezuela's entrenched crisis.

The arrival of a Russian tanker carrying 730,000 barrels of crude oil in Cuba in March marked the island's first oil shipment in three months. Russia has promised to send a second tanker. Despite threatening tariffs in Janu-

ary on countries that sell or provide oil to Cuba, the Trump administration allowed the tanker to proceed.

"Cuba's finished," President Donald Trump said at the time. "They have a bad regime. They have very bad and corrupt leadership and whether or not they get a boat of oil, it's not going to matter."

Diaz-Canel said his government takes Trump's words as a warning.

"You hear that Cuba is next, that Cuba is going to be next, that there are, there's a way out, that they're going to take over Cuba," he said. "So, from the position of responsibility within the leadership of the country, that is a warning. And we need to responsibly protect our people, protect our project and protect our country."



The Pentagon is seen from an airplane on April 7, in Washington. (AP)

Strikes on alleged drug boats kill five, leave 1 survivor in eastern Pacific: US

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): The US military said Sunday that it blew up two boats accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing a total of five people and leaving one survivor, as the Trump administration pursues its campaign against alleged traffickers in Latin America while preparing a naval blockade of Iranian ports.

The attacks on Saturday bring the number of people who have been killed in boat strikes by the US military to at least 168 since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September.

As with most of the military's statements on the dozens of strikes in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean Sea, US Southern Command said it targeted the alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes. The military did not provide evidence that the vessel was ferrying drugs. Videos posted on X showed small boats moving across the water before they each were engulfed in a bright explosion.

US Southern Command stated on X that it notified the US Coast Guard



Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks to members of the media during a press briefing at the Pentagon in Washington on April 8. (AP)

to activate the search-and-rescue system for the survivor. The Coast Guard confirmed it was coordinating the search and said updates would be provided when available.

President Donald Trump has said the US is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary esca-

lation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States and fatal overdoses claiming American lives. But his administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing "narcoterrorists."

Critics have questioned the overall legality of the boat strikes as well as their effectiveness, in part because the fentanyl behind many fatal overdoses is typically trafficked to the US over land from Mexico, where it is produced with chemicals imported from China and India.

The boat strikes have continued in Latin America even as the US military has focused on operations in the Middle East, where the US was engaged in a war with Iran for several weeks.

Trump on Sunday said the US Navy would begin a blockade of ships entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz, after US-Iran ceasefire talks in Pakistan ended without an agreement. Trump wants to weaken Iran's key leverage in the war after demanding that it reopen the crucial waterway through which 20% of global oil normally passes. US Central Command said the blockade would involve Iranian ports.



Election officials count ballots during general elections in Lima, Peru on April 12. (AP)

Peru's election results delayed

LIMA, Peru, April 13, (AP): Peruvian voters will have to wait until at least Monday to learn the outcome of Sunday's presidential election after the process was mired with logistical issues that even left thousands of people in the country and abroad unable to cast ballots.

The problems prompted electoral authorities to allow more than 52,000 residents of Peru's capital, Lima, to vote on Monday. The extension, announced after vote counting began Sunday evening, also covers Peruvians registered to vote in Orlando, Florida, and Paterson, New Jersey.

Oil surges 8% on US plan to isolate Iran

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): Oil prices rose in early market trading Sunday after the U.S. said it would blockade Iranian ports beginning Monday.

The price of U.S. crude oil rose 8% to \$104.24 a barrel and Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 7% to \$102.29.

Brent crude has swung dramatically during the Iran war, rising from roughly \$70 per barrel before the war in late February to more than \$119 at times.

On Friday, ahead of the peace talks, Brent for June delivery fell 0.8% to \$95.20 per barrel.

Business

Reinforcing new digital services

Warba Bank supports 'Zahrat Al Arfaj' initiative

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Warba Bank has announced its support for the "Zahrat Al Arfaj" initiative, a national initiative aimed at honoring front-line workers for their service and dedication. As part of this support, the bank incorporated the initiative's logo into its mobile application identity, in line with its commitment to national solidarity and social responsibility.

The initiative aligns with the bank's strategy to participate in national programs that highlight social cohesion in Kuwait. By supporting front-line personnel, Warba Bank emphasizes the importance of sustainable community impact and national appreciation for those serving the country.

Digital Transformation and Community Engagement:

Nasser Maher Al-Mutawa, Chief Digital Officer at Warba Bank, said the bank's role extends beyond traditional banking to include active community engagement.

"Our support for the 'Zahrat Al Arfaj' initiative is a tribute to the efforts of our front-line workers. This is part of our ongoing efforts to develop digital services that provide a seamless and secure banking experience for our customers."

Enhanced Digital Services:

In parallel with its community initiatives, the bank launched a suite of advanced digital services designed to improve customer experience and provide flexible banking solutions. These updates enable users to manage digital wallets directly through the app, including adding or suspending cards to enhance security.

The bank also introduced an improved interface that provides users with a clear overview of supported devices and digital wallets, along with simplified setup guides to streamline the user journey.



Nasser Al-Mutawa



Primary Banking Al Arfaj flower

Flexible Card Management:

Addressing card security and flexibility, Al-Mutawa said the bank now enables customers to manage their transaction limits:

"We introduced features that allow customers to set cash withdrawal limits for ATMs and control purchase limits for point-of-sale (POS) and online transactions. Customers can apply temporary limit adjustments based on individual needs, enhancing both control and security in daily financial dealings."

The updates reflect the bank's strategy to invest in its digital infrastructure while adopting technological solutions to meet customer expectations.

About Warba Bank:

Warba Bank is a leader in Sharia-compliant digital banking in Kuwait. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank focuses on delivering innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused Islamic bank.

Other Voices

Regulatory easing boosts banking flexibility, strengthens risk controls

By **Ahmad Ghazi Alabduljalil**

Former Board Member, Ahli United Bank Group
Former Member of the Audit & Compliance and Nomination Committees, Ahli United Bank Group

The recent decisions by the Central Bank of Kuwait - most notably the reduction of the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) from 100% to 80%, alongside lowering the Regulatory Liquidity Ratio (RLR) from 18% to 15% - reflect a clear shift toward enhancing the resilience and flexibility of the banking sector.

These measures come as part of a broader package of regulatory and prudential actions announced on March 26, 2026, amid continued monitoring of geopolitical developments and their implications for liquidity dynamics and global funding conditions.

In an operating environment characterized by heightened uncertainty - driven by geopolitical tensions and volatility in energy flows and financial markets - such adjustments signal a tactical shift in supervisory policy, from emphasizing liquidity preservation toward enabling banks to deploy liquidity in support of economic activity and sustained lending.

This approach aligns with international best practices during periods of stress, where central banks temporarily ease prudential constraints to mitigate the risk of a credit contraction, while maintaining the integrity of the overall regulatory framework.

Liquidity Management: From Compliance to Operational Efficiency

The reduction in LCR and NSFR redefines the balance between regulatory compliance and the efficient use of liquidity. While it provides additional room for balance sheet flexibility, it simultaneously elevates the importance of intraday liquidity management and liquidity stress testing, particularly under short-term funding volatility scenarios.

In this context, banks must reinforce:

- Cash flow forecasting accuracy
- Funding concentration risk management
- Monitoring of short-term liquidity gaps

Liquidity is no longer measured solely by its absolute level, but by the speed, flexibility, and efficiency with which it is managed.

Maturity Mismatch: Greater Flexibility... Higher Sensitivity

The expansion of cumulative negative gap limits across maturities offers banks broader flexibility in managing their balance sheet structures. However, it also increases sensitivity to refinancing risks, particularly in environments of rising funding costs or tightening market liquidity.

This makes it essential to strengthen:

- Maturity profile monitoring
- Contingency funding plans
- Stress testing under partial market disruption scenarios

As flexibility expands, the timing of liquidity becomes as critical as its availability.

Capital: Utilizing Buffers with Confidence... While Preserving Asset Quality

The package also includes the release of part of the Capital Conservation Buffer - equivalent to 1.0% of risk-weighted assets - effectively reducing the overall capital requirement from 13% to 12%, providing additional lending capacity while maintaining strong capital positions. Importantly,



Ahmad Alabduljalil

■ This is not a conventional easing cycle. It is a recalibration of how liquidity and risk are managed within Kuwait's banking system.

This move reflects regulatory confidence in the strength of the sector's financial soundness indicators.

In this phase, asset quality and disciplined credit underwriting become critical to ensuring that buffer utilization remains prudent, especially given the potential divergence in performance across economic sectors.

The effective management of these buffers will likely become a key differentiator among institutions.

Lending: Supporting Growth Without Compromising Risk Pricing

Raising the maximum financing threshold from 90% to 100% enhances banks' ability to meet funding demand. However, it underscores the importance of maintaining:

- Risk-based pricing discipline
- Robust credit underwriting models
- Balanced sectoral exposure

The ability to support growth while preserving credit quality will be central to the success of this phase.

Managing the Transition: The Decisive Factor

The success of these measures ultimately depends on how effectively the transition phase is managed, particularly through:

- Clear time horizons for the measures
- A defined normalization path back to standard regulatory levels
- Continued coordination between regulators and banks

This transition phase requires disciplined execution to ensure that temporary flexibility does not translate into long-term structural risk.

If current conditions persist for an extended period, operational flexibility may shift from being a supportive feature to a source of hidden risk, requiring careful and proactive management.

Conclusion

These measures represent a sophisticated and dynamic use of regulatory tools. They strike a careful balance between supporting economic activity and preserving financial stability.

The focus is shifting from mere compliance with regulatory ratios to the quality of managing this flexibility, ensuring that the banking system remains capable of absorbing shocks while continuing to fulfill its core role in supporting the economy.

Ultimately, the strength of financial systems is not defined solely by their conservatism. It is defined by their ability to manage flexibility efficiently, without allowing it to become a source of hidden risk.

Iran war energy shock boosts China's clean tech edge

HONG KONG, April 13, (AP): China is poised to benefit from the Iran war as global energy disruptions accelerate a shift away from fossil fuels and toward clean technologies and renewable power, industries that China dominates.

Most of the oil and gas from the now mostly shut Strait of Hormuz was Asia-bound. Asian nations are scrambling to conserve energy and bolster dwindling reserves. As a temporary ceasefire teeters, gasoline prices in the U.S. and Europe are spiking.

While most of Asia is hit hard, China will likely benefit from the fossil fuel disruptions despite being the biggest purchaser of Iranian oil. China leads the world in battery, solar and electric vehicle exports, and its industries are forecast to face a rise in demand for renewable products.

Before the start of the Iran war in late February, China's lead in clean technologies was lengthening. The U.S. under President Donald Trump scaled back on renewable energy and leaned on its vast oil and gas resources, promoting energy exports to achieve what Trump described as "energy dominance."

Now Chinese industry giants like vehicle-maker BYD and battery-producer CATL are well-positioned to capitalize on growing interest in low-emissions energy products as the world confronts the fragility of fossil fuels.

"China's approach to energy sector development and geopolitics has been completely validated by the Iran conflict," said Sam Reynolds with the U.S.-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

Over a decade ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping merged energy security with national security. China has since stepped up its focus on renewable energy, even though fossil fuels still dominate its domestic energy mix.

China makes up over 70% of EV manufacturing and about 85% of battery cell production globally, according to the International Energy Agency. Its current five-year plan until 2030 continues to prioritize these industries.

"They are at the very forefront of this, more so than any other countries in the world, certainly more so than the United States," said Li Shuo, director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's China Climate Hub.

The U.S. is the world's top oil producer and has pushed liquefied natural gas. The American approach - summed up by Trump as "drill, baby, drill" - favors fossil fuels over renewables.

Markets were witnessing a "bifurcation" before the war, Reynolds said, with the superpowers pushing very different energy futures, leaving other countries with complex choices on which approach to back.

The Iran war is driving demand for Chinese technology, whose exports of items such as solar panels, batteries and electric cars hit a record of almost \$22.3 billion in December. That was up about 47% from the year before, with much going to Southeast Asia and Europe, according to the think tank Ember.

Investment in renewable power and battery storage - designed to save energy when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing - is expected to increase in nations heavily dependent on energy imports, including European countries, according to the credit rating firm Fitch Ratings.

Investors are betting the war will boost demand for renewables. In March, CATL and BYD's Hong Kong traded shares rose roughly 24% and 11%, respectively.

Over the past few years, Chinese automakers were already expanding EV development and production while growing exports faster than American or European rivals, offering cheaper models and gaining ground in regions like Southeast Asia.

These trends are expected to accelerate. The energy shock is "going to help the Chinese industry globally and hurt the American car industry globally," said Amy Myers Jaffe of New York University's Center for Global Affairs.

Meanwhile, high U.S. tariffs have largely shut Chinese EVs out of the American market.

Rising fuel prices also may boost BYD growth in China, said Chris Liu with the research and advisory firm Omdia.

Households facing higher energy costs are likely to move to clean power, said James Bowen of the Australia-based consultancy ReMap Research.

Pakistan offers an early example. Its renewable rollout in 2017 led to more than 50 gigawatts of Chinese solar panels imported by December

2025.

Pakistan still imports a third of its energy. About 80% of its oil flowed through the Strait of Hormuz, and Qatar had been supplying a quarter of its LNG. But "the shock isn't as big as it would have been without solar," said Nabiya Imran of Renewables First.

If prices remain high, solar could save Pakistan \$6.3 billion in fossil fuel imports over the next year, according to think tanks Renewables First and the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

In the United Kingdom, EV leasing demand jumped by more than a third in the first three weeks of March compared to a similar period in February before the war, according to Octopus Energy, a renewable group. Octopus also reported increases in rooftop solar sales and solar-related inquiries.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnamese EV maker VinFast is offering discounts to offset fuel price shocks.

Prolonged fuel spikes may act as a future catalyst for EVs, but it will take time to see the trend reflected in purchases, partly because customers are likely waiting to see how the conflict plays out, said Patrick Tan, with the energy consultancy Aurora Research.

Even Indonesia, the world's largest coal exporter, is recalibrating in ways that could make it a bigger customer for China's clean energy technology.

In March, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto announced a push into EVs, including plans to produce electric cars and expand charging infrastructure.

The dream of electrified transportation is gaining renewed attention, said Putra Adhiguna of the Jakarta-based think tank Energy Shift Institute.

Chinese firms play a major role in Indonesia's clean energy supply chain. They signed more than \$54 billion dollars' worth of deals with the state utility in 2023 and added a \$10 billion pledge during Prabowo's visit to Beijing in 2024.

"There will be direct financial benefits to Chinese companies," said Reynolds of IEEFA.

Oil still 'king,' but efficiency and fracking soften modern shock

Iran conflict sparks economic flashback to the '70s energy crisis

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): The world economy is experiencing a disorienting flashback to the 1970s.

Oil prices are once again surging in the wake of war in the Middle East, driving up the cost of gasoline, diesel and jet fuel and threatening a return to stagflation - the toxic mix of higher prices and slower growth that made economic life so miserable a half century ago.

But the U.S. and world economies are less vulnerable now than they were when Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern petroleum producers withheld oil supplies to punish countries that supported Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

In response to that shock - and another triggered six years later by the Iranian revolution - countries embarked on a new course to increase their energy efficiency, reduce their dependence on Middle Eastern oil, stockpile fuel against future threats, and find and develop alternative sources of energy.

"We have decades of experience now dealing with these kinds of oil shocks," said Amy Myers Jaffe, research professor at New York University's Center for Global Affairs.

Of course, the notion that the current Iran energy shock could have been worse is little comfort to frustrated American motorists paying \$4 or more for a gallon of gasoline, to European farmers contending with skyrocketing fertilizer prices and to street vendors in India who can't get enough gas to cook curries and samosas for their customers. And the sheer scale is unprecedented. In response to attacks by the United States and Israel that began Feb. 28, Iran effectively shut off the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 million barrels of oil - or one-fifth of global production - flowed daily.

Lutz Kilian, director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas' Center for Energy and the Economy, figures that 5 million daily barrels can either be rerouted from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea or continue to transit through the Strait of Hormuz. But that still means that roughly 15 million barrels - or 15% - of daily global oil production is missing, "with just 6% in the 1973 embargo and after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Changes the U.S. and other countries made over the past five decades have limited the economic fallout from the war. In 1973, oil accounted for almost half - 46% - of world energy supplies. By 2023, oil's share had fallen to 30%, according to the International Energy Agency.

The world still uses more oil than ever: Consumption topped 100 million barrels a day last year, up from fewer than 60 million barrels a day in 1973. But a much bigger share of global energy is coming from other sources - such as natural gas, nuclear, solar - compared with five decades ago.

The United States, in particular, has weaned itself away from dependence on foreign oil.

When the '73 oil shock hit, America's domestic energy production was in decline and its reliance on oil imports was growing alarmingly. But the rise of fracking - pumping high-pressure water deep underground to extract previously hard-to-get oil or gas from rock - rejuvenated U.S. energy production in the 21st century. By 2019, America had become a net petroleum exporter.

"The U.S. economy is much better positioned than it was in the 1970s," when it was "particularly vulnerable to an oil price shock," said Sam Ori, executive director of the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute.

In the early '70s, for example, the United States got about 20% of its electricity from oil, Ori said. But a law enacted in 1978 prohibited the use of petroleum in power plants. Now the United States gets no electricity from oil - aside from a few generators in, say, the far reaches of Alaska.

The 1973 oil embargo was a wake-up call, creating shortages that led to long lines at U.S. gasoline stations.

On Nov. 25, 1973, President Richard Nixon went on television to ask the American people to make sacrifices. To conserve fuel, he urged gasoline stations to shut their pumps from Saturday night through Sunday, hoping to discourage long-distance weekend driving. He asked Congress to lower the maximum speed limit to 50 miles an hour (lawmakers settled for 55 miles an hour) and to ban ornamental and most commercial lighting (they balked at that). Nixon himself promised to dim the White House Christmas lights.

Fuel

But while those memories may have left a lasting imprint on some, Jaffe of New York University's Center for Global Affairs says that today, "a repeat of long gasoline lines, fuel rationing, and outright fuel shortages in the U.S. seems highly unlikely."

Other countries took aggressive action following the 1973 oil embargo as well. The United Kingdom, contending with a coal strike as well as the energy crisis, cut the work week to three days to slash electricity consumption. France ordered offices to turn off the lights at night.

Japan, almost entirely dependent on imported oil, passed a series of "sho-ene" laws - combining the Japanese words for "save" or "reduce" with "energy" - mandating energy efficiency in shipping, buildings, machinery, automobiles and homes.

Japan also encouraged the use of liquefied natural gas and the rapid growth of nuclear power, an effort set back after a 2011 earthquake and tsunami damaged the Fukushima nuclear plant. Overall, Japan ranks No. 21 in the world in per capita energy consumption, according to International Energy Agency data, as a result of its efficiency drive and widespread use of buses and trains. The United

States is No. 9.

The U.S. government began imposing fuel economy standards in 1975. Fuel economy has risen from 13.1 miles per gallon for model year 1975 vehicles to 27.1 mpg in model year 2023, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The World Bank, in fact, attributes most of the drop in the global economy's dependence on oil to stricter fuel efficiency requirements for vehicles around the world.

The '70s shocks also set off a search for oil outside the Middle East - Prudhoe Bay in Alaska, the North Sea fields off the coasts of the United Kingdom and Norway and Canada's oil sands deposits.

As fracking boomed, U.S. oil production shot up from 5 million barrels a day in 2008 to 13.6 million barrels a day last year. Over the same period, U.S. natural gas production has more than doubled.

Countries also began stockpiling oil and set up the Paris-based International Energy Agency in 1975 to coordinate responses to energy shocks. Last month, the agency's 32 member countries agreed to release 400 million barrels of oil in an effort to calm the oil market; included were 172 million barrels from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve, set up in 1975.

Central banks such as the Federal Reserve also learned lessons. In the '70s, they reduced interest rates to protect the economy from the oil shocks. In so doing, they overlooked the threat posed by higher energy costs - and inflation, already elevated, got worse.

In a Feb. 17 commentary - 11 days before the United States and Israel attacked Iran - the Dallas Fed's Kilian wrote that the Fed erred in cutting rates to boost the economy when the 1970s oil shocks hit: "What we can learn from the 1970s is that a well-intentioned policy of stimulating the economy by lowering interest rates has the potential of inadvertently reigniting inflation."

While much has changed, the University of Chicago's Ori cautions: "Oil is still king, the No. 1 fuel in the U.S. economy." Cars, planes, trucks and ships get about 90% of their delivered energy from petroleum. "The lifeblood of the economy - the transportation sector - is still overwhelmingly reliant on petroleum fuel, the price of which is set in a global market," Ori said, "and a disruption anywhere affects the price everywhere." He also notes that President Donald Trump is undoing many of the policies meant to reduce America's dependence on petroleum and to encourage the use of electric vehicles.

Trump's sweeping tax bill last year ended consumer credits of up to \$7,500 for EV purchases. He has announced a proposal to weaken U.S. fuel economy standards and repealed fines on automakers that don't meet those standards.

"You take all that together, and the fact is, the U.S. is going in the opposite direction of making big changes to further insulate the economy from oil shocks and oil price volatility," Ori said.

Wins four prestigious Euromoney private banking awards 2026

KFH crowned Best and Safest Private Bank in Kuwait & Middle East

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has reaffirmed its leadership in private banking and wealth management by winning four distinguished awards from Euromoney in 2026. The awards are:

- Middle East's Safest Private Bank
- Kuwait's Best Private Bank
- Kuwait's Safest Private Bank
- Kuwait's Best Bank for Real Estate Financing

These awards underscores KFH's steadfast commitment to delivering secure, innovative, and client-focused private banking and wealth management experiences built on quality and sustainable growth. They mark a new milestone in KFH's journey, adding to its growing list of international recognitions and reinforcing its strategic vision to provide exceptional Sharia-compliant private banking and wealth management services.

The awards ceremony, held in London, was attended by Alexander Liddle, Deputy Group CEO for Private Banking, Wealth Management and Business Excellence, and Philip Crawford, CEO of KFH UK, who accepted the honors on behalf of the bank.

KFH was recognized for its ability to meet the evolving needs of high-net-worth clients through a comprehensive suite of advisory services. Supported by experienced relationship managers, clients benefit from tailored solutions across everyday banking,



Alexander Liddle and Philip Crawford accepting the awards.

savings, real estate, business financing, and advanced investment services.

With extensive regional and international expertise, KFH offers global multi-asset class open-architecture discretionary portfolios, equity funds, international real estate, and leasing funds – all delivered to the highest international standards. Operating across 10 countries, including Kuwait, Bahrain, the UK, Egypt, Turkey, and Germany, KFH provides diverse Sharia-compliant investment opportunities worldwide.

Innovation remains central to KFH's strategy. The launch of the KFH Wealth App enables clients to manage investments in real time, access secure advisory services, and complete KYC updates digitally reflecting the bank's forward-looking approach to private banking.

The Global Private Banking Awards are among the industry's most prestigious honors, evaluated on financial performance, innovation, service quality, and wealth management strategy. Each award is submission-based, allowing each bank to tell the story of its achievements, innovations and performance over the 12-month award period.

For over 50 years, Euromoney has been the trusted benchmark for excellence in global banking and finance, recognizing institutions that demonstrate outstanding performance, innovation, and client service.

New CIO to boost quick commerce

Bader Al-Ghanim takes talabat's new CIO role

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: talabat, the leading on-demand online ordering platform in the MENA region, has appointed Bader Al-Ghanim as Chief International Officer, a newly established role aimed at strengthening collaboration and driving consistent execution across markets. The appointment underscores talabat's commitment to leading high-performing local teams while bringing its quick commerce offering closer to the core of the business.



talabat's Bader Al-Ghanim

Commenting on the appointment, Toon Gysels, Chief Executive Officer at talabat, said: "I'm really excited about Bader's appointment and new role. When he joined talabat, he launched our vertically integrated grocery offering from the get-go, and afterwards shaped our Kuwait business as Managing Director. In his new role, he'll bring our teams even closer together in building our multi-vertical platform and he's got the deep market expertise and strong track record for it."

In his role, Al-Ghanim will oversee talabat's Managing Directors across eight markets, as well as regional key accounts, reinforcing operational alignment and driving consistent performance across the business. He will also continue to oversee the Kuwait market during this transition period.

"I am honored to take on this new role at a pivotal time for talabat's growth journey," said Bader Al-Ghanim, Chief International Officer and Acting Managing Director at talabat Kuwait. "As we continue to grow across our markets, we're focused on

scaling key verticals like grocery and retail, and expanding our non-food offering. I look forward to working closely with our teams to build on the strong foundations already in place, unlocking new opportunities for sustainable, cross-market expansion and long-term value creation."

Al-Ghanim brings extensive leadership experience, having successfully led talabat Kuwait with strong performance and consistent execution. Prior to this, he held leadership roles across Kuwait's shipping, grocery, and retail sectors.

This appointment reflects talabat's continued investment in leadership and its commitment to strengthening its multi-vertical platform across the region, with a growing focus on non-food categories. It also reinforces talabat's support for Kuwait Vision 2035 by contributing to the development of national talent and empowering future leaders across key sectors, including technology and innovation.

Joe & The Juice opens at Mutlaa Al Jahra Complex

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Light Food, a subsidiary of Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Company (AAW), announced today the opening of Joe & The Juice store, located at Mutlaa Al Jahra Complex.

The brand continues to meet the growing demand for its selection of fresh juices, sandwiches, and hot beverages, all served in a modern, energetic setting that promotes an active lifestyle.

This new location caters to a wide audience in Al Jahra, offering a welcoming, all-day experience for both families and young adults. The store features a contemporary design with comfortable indoor and outdoor seating, as well as a drive-through service, ensuring a smooth and convenient ex-

perience for customers on the go.

The Jahra location joins a network of Joe & The Juice stores across Kuwait, including Argania Complex in Shuwaikh, Argan Square in Salmiya, The Walk Mall in Ardiya, Al Andalus Complex in Hawally, The Warehouse in South Sabahiya, Sahara Golf Resort next to the Hunting and Equestrian Club, the GUST campus in West Mishref, Al Khiran Mall, Arraya Centre in Kuwait City, Kuwait International Airport Terminal 1 – Arrivals, Murouj near the Hunting and Equestrian Club, Vibes Complex in Abu Al Hasaniya, Bnaider Resort, which operates 24 hours a day from Thursday to Saturday, 360 Mall, Mishref, Al Shaheed Park, and Hessah Hub in the Hessah Al Mubarak District.



AAW Light Food launches new Joe & The Juice in Jahra.

Trainees showcased projects to business representatives

Promising youth innovations conclude NBK Academy's 30th batch's pitch presentation day

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: National Bank of Kuwait successfully concluded its pitch presentation day for the 30th graduating class of the NBK Academy, which featured a range of innovative projects presented to representatives from various business sectors. This event was part of a comprehensive training program designed to enhance the trainees' presentation skills and enable them to translate theoretical ideas into practical, applicable solutions within the banking environment.

Four teams participated in presenting innovative projects that reflected a distinguished level of preparation and professionalism. The presentations received great interaction and widespread praise from the relevant departments, due to the ambitious ideas and scalable solutions they contained.

The event was professionally organized, allowing trainees to present their projects in an interactive atmosphere in front of the evaluation committee. The presentations were characterized by a high level of readiness and the ability to present ideas with confidence and clarity, which reflected the quality of training they received during the program.

The presentations received great interest from the committee, which commended the trainees' skills in analysis, presentation and tackling questions and praised their ability to develop practical ideas that can be built upon in the future.

NBK is keen to empower young talents through a training environment that allows them to acquire creative thinking skills and work within multidisciplinary teams. The Bank also strives to provide practical training experiences that simulate the real work environment, providing trainees with the opportunity to apply their acquired skills and get to know the nature of banking operations and modern work methods.

On this occasion, **Maryam Al-Nasrallah**, AVP – Talent Management, Group Human Resources at National Bank of Kuwait, commented: "The pitch presentations day is an important milestone in this program, as it reflects NBK's commitment to establishing a work environment based on innovation and enriching capabilities, which is why we are keen to provide initiatives that link training with practical experience and allow trainees to deal with real challenges within the business environment".

"The NBK Academy," Al-Nasrallah added, "has become a key platform for preparing the next generation of bankers, as we work to provide trainees with practical knowledge and enable them to offer solutions that align with the trends of digital transformation. What the trainees presented today reflects the extent to which they benefited from the Academy's programs and their ability to innovate and turn their ideas into feasible projects".

Al-Nasrallah also emphasized that NBK's strategy in developing human capital is a fundamental pillar and a well-established culture, noting that the Academy embodies this vision by ensuring a sustainable flow of national talents capable of driving growth and innovation in the banking industry.

The successful journey of the NBK Academy stems from more than 15 years of continuous work in preparing generations of national banking leaders, who possess high skills in various disciplines.

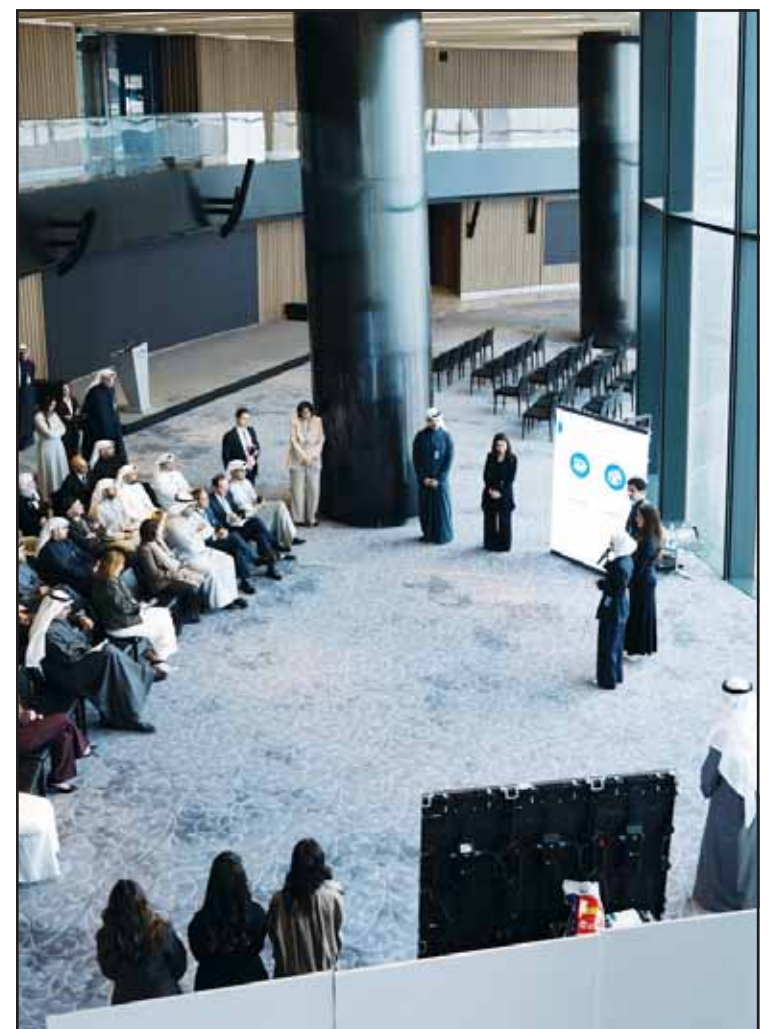
It is worth noting that NBK continues to reinforce its leadership in



Maryam Al-Nasrallah

Al-Nasrallah:

- We are committed to establishing a work environment based on innovation and empowering national talent.
- The presentations reflect the trainees' ability to transform their ideas into feasible projects.
- The Academy's programs represent a pioneering model for linking training with practical experience.
- The trainees' innovations confirm the success of the Academy's creative thinking approach.



National Bank marks successful NBK Academy pitch event.

the private sector by attracting, training, developing and qualifying national talent for banking work. Moreover, NBK maintains the highest employee retention rates and is one of the most attractive institutions for Kuwaiti talent, in addition to being the largest private sector institution in Kuwait in terms of employing national labor.

AAW opens first SQUATWOLF store at The Avenues

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Co. (AAW) today announced the debut of activewear brand SQUATWOLF in Kuwait with the opening of its first store at The Avenues – Phase 4 (Electra). This launch underscores AAW's commitment to expanding its sports and lifestyle portfolio by partnering with top leading brands to strengthen its presence in the Kuwaiti market.

SQUATWOLF is recognized for combining technical innovation with contemporary design. The brand caters to both athletes and everyday fitness enthusiasts, offering apparel engineered for comfort, durability, and high performance. Built on values of discipline, resilience, and commitment, SQUATWOLF represents more than performance gear; it embodies a community driven by determination and personal strength.

The new store provides a streamlined shopping experience, featuring distinct men's and women's sections and a dedicated accessories wall. It showcases the brand's latest collec-



tions across training, running, lifestyle, and casual performance wear.

AAW Deputy CEO Mr. Khalid Al Mutawa said: "We're pleased to partner with SQUATWOLF to introduce the brand to the Kuwaiti market through the opening of its first store at The Avenues. This collaboration re-

flects our commitment to delivering premium, high-quality products that align with the evolving preferences of consumers."

Since its establishment in Dubai in 2016, SQUATWOLF has expanded to seven key locations across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and now Kuwait.

Ali Abdulwahab Al Mutawa Commercial Company is one of the largest retail and distribution companies in Kuwait, operating across multiple sectors and representing more than 100 global brands in the wholesale and retail markets.



Kuwait welcomes SQUATWOLF fitness brand launch.

Gulf Bank returns to creating millionaires and announces 272 winners in the postponed 2025 draws

Nadia Atallah Saad Alsulaimani: Wins the world's largest cash prize of KD 2 Million

Mohamed Jassim Basheer Ahamed: Crowned with the KD 1 million prize



A group photo of the executive management in front of the bank's headquarters after the withdrawals were completed.

■ **Basil Al-Assad:** We congratulate all winners and wish better luck to the rest of our customers in the upcoming draws
 ■ Gulf Bank will continue investing generously to deliver a more distinguished customer experience and further strengthen its position as the Bank of the Future
 ■ **Najla Aleisa:** We thank AIDanah Millionaire Account customers for their valued trust and are excited to continue rewarding them
 ■ We encourage all customers to continue depositing into their accounts and increase their chances of winning in future draws



Winner Mohamed Jassim Basheer receives a check for one million dinars.



Faisal Al-Adsani, Najla Al-Essa, and Basel Al-Assad during the announcement of two million dinars draw.

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Over the course of four days, Gulf Bank resumed crowning winners in the postponed AIDanah Millionaire account draws for 2025. The draws covered 272 winners, with total prizes approaching KD 3.3 million, and included the announcement of two new millionaires joining the growing list that Gulf Bank has been proudly building since 1998.

Having fulfilled all regulatory requirements the postponed monthly draws commenced on April 8 with the announcement of 70 winners, each receiving a prize of KD 1,000.

On April 9 and 12, the quarterly draws took place, with 100 winners announced on each day, each receiving KD 1,000. This brought the total number of quarterly draw winners to 200 across the two days, with combined prize value of KD 200,000.

April 13 marked the completion of the draws with the two most anticipated events: the announcement of the semi-annual KD 1 million prize, won by MOHAMED JASSIM BASHEER AHAME, and the KD 2 million grand prize, won by NADIA ATALLAH SAAD ALSULAIMANI.

The draws were conducted under the supervision of leading international audit firms, including RSM and Grant Thornton, underscoring Gulf Bank's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of transparency and credibility in the draw process.

Precious Opportunities

On this occasion, Mr. Basil Al-Assad, Deputy General Manager of Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank, extended his warmest congratulations to all winners across the various draws, led by the winners of the KD 1 million and KD 2 million prizes. He expressed his gratitude to customers who have chosen the AIDanah Millionaire account as a savings account for achieving their financial goals, and wished the remaining customers greater luck in the upcoming draws across all categories.



Faisal Al-Adsani signs the winner's check for one million dinars.

Mr. Al-Assad added: "We take pride in the trust our customers place in us. We are always committed to creating precious opportunities that help them change their lives for the better and fulfil their hopes and ambitions through the many draws of the AIDanah Millionaire account." He continued: "Our goal at Gulf Bank is to be a trusted partner in realising our customers' financial aspirations."

He went on to highlight the significant advancements that Gulf Bank's banking services have undergone, encompassing the bank's mobile application, innovative products, digital services, branches, ATMs, and contact centre, all working together to make Gulf Bank's services easier, faster, and superior within the banking sector, driven by technology that exceeds customer expectations.

Mr. Al-Assad concluded: "The Bank will continue investing generously to provide an ever more distinguished customer experience, by focusing on building highly advanced digital capabilities and enhancing employee skills, with the aim to further strengthen its position as the

Bank of the Future."

Customer Trust

Gulf Bank's Chief Marketing Officer, Mrs. Najla Aleisa, stated: "We thank our AIDanah Millionaire customers for their valued trust and for maintaining a high level of loyalty to Gulf Bank throughout the period during which draws were temporarily paused."

She added: "We are committed to broadcasting the AIDanah Millionaire draws live to everyone through Gulf Bank's official social media channels. This reinforces our transparency and gives our customers the opportunity to follow the draws in real time and find out whether they are among the lucky winners."

Mrs. Aleisa continued: "Over more than a quarter of a century (the lifetime of the AIDanah Millionaire account), we have succeeded in building lasting relationships with our customers. The AIDanah Millionaire account is one of the savings accounts Gulf Bank offers alongside a wide range of banking solutions that meet customers' aspirations and encourage them to save and invest with ease."

count was designed to foster a culture of saving, making it a suitable choice for all segments of society from children to adults, and across all nationalities. A minimum deposit of KD 200 qualifies customers to enter all draws, including the million KD draws, providing multiple winning opportunities throughout the year. Winning chances increase with higher savings balances and longer holding periods, within a distinctive loyalty program that enhances the overall customer experience. The account also offers full flexibility in deposits and withdrawals at any time.

The AIDanah Millionaire account is more than a savings account. It is a comprehensive savings experience that combines financial discipline with winning opportunities, reflecting Gulf Bank's commitment to empowering its customers to achieve their financial goals with confidence and sustainability.

About Gulf Bank

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The Bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace, in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank provides customers with the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining robust developments in sustainability at environmental, social and governance levels through diverse, strategically selected initiatives. In alignment with Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait," Gulf Bank supports collaborative partnerships and is dedicated to driving meaningful progress across ESG dimensions.



Ahmad Al-Matar announces the names of the winners under the supervision of international auditors.

She concluded: "We are excited to continue rewarding our customers who choose to save in the AIDanah Millionaire account, and we encourage everyone to keep depositing and increase their chances of winning in the upcoming draws."

The AIDanah Millionaire account from Gulf Bank stands as one of Kuwait's most prominent prize-linked savings accounts. Since its launch in 1998, it has continuously empowered customers to build a more stable financial future.

The AIDanah Millionaire ac-

A Secure Financial Future

- * Winners in the 2025 Postponed Draws
- 70 winners in monthly draws — KD 1,000 each
- 100 winners in Q1 draw — KD 1,000 each
- 100 winners in Q2 draw — KD 1,000 each
- One winner of KD 1,000,000
- One winner of KD 2,000,000

AIDanah Millionaire Account by the Numbers

- 1998 — Year the AIDanah Millionaire prize was launched
- ~KD 58 million — Total prizes awarded since launch
- 5,872 customers have won prizes since the account's inception
- 25 millionaires created through AIDanah draws to date
- #1 globally — Largest cash prize linked to a bank account, as recognised by Guinness World Records
- KD 200 — Minimum deposit to qualify for the KD 1 million and KD 1.5 million draws

*** Be the Next Millionaire**

If you wish to increase your chances of winning in the upcoming draws, increase your deposits today. To participate in the upcoming monthly, quarterly, and annual AIDanah draws, customers must maintain the minimum balance of KD200.

*** New Winner Participation Restrictions**

- In accordance with Central Bank of Kuwait regulations:
- Winners of prizes below KD50,000 will be suspended from participating in all draws for a period of 3 months.
 - Winners of prizes above KD50,000 will be suspended from participating in all draws for a period of 1 year.

*** "Let's Be Aware"**

As part of its commitment to promoting financial literacy across all segments of society, and in line with its support of the "Let's Be Aware" financial awareness campaign, supervised by the Central Bank of Kuwait and in collaboration with the Kuwait Banks Association, Gulf Bank ensured that this campaign was actively represented during the draws. Financial awareness messages were broadcast during the intervals between the draws, which were streamed live on the Bank's official social media channels.

*** KEY ANNOUNCEMENT: New AIDanah Draws Lineup**

The AIDanah Millionaire account draws lineup has been enhanced, with total prize value increasing to KD 3,500,000 effective from September 2026, distributed as follows:

- KD 1,000,000 — Semi-Annual Draw for 1 winner
- KD 1,500,000 — Annual Grand Draw for 1 winner
- KD 200,000 — Distributed across 5 draws for 5 winners

*** KEY ANNOUNCEMENT: H1 2026 Draw Schedule**

- 40 winners in monthly draws, KD 1,000 each: Two draws on 13 May and one draw on 19 June and 8 July.
- 100 winners in the quarterly draw, KD 1,000 each: Draw on 13 May July
- KD 1,000,000: Draw on 8 July

'Project Hail Mary' maintains strong run in week four

'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie' rockets to \$629m worldwide

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP) — "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie" enjoyed otherworldly success at the box office in its second weekend in theaters.

The Universal and Illumination sequel added \$69 million from 4,284 theaters in the US and Canada, according to studio estimates Sunday. That brings its running domestic total to \$308.1 million and its global total to \$629 million.

That's a 48% drop from the film's first weekend in theaters, a fairly modest decline for a blockbuster. But the chasm between this movie and the first continues to grow. By its second weekend in 2023, "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" — which was much better reviewed than its follow-up — had earned over \$353 million domestically. Still, the sequel is an unabashed hit by any measure, having cost only \$110 million to produce.

Paul Dergarabedian, the head of marketplace trends for Comscore, said "it's a very respectable" hold.

"For the film to already be over \$300 million is just astonishing," Dergarabedian said, noting that the majority of tickets were likely sold at lower prices for children. "To get to these box office milestones is all the more impressive."

The movie is also helping power up box office momentum before the summer movie season begins in May.

The weekend's big new opener was also a Universal release: The travelogue romantic comedy "You, Me & Tuscany," starring Halle Bailey and Regé-Jean Page of "Bridgerton" fame. It debuted in fourth place with an estimated \$8 million from 3,151 screens against a reported production budget of \$18 million. Women made up an overwhelming 80% of the audience.

Directed by Kat Coiro, the movie arrived in theaters with mixed to positive reviews. According to a review by The Associated Press, it's "a movie as



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Princess Peach, voiced by Anya Taylor-Joy, (left), and Mario, voiced by Chris Pratt, in a scene from 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie.' (AP)

frothy and insubstantial as the foam on a nice cappuccino." It currently holds a 68% critic score on Rotten Tomatoes.

Audiences seemed to enjoy it a bit more. According to PostTrak exit polls,

77% of ticket buyers said they would "definitely recommend" it to friends. It also got an A- on CinemaScore.

Jim Orr, Universal's head of domestic distribution, said the audience reaction scores, "point to a very nice run at the box office."

Second place at the box office this week went to Amazon MGM Studios' "Project Hail Mary," which is still drawing double-digit ticket sales in its fourth weekend. It added an estimated \$24.6 million from Friday to Sunday, bringing its domestic total to \$256.7 million. Worldwide, it has earned \$510.6 million. "The Drama" took third place in its second weekend, with \$8.7 million. The buzzy A24 movie about an engaged couple played by Robert Pattinson and Zendaya fell only 38%, bringing its domestic total to \$30.8 million and its worldwide total to \$65 million.

Disney and Pixar's "Hoppers" rounded out the top five in its sixth weekend with \$4.1 million. The animated movie has made \$354.4 million globally to date.

Another bright spot was the Japanese video game adaptation "Exit 8," which made \$1.4 million from only 490 theaters and landed in seventh place. Directed by Genki Kawamura, the Neon-distributed film is sitting at 95% on Rotten Tomatoes.

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore: 1. "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," \$69 million; 2. "Project Hail Mary," \$24.6 million; 3. "The Drama," \$8.7 million; 4. "You, Me & Tuscany," \$8 million; 5. "Hoppers," \$4.1 million; 6. "Faces of Death," \$1.7 million;

7. "Exit 8," \$1.4 million; 8. "A Great Awakening," \$1.3 million; 9. "Reminders of Him," \$1 million and 10. "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come," \$867,000.

Awards



From left: Rosamund Pike, Monica Barbaro, Hayley Squires, Emilia Fox and Cate Blanchett pose for photographers upon arrival at the Olivier Awards in London, England, Sunday, April 12. (AP)



From left: Elizabeth Hurley, Jo Foster, Amelia Dimoldenberg, Jo Whaley and Kate Yuille pose for photographers upon arrival at the Olivier Awards in London, England, Sunday, April 12. (AP)

Legal action

Spears in rehab after DUI arrest

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP) — Britney Spears has entered a substance abuse treatment facility just over a month after she was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.



Spears

A representative for Spears said in an email to The Associated Press on Sunday that the 44-year-old pop superstar had voluntarily checked herself into the facility.

On March 5, California Highway Patrol officers received a report that a BMW was driving fast and erratically on US 101 in Ventura County near the Los Angeles County line, the CHP said.

Spears, who lives in the area, took a series of field sobriety tests and was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of a combination of alcohol and drugs, authorities said. She was taken to a county jail and released several hours later.

Investigators turned over the case on March 23 to the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, which plans to make a decision on charges against Spears before a scheduled May 4 court date.

A representative at the time called Spears' actions "completely inexcusable" and said it would ideally be "the first step in long overdue change that needs to occur in Britney's life."

Rosamund Pike, Jack Holden take top acting honors

'Paddington' wins big at London's Olivier Awards

LONDON, April 13, (AP) — Home-grown hit "Paddington The Musical" was the big winner at London's Olivier Awards on Sunday, where the marmalade-loving bear from Peru won seven trophies, including best new musical.

The prizes celebrating achievements in theater, opera and dance are Britain's equivalent of Broadway's Tony Awards.

Based on Michael Bond's stories about a duffel-coated bear seeking a new home in London, "Paddington The Musical" was written by playwright Jessica Swale and songwriter Tom Fletcher of the band McFly.

Bond's books have been mulched since the 1950s, and in recent years Paddington has become a British icon through three successful movies and an on-screen appearance with Queen Elizabeth II in 2022, just weeks before her death.

The musical has proved a major success since it opened in November, with audiences embracing the cuddly central character, brought to life through a blend of live acting and puppetry.

Its Olivier wins included a joint best actor in a musical award for James Hameed and Arti Shah, who together play the role. Hameed provides the voice and remote puppetry, while Shah — the first woman to win a best-actor Olivier — inhabits the bear costume onstage.

Hameed urged people to embrace the Paddington stories' message of welcoming immigrants and strangers. "Paddington reminds us to be welcoming, inquisitive and most importantly, kind," he said.

Cast members Tom Edden and Victoria Hamilton-Barritt won the supporting performer prizes, and the show also took trophies for director



Rachel Zegler poses for photographers upon arrival at the Olivier Awards in London, England, Sunday, April 12. (AP)

Luke Sheppard and for both set and costume design.

Sheppard hinted that this "love letter to London" could one day be Broadway-bound. "It would be a dream for Paddington to pack his suitcase and visit some other cities around the world," the director said backstage. "So watch this space."

Rachel Zegler was named best actress in a musical for her starring role in "Evita." Playing Argentine first lady Eva Peron, Zegler performed the song "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina" on an exterior balcony, attracting large crowds to the street every night while theatergoers inside watched on screens.

A much-praised production of Stephen Sondheim's twisted fairy tale journey "Into the Woods" won the prize for best musical revival, and a second award for lighting.

In the nonmusical categories, Rosamund Pike was named best actress for playing a judge forced to

question the justice system and her own ethics in "Inter Alia." She said doing the one-woman show, her first stage play in 14 years, was an "exhilarating risk."

Jack Holden took the best actor prize for playing multiple roles in small-town murder mystery "Kenrex."

"All My Sons" was named best revival, with Paapa Essiedu winning the best supporting actress prize for Arthur Miller's classic drama.

Julie Hesmondhalgh took home the best supporting actress prize for "Punch." The true-life crime and redemption story, which had a Broadway run last year, was also named best new play.

Playwright James Graham said it had been "one of the honors of my life" to dramatize the story of Jacob Dunne, who killed another man with a single punch in a fight but went on to reconciliation with the victim's

family. Graham was joined onstage by Dunne and the victim's mother, Joan Scourfield.

The Olivier Awards were founded in 1976 and named after the late actor-director Laurence Olivier. The winners are chosen by voting groups of stage professionals and theatergoers.

"Ted Lasso" star Nick Mohammed hosted the 50th anniversary edition of the awards at a star-studded ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall, where Ian McKellen, Helen Mirren, Vanessa Williams and Andrew Lloyd Webber were among the trophy presenters.

The ceremony included performances from nominated musicals and numbers marking two significant anniversaries: 40 years of Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera," and 20 years of "Wicked" in the West End.

Elaine Paige, star of hit musicals including "Cats," "Evita," "Sunset Boulevard" and "Piaf," received this year's Special Award.

The upbeat ceremony reflected the mood of London theater, which is celebrating a strong post-pandemic return. The Society of London Theater, an industry umbrella group, says ticket sales have surpassed the levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. Shows in the West End — the collective name for London's theaterland — attracted 17.6 million visitors in 2025, 3 million more than Broadway.

But there are concerns about rising ticket prices and soaring production budgets, fueled by higher costs for labor, materials and energy.

"Theaters are busier than ever, but many are operating with far less financial headroom," the society said in a report published last month.

The winners of the 2026 Olivier Awards handed out Sunday for

achievement in London theater, opera and dance:

- New Musical: "Paddington The Musical"
- New Play: "Punch"
- New Entertainment or Comedy: "Oh, Mary!"
- Family Show: "The Boy at the Back of the Class"
- Revival: "All My Sons"
- Musical Revival: "Into The Woods"
- Actress-Play: Rosamund Pike, "Inter Alia"
- Actor-Play: Jack Holden, "Kenrex"
- Actress-Musical: Rachel Zegler, "Evita"
- Actor-Musical: James Hameed and Arti Shah, "Paddington The Musical"
- Supporting Actor-Play: Paapa Essiedu, "All My Sons"
- Supporting Actress-Play: Julie Hesmondhalgh, "Punch"
- Supporting Actress-Musical: Victoria Hamilton-Barritt, "Paddington The Musical"
- Supporting Actor-Musical: Tom Edden, "Paddington The Musical"
- Director: Luke Sheppard, "Paddington The Musical"
- Outstanding Musical Contribution: Chris Fenwick and Sean Hayes, "Goodnight Oscar"
- Theater Choreography: "Evita"
- New Opera Production: "Dead Man Walking"
- New Dance Production: "Into the Woods"
- Set Design: "Paddington The Musical"
- Lighting Design: "Into The Woods"
- Sound Design: "Kenrex"
- Costume Design: "Paddington The Musical"
- Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theater: "The Glass Menagerie" at the Yard Theatre
- Special Award: Elaine Paige



This cover image released by Polydor shows 'Cruel World.' (AP)

Singer looks outward with new album

Humberstone embraces new horizon on 'Cruel World'

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP): On her 2023 debut album, "Paint My Bedroom Black," Holly Humberstone considered her interior life, turning to her worries, wishes and emotions for inspiration.

The British singer-songwriter's sophomore album, "Cruel World," sees Humberstone take her atmospheric pop and look outward - at the space between breakups, long distance relationships, connections and settings that make up a life.

If before, she looked to mute out color ("I'm gonna paint my bedroom black," as she once sang) here, she embraces shades of the world around her. Lyrically, Humberstone draws on their symbolism (the guitar-and-sax retro "Red Chevy," the psychedelic "Blue Dream," the plaintive ballad "Peachy").

Yellow appears as a "patch of golden sun," on

"Lucy," an ode to her sisters and girlhood; orange is the mandarin light that interrupts "Blue Dream"; green is the globe that "keeps on spinning to the beat" on the frantic love song "To Love Somebody."

"White Noise" looks for comfort in the external: "So play a sad song DJ." Humberstone pleads over the country-tinged track, chimes and a lap steel sneaking in beneath synths and percussion.

"I just want to sway tonight," she sings. She's overstimulated but still looks to a busy dance floor for relief.

Sonically, Humberstone has always embraced abundance. She's succeeded in building a lush musical world since her early EPs, because of her knack for pairing cool, vulnerable lyrics with her temporal sound, which combines live instrumentation with electronics.

And it's apparent from the top: The album starts

with the 45-second instrumental "So It Starts ...", strings warming up over synths that build to a cinematic climax.

The driving melody carries into "Make It All Better," and the strings return on album closer "Beauty Pageant," which also samples the French love song "Le Coup D'soleil."

Throughout the album, Humberstone's melodies are employed with full confidence.

On the intro, they are melted together like a wax seal for the project.

"Open your window darling, the world is in full bloom," Humberstone coos over acoustic guitar on "Lucy."

The reminder is there for someone else, but it also feels like acknowledgment from Humberstone that despite heartache and uncertainty, she's ready to embrace it all. And by stepping out of herself, she's reached a new horizon.

Variety

PARIS: Are you feeling lucky? A raffle in France is offering the chance to win a portrait by Pablo Picasso for the price of a 100-euro (\$117) ticket, with proceeds going to Alzheimer's research.

The draw is on Tuesday at Christie's auction house in Paris.

The inaugural "1 Picasso for 100 euros" raffle, in 2013, saw a fire-sprinkler worker in Pennsylvania win "Man in the Opera Hat," which the Spanish master painted in 1914 during his Cubist period.

A second Picasso, the oil-on-canvas "Nature Morte," was raffled off in 2020 and made a very happy mom of Claudia Borggno, an accountant in Italy. Her son bought her the ticket as a Christmas present.

That still life, painted in 1921, was purchased for the raffle from billionaire art collector David Nahmad, who argued in a rare Associated Press interview that Picasso would have approved of raffling his work. Picasso died in 1973.

"Picasso was very generous. He gave paintings to his driver, his tailor," Nahmad said. "He wanted his art to be collected by all kinds of people, not only by the super-rich."

The gouache on paper "Tête de Femme," meaning "head of a woman," up for grabs next week was painted by Picasso in 1941.

The Alzheimer Research Foundation, the charity raffle's organizer, is based in one of Paris' leading public hospitals and says it has become France's leading private financier of Alzheimer-related medical research since its founding in 2004.. (AP)

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MILAN: Stefano Gabbana has stepped down as chairman of the Italian fashion house that he co-founded with Domenico Dolce, but will continue in his creative role, the company said on Friday.

Gabbana's resignation from oversight roles was effective Jan. 1. Alfonso Dolce, Domenico Dolce's brother, was named chairman later that month, according to the company's filing with the Milan chamber of commerce.

Dolce & Gabbana in a statement called the move "a natural evolution of its organizational structure and governance."

The news was first reported by Bloomberg, which cited sources saying that Gabbana, 63, was considering options to exit his 40% stake in the 41-year-old fashion house.

Dolce & Gabbana's lenders are up to 150 million euros in new funding as part of a broader refinancing of the fashion house's 450 million euros (\$525.7 million) of debt, Bloomberg reported. It added that the company was considering the disposal of real estate and the renewal of licences to raise money.

Dolce & Gabbana declined comment on the company's debt, citing talks with bankers. (AP)

Events



Olivia Munn arrives at a PaleyFest screening of 'Your Friends and Neighbors' on Saturday, April 11, at Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Rachel Stubington arrives at an FYC event for 'Shrinking' on Sunday, April 12, at Paramount Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)

Tech Tip

iPod makes a quiet comeback in the streaming era

New generation is reviving iPod for distraction-free listening

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): Remember the iPod? It's making a quiet comeback.

Four years after Apple killed off its digital music player, secondhand sales are surging. It's fueled in part by young people interested not just in its retro looks but a desire to listen to music in a focused way and with playlists not determined by algorithms.

"There's a growing trend, particularly amongst younger users, to mitigate the ease with which they can be distracted by smartphones, often driven by mental health and well-being concerns," said Ben Wood, chief analyst at CCS Insight. "Having a dedicated music device, such as an iPod, is a good way to reduce your dependence on a smartphone and avoid being drawn into other activities, like doomscrolling through social media feeds, when you only really want to listen to music."

If you're interested in joining the iPod revival, here are some pointers:

You can't buy a new iPod anymore but it's not too hard to get your hands on a used one. There are still a lot of them around because Apple sold 450 million over two decades.

There's a thriving secondhand market, as evidenced by thousands of listings for used iPods on eBay. "Based on my discussions with people in the market, there has definitely been renewed interest in refurbished iPods," said Wood.

But watch out, because eBay, strangely, also has thousands of listings for new iPods. On closer inspection, they're from China-based sellers and some buyers have left feedback complaining they received a used or refurbished device in counterfeit packaging.

Facebook Marketplace, peer-to-peer reselling site Mercari and refurbished electronics platform Back Market also have

plenty of listings. Back Market, which operates in the US, Japan and more than a dozen European countries, said iPod sales last year jumped 48% from 2024.

There are also businesses dedicated to selling refurbished iPods.

And there's a chance someone you know has one gathering dust in a drawer somewhere. My 16-year-old daughter recently discovered her grandmother's silver iPod Nano, complete with original charging cable and white earphones, in a guest room nightstand during a recent visit.

For support, there's a vibrant online community of users swapping tips and sharing pictures of their devices, many with aftermarket modifications like faceplates in non-original colors.

There's not just one single style of iPod.

The original iPod, released in 2001, came with a scroll wheel that became a design signature. When the sixth generation was released, Apple started calling it the Classic.

It was followed by the smaller Mini and Nano versions, and the Shuffle, which had no screen. Then came the Touch, which had a glass touch screen and ran on iOS to support mobile apps - basically an iPhone without the phone.

If you're not sure which model you have, check Apple's identification page.

So you've found grandma's old iPod, but does it work? The battery could be dead so you will need a charging cable.

Later generations of the iPod Touch used Apple's Lightning cable but all other models require a 30-pin charging cable, which has a distinctive wide, flat plug. Apple doesn't make these anymore but replacements are available from aftermarket manufacturers.

If charging doesn't revive it, the battery might need re-



An iPod is displayed after its introduction by Apple CEO Steve Jobs during a news conference, Oct. 23, 2001, in Cupertino, Calif. (AP)

placing. Or maybe there's something else wrong, like a broken earphone jack or a damaged display. Apple still repairs iPods, but only for the two final generations of the Touch.

You can send it to a repair service or fix it yourself if you're feeling handy. Repair website iFixit has detailed step-by-step repair guides for replacing various components. You'll need to source spare parts yourself.

iPod Touch owners should beware of software limitations. The most recent version of Apple's operating system

that will work on the seventh generation iPod Touch - the last version ever sold - is iOS 15, and previous models are limited to even older versions.

This is not an issue with other iPod variants because they don't run iOS.

Grandma's silver iPod Nano appeared to be working fine, but I decided to start fresh by doing a factory reset to wipe the audio files left on it and restore the original settings. You'll need a computer, either a Mac or Windows, to do this. Apple has a page that outlines the steps.

Those of you with Windows computers can use Apple's iTunes program to manage your iPod and sync up your song library. To add digital music files from your computer, drag the files into iTunes and drop them in the iPod's music library. To add a song that you've bought previously in iTunes, download it first to your computer, right click on it and select "Add to Device."

Apple discontinued iTunes for MacOS in 2019 so Mac computer users will have to use Apple Music, but it's an equally easy process of dragging and dropping files.

Take note, Apple Music subscribers: you should be able to stream music on later generations of the iPod Touch. But for every other type of iPod, you'll only be able to add and listen to music files ripped from a CD or purchased from a digital music platform.

Most iPods are pretty basic, in part because they're limited by the device's onboard firmware.

But part of the iPod's appeal is that it's easy for hobbyists to tinker with them, said Wood.

"There is definitely a movement of people looking to take iPods and modify them for modern use," he said.

Books

Author turns cruise experience into 'American Fantasy'

On a New Kids on the Block cruise, Emma Straub found a way past grief

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): Emma Straub wrote her 2022 novel "This Time Tomorrow" - about a woman who is able to return to her 16th birthday and spend time with her father as a healthy young man - as her own father's health was declining. It was a love letter to the father-daughter bond. A few months later, her father, the novelist Peter Straub, died.

She was deep in grief when an advertisement for a New Kids on the Block fan cruise caught her attention.

She ended up among the thousands of fans who set sail on a four-day cruise with the boy band on board.

They performed intimate concerts and other events were organized for their supporters to mingle. Straub decided then and there it was perfect setting for her next book.

"For the first time, I had the whole idea," said the author of "Modern Lovers," "All Adults Here" and "The Vacationers." "I knew it was a book. I could write it and I would have the time of my life doing it."

The result was "American Fantasy," released Tuesday. Her protagonist is Annie, a newly single empty-nester who agrees to embark on a fan cruise for a '90s boy band and ends up forming a connection with one of its members.

Straub spoke with The Associated Press about her new book. Responses have been condensed for clarity and brevity.

AP: Why build your story around a fan cruise?

Straub: My everyday life is quite small. I walk the same loop, from my bookstore to my kid's school and home. When I leave that, I'm reminded there's a great big world out there. The cruise in particular struck me as novelistic from the get-go. You have a certain number of people trapped together in a small space for a certain number of days. That's a novel right there.

AP: What did you think when you got there?



Author Emma Straub poses for a portrait in New York on Monday, March 23, 2026. (AP)

Straub: I went in feeling like an observer. A fan, but really an observer, because it all felt so foreign. Pretty quickly, I realized I wasn't any better than anyone else there. I eavesdropped on everything and knew 100% of the New Kids references they were talking about. What impressed me was how much these women had spent so much time and energy planning their experience. They wore costumes, decorated the doors of their cabins and made gifts for each other. These were middle-aged women who had given themselves the gift of doing something purely for their own pleasure. I had never seen anything quite like it.

AP: Your main character, Annie, is 50 and going through a divorce. Why put her at that crossroads?

Straub: I have so many women friends who have made enormous changes between 40 and 55. They have changed careers, gone back to school, moved across the country, gotten divorced and gotten remarried. I grew up thinking of middle age as a downward slope. That's just not true. We are all still making choices and doing things for the first time. I wanted to spend time with a character who was in that struggle of realizing that and ultimately able to embrace it.

AP: What other research did you do for the book?

Straub: I got to know Joe McIntyre from the New Kids. He is smart and funny, and introspective. I wanted to know what it's like to be a middle-aged man who has had this life, and a relationship with these other men who you've known for 40 years, whether you love them or hate them, you're truly stuck in this work environment. You are yoked to these other men for your entire life. What does that feel like? How does it feel to have these kinds of fans? How it feels to grow up in the public eye? And I was able to ask him all these questions. He was so generous with me.

AP: You and your husband co-own the Brooklyn bookstores Books Are Magic. What have you learned about the publishing world as a bookseller?

Straub: In an alternate world, I would be able to say, the things that are selling the most right now are murder thrillers with this kind of protagonist or, you know, romantasy with dragons or whatever, so I'm going to do that. But, that's not how writing works, you know? If I've learned anything, it is that the best book you can write is always the one that is most personal and most authentic to you. And so, alas, I've yet to have a dragon in one of my books.

HEALTH/SCIENCE

Hearing loss can go unnoticed, doctors warn

Hearing aids can be a big step but this dancer has no regrets

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP) — Sara Mearns was missing her cues.

She couldn't hear what her dance partner was saying from across the studio. She was late for her entrances because the music sounded too soft.

Without telling anyone, she finally made an appointment to get her hearing checked.

Mearns learned that she had hearing loss. After years of isolation, she got the tools to make sense of a world that had gotten muffled.

Now, she's one of the first dancers with the New York City Ballet to wear hearing aids during performances.

"I feel like it's a whole new chapter of my life," Mearns, 40, said in an interview with the AP.

While hearing loss is common in older adults, it can happen at any age and can be caused by things like nerve damage, infection or head trauma. For Mearns, it may have been a blend of factors including genetics, medical conditions and exposure to loud noise.

According to the National Institutes of Health, less than a fifth of American adults aged 20 to 69 who could benefit from wearing hearing aids have ever used them. That's due to lack of access, shame or embarrassment and just not knowing the symptoms.

"Hearing loss is often not detected by the person because what they can't hear, they don't know," said Dr. Anil Lalwani, a hearing expert with Columbia University Irving

Medical Center.

Still, "there are a lot of symptoms of hearing loss that are not hearing less," said Dr. Maura Cosetti with Mount Sinai's New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.

One thing to look out for is saying "what" more often, and not being able to hear friends and family in noisy settings like restaurants. Other symptoms include ringing, a sensation like something is stuck in the ears or conversations sounding muffled.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mearns couldn't hear conversations when people were wearing masks.

"I realized that I was reading everybody's lips to understand what they were saying," she said.

Experts say to let a doctor know if you think you may be experiencing symptoms of hearing loss. They can help you connect with an audiologist or an ear, nose and throat specialist to get a hearing test.

Cosetti with Mount Sinai said the Mimi Hearing Test app can be a useful resource to get a sense of your hearing. Seeing a professional is the best way to figure out what's actually going on - like whether your ears are just plugged up with wax or fluid.

Hearing aids fine-tune the sound signal that enters the brain, enhancing speech while lowering background noise. They can be expensive, but many are now available over the counter. Some Apple AirPods also can be used as hearing aids.



Sara Mearns, principal dancer at New York City Ballet, wearing hearing aids on March 17, 2026, in New York. (AP)

For more severe forms of hearing loss, doctors may recommend a device called a cochlear implant, which converts sounds into electrical signals that are sent to the brain. These include a surgically inserted component and can take months to get used to.

Researchers warn of governance gaps

AI can design, run thousands of lab experiments ... humanity isn't ready

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

By Stephen D. Turner
University of Virginia

Artificial intelligence is rapidly learning to autonomously design and run biological experiments, but the systems intended to govern those capabilities are struggling to keep pace.

AI company OpenAI and biotech company Ginkgo Bioworks announced in February 2026 that OpenAI's flagship model GPT-5 had autonomously designed and run 36,000 biological experiments. It did this through a robotic cloud laboratory, a facility where automated equipment controlled remotely by computers carries out experiments. The AI model proposed study designs, and robots carried them out and fed the data back to the model for the next round. Humans set the goal, and the machines did much of the work in the lab, cutting the cost of producing a desired protein by 40%.

This is programmable biology: designing biological components on a computer and building them in the physical world, with AI closing the loop.

For decades, biology mostly moved from observation toward understanding. Scientists sequenced the genomes of organisms to catalog all of their DNA, learning how genes encode the proteins that carry out life's functions. The invention of tools like CRISPR then allowed scientists to edit DNA for specific purposes, such as disabling a gene linked to disease. AI is now accelerating a third phase, where computers can both design biological systems and rapidly test them.

The process looks less like traditional benchwork in a lab and more like engineering: design, build, test, learn and repeat. Where a traditional experiment might test a single hypothesis, AI-driven programmable biology explores thousands of design variations in parallel, iterating the way an engineer refines a prototype.

Regulations

As a data scientist who studies genomics and biosecurity, I research how AI is reshaping biological research and what safeguards that demands. Current safety measures and regulations have not kept pace with these capabilities, and the gap between what AI can do in biology and what governance systems are prepared to handle is growing.

The clearest example of how researchers are using AI to automate research is AI-accelerated protein design.

Proteins are the molecular machines that carry out most functions in living cells. Designing new ones has traditionally required years of trial and error because even small changes to a protein's sequence can alter its shape and function in unpredictable ways.

Protein language models, which are AI systems trained on millions of natural protein sequences, can quickly predict how mutations will change a protein's behavior or design new proteins. These AI models are designing potential new drugs and speeding vaccine development.

Paired with automated labs, these models create tight loops of experimentation and revision, testing thousands of variations in days rather than the months or years a human team would need.

Faster protein engineering could mean faster responses to emerging infections and cheaper drugs.

Myrrh explored for its role in natural remedies

Drought threatens myrrh tree key to luxury perfumes and African incomes

AFCADDE, Ethiopia, April 13, (AP) — The critical note in some of the world's most well-known perfumes is myrrh, a tree resin from the Horn of Africa that is under pressure from what experts say has been a historic drought. Threatened by the lack of water and nibbled by starving livestock, the trees that once formed a dense forest in the Somali region of Ethiopia are in danger, locals say.

Earlier this year, researchers supported by the American Herbal Products Association, a trade group, and Born Global, a nonprofit, visited a source of the prized resin that makes its way to global markets from some of the most vulnerable places on earth. Their goal was to ensure that those who harvest the resin get more of the direct profits instead of middlemen along the opaque supply chain.

Ethiopia is a major source of myrrh, which has been used in beauty, health and religious practices since at least ancient Egypt. Traditional harvesting in the region has not changed, which helps to protect the trees and produces the highest quality resin.

Myrrh's hand-harvested nature raises its price, but those doing the work see little of the profit. Collecting a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of the resin brings as little as \$3.50 and as much as \$10.

That's far from the prices for the



Amid a drought, a lake that should be full now, remains dry Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, outside Afcadde, Ethiopia. (AP)

perfumes it helps to create, which are marketed by well-known fashion brands like Tom Ford, Comme des Garçons and Jo Malone, and sold at prices as high as \$500 a bottle.

Meanwhile, curiosity about myrrh's other potential uses is growing with increased global interest in natural remedies.

For now, most myrrh from this part of eastern Ethiopia is purchased by traders from neighboring Somalia. Ethiopia collects no taxes on the goods.

Local residents hope more visibility will help them as the climate crisis

threatens their ways of life.

"They expressed hope that a direct market would enable them to secure better prices, ensuring sustainable livelihoods," said Abdinasir Abdikadir Aweys, senior researcher with the Somali Regional Pastoral and Agro-Pastoral Research Institute and a member of the research team.

The researchers were led by Anjanette DeCarlo, an expert in sustainable supply chains and resins at the University of Vermont, and Stephen Johnson, resin expert and owner of FairSource Botanicals. They found that communities practice traditional harvesting by collecting resin from trees' naturally occurring wounds instead of by making intentional cuts, which makes trees more vulnerable to pests and disease.

"Traditional practice is in balance and protects trees. It should be celebrated," DeCarlo said.

But the drought worried the team. The annual rains have been falling over the past several years, interrupted in 2023 by devastating flooding.

The arid region has long seen droughts, but this one has been historic. Experts have blamed the changing climate.

Myrrh harvesting is threatened. While adult trees are generally healthy, they are producing less resin. And fewer young trees are surviving.



In this image provided by NASA, The Artemis II crew captured this view of an Earthset on Monday, April 6, as they flew around the Moon. (AP)

Triumphant moon flyby fuels next space missions

NASA already has Artemis III in its sights

HOUSTON, April 13, (AP) — Never-before-glimpsed views of the moon's far side. Check. Total solar eclipse gracing the lunar scene. Check. New distance record for humanity. Check.

With NASA's lunar comeback a galactic-sized smash thanks to Artemis II, the world is wondering: What's next? And how do you top that?

"To people all around the world who look up and dream about what is possible, the long wait is over," NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said as he introduced Artemis II commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canada's Jeremy Hansen at Saturday's jubilant homecoming celebration.

Now that the first lunar travelers in more than a half-century are safely back in Houston with their families, NASA has Artemis III in its sights.

"The next mission's right around the corner," entry flight director Rick Henfling observed following the crew's Pacific splashdown on Friday.

In a mission recently added to the docket for next year, Artemis III's yet-to-be named astronauts will practice docking their Orion capsule with a lunar lander or two in orbit around Earth. Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin are racing to have their company's lander ready first.

Musk's Starship and Bezos' Blue Moon are vying for the all-important Artemis IV moon landing in 2028. Two astronauts will aim for the south polar region, the preferred location for Isaacman's envisioned \$20 billion to \$30 billion moon base. Vast amounts of ice are almost certainly hidden in permanently shadowed craters there - ice that could provide water and rocket fuel.

The docking mechanism for Artemis III's close-to-home trial run is already at Florida's Kennedy Space Center. The latest model Starship is close to launching on a test flight from South Texas, and a scaled-down version of Blue Moon will attempt a lunar landing later this year.

NASA promises to announce the Artemis III crew "soon." Like 1969's Apollo 9, Artemis III aims to reduce risk for the moon landings that follow.

Apollo 9 astronaut Rusty Schweickart loved flying the lunar module in low-Earth orbit - "a test pilot's dream." But there's no question, he noted, that "the real astronauts" at least in the public's mind were the ones who walked on the moon.

Wiseman and his crew put their passion and feelings on full display as they flew around the moon and back, choking up over lost loved ones as well as those left behind on Earth.

During their nearly 10-day journey, they tearfully requested that a fresh, bright lunar crater be named after Wiseman's late wife, Carroll, who died of cancer in 2020. They also openly shared their love for one another and Planet Earth, an exquisite yet delicate oasis in the black void that they said needs better care.

Artemis II included the first woman, the first person of color and the first non-US citizen to fly to the moon.

"Wonderful communicators, almost poets," Isaacman said from the recovery ship while awaiting their return.

Apollo's manly, all-business moon crews of the 1960s and 1970s certainly did not do group hugs.

For those old enough to remember Apollo, Artemis - Apollo's twin sister in Greek mythology - couldn't come fast enough.

Author Andy Chaikin said he felt like Rip Van Winkle awakening from a nearly 54-year nap. His 1994 biography "A Man on the Moon" led to the HBO miniseries "From the Earth to the Moon."

"It's amazing how far we've come and how different this experience is from back then," Chaikin said from Johnson Space Center late last week.

The hardest part, according to NASA Associate Administrator Amit Kshatriya, is becoming so close to the crews and their families and then blasting them to the moon. He anxiously monitored Friday's reentry alongside the astronauts' spouses and children.

"You know what's at stake," Kshatriya confided afterward. "It's going to take risk to explore, but you have to make sure you find the right line between being paralyzed by it and being able to manage it."

Families urged to vaccinate children against polio

Pakistan's polio drive hit by militant attack

ISLAMABAD, April 13, (AP) — Suspected militants opened fire on a vehicle carrying police officers assigned to protect polio workers in northwestern Pakistan on Tuesday, killing one of them and wounding four others before fleeing the scene, police said. Two attackers were killed when police returned fire.

The shooting occurred in Hangu, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan, shortly after Pakistan launched its second nationwide anti-polio campaign of the year, according to local police official Mahmood Alam.

No group immediately claimed responsibility, but suspicion is likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban and local militant groups, which often carry out similar attacks in the region and elsewhere. Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan remain the only countries where polio has not been eradicated, according to the World Health Organization.

First lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari urged families to ensure their children are vaccinated during the weeklong drive, which aims to reach more than 45 million children under 5 across all provinces and regions. She said the campaign will be conducted in coordination with Afghanistan, reflecting a shared commitment to interrupt cross-border transmission and close remaining gaps.

Aseefa is the daughter of President Asif Ali Zardari and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was killed in a 2007 gun and bomb attack by militants, and who had personally overseen initiatives aimed at eliminating polio during her tenure. In a statement, she said "Pakistan stands at a crucial moment in the fight against polio." She said while the country is closer than ever to eradication, "the final stretch remains the most challenging."

Highlighting recent gains, she said 31 polio cases were reported nationwide in 2025, while only one case has so far been recorded so far this year, but warned against complacency.

While Pakistan primarily uses door-to-door vaccination teams to reach children at their homes, Afghanistan gener-



A health worker administers a polio vaccine to a child in Lahore, Pakistan, Monday, April 13. (AP)

ally relies on fixed vaccination sites and health facilities, where parents are asked to bring their children for immunization.

In Kabul, Sharafat Zaman, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, said the first national polio vaccination campaign of the year has begun in Afghanistan in coordination with international partners, aiming to vaccinate around 12.6 million children under the age of 5 across the country. He said the campaign has been delayed in some areas due to cold weather.

Zaman urged parents, religious scholars and community leaders to ensure maximum participation in the campaign, stressing that polio can only be prevented through vaccination.

Pakistan's polio eradication program has been running anti-polio campaigns for years, though health workers and the police assigned to protect them are often targeted by militants who falsely claim the vaccination campaigns are a Western conspiracy to sterilize children.

Toronto routs Brooklyn to clinch playoff berth



Los Angeles Clippers guard Darius Garland (10) drives against Golden State Warriors center Al Horford (20) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Inglewood, Calif. (AP)



Los Angeles Lakers forward Dalton Knecht (4) is defended by Utah Jazz guard Hayden Gray as he goes up for a basket during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. (AP)

TORONTO, April 13, (AP): RJ Barrett scored 26 points, Scottie Barnes had 18 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists for his ninth career triple-double, and the Toronto Raptors clinched their first playoff berth in four seasons by beating the Brooklyn Nets 136-101 in the regular-season finale for both teams.

Atlanta's loss to Miami and Orlando's loss at Boston gave Toronto the fifth seed in the East and a first-round matchup with fourth-seeded Cleveland.

The Raptors and Hawks both finished 46-36 but Toronto swept the season series 4-0.

Nuggets 128, Spurs 118

In San Antonio, Nikola Jokic scored 23 points in the first half of his 65th game to become NBA award eligible and the Denver Nuggets beat the San Antonio Spurs to secure the No. 3 seed in the Western Conference.

Denver had seven players score in double figures, including Julian Strawther with 25 points and Jonas Valanciunas, who finished with 16 points and 11 rebounds.

De'Aaron Fox scored 24 points to lead San Antonio, which had a three-game winning streak snapped. Stephon Castle added 10 points, 11 rebounds and nine assists in his return from a two-game absence due to left foot soreness.

Trail Blazers 122, Kings 110

In Portland, Deni Avdija had 25 points and 10 assists, Jrue Holiday scored 23 points, and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Sacramento Kings to clinch the No. 8 seed and a spot in the Western Conference play-in tournament.

Portland will head to Phoenix to play the seventh-seeded Suns on Tuesday night, with the winner advancing to a first-round series against the San Antonio Spurs.

Clippers 115, Warriors 110

In Inglewood, Benedict Mathurin had 20 points, nine rebounds and eight assists off the bench, and the Los Angeles Clippers defeated the Golden State Warriors to set up a rematch in the play-in tournament.

Nuggets top Spurs to claim No. 3 seed

The Clippers settled for the No. 9 seed and will host the 10th-seeded Warriors on Wednesday after Portland beat Sacramento 122-110 to claim the eighth seed. **Hornets 110, Knicks 96**

In New York, LaMelo Ball and Brandon Miller each scored 19 points, Kon Knueppel made three 3-pointers in his record-setting rookie season and the Charlotte Hornets beat the New York Knicks to clinch the No. 9 seed in the Eastern Conference.

Coby White also had 19 points for the Hornets, who will host No. 10 Miami on Tuesday in the play-in tournament. Charlotte will have to win that game and then go on the road Friday and beat the loser of the game between No. 7 Philadelphia and No. 8 Orlando to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2016.

Mavericks 149, Bulls 128

In Dallas, Ryan Nembhard broke Dallas coach Jason Kidd's club rookie record with 23 assists after No. 1 pick Cooper Flagg's debut season ended with an ankle injury, and the Mavericks beat the Chicago Bulls 149-128 in a season finale.

Flagg scored 10 points in 10 minutes before exiting with a sprained left ankle in the second quarter.

76ers 126, Bucks 106

In Philadelphia, Tyrese Maxey scored 21 points and the Philadelphia 76ers tuned up for the play-in tournament with a win over the Milwaukee Bucks in what appeared to be Hall of Fame coach Doc Rivers' final game.

The seventh-seeded 76ers host No. 8 Orlando in a play-in game Wednesday.

A few hours after the game, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press that Rivers was not expected back as Milwaukee's coach next season. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because no formal announcement about Rivers' decision has been made.

Celtics 113, Magic 108

In Boston, Baylor Scheierman scored a career-high 30 points, Luka Garza added 27, including a key 3-pointer with 31.6 seconds left, and the Boston Celtics' reserves defeated Orlando, sending the Magic into a road play-in tournament game.

Ron Harper Jr. had a career-best 27 points for Boston, and Garza grabbed 12 rebounds.

Pistons 133, Pacers 121

In Indianapolis, Paul Reed finished with 26 points, six rebounds, three assists and three blocks and Tobias Harris scored 24 points in limited minutes Sunday, propelling the Eastern Conference's top seeded Detroit Pistons past the Indiana Pacers 133-121.

Reed was 11 of 11 from the field and made all four of his free-throw attempts on a night the Pistons shot nearly 70% from the field and from 3-point range in the first half. Harris was 9 of 12 from the field and 4 of 4 on 3s.

Lakers 131, Jazz 107

In Los Angeles, LeBron James had 18 points, six assists and four rebounds in the first half, and the Los Angeles Lakers tuned up for the postseason with a 131-107 win over the Utah Jazz.

Rui Hachimura and Deandre Ayton each had 22 points and 10 assists. James and Luke Kennard were held out of the second half as a precautionary measure, and the Lakers closed the regular season on a three-game winning streak.

Heat 143, Hawks 117

In Miami, Jaime Jaquez Jr. capped his sixth-man award candidacy by scoring 26 points off the bench, Bam Adebayo and Norman Powell each scored 25 and the Miami Heat tuned up for the play-in tournament by beating the Atlanta Hawks.

Kel'el Ware scored 16 points for Miami, which will need to win two road play-in games to make the playoffs. The Heat pulled off that feat as the No. 10 seed entering the play-in last season.

Suns 135, Thunder 103

In Oklahoma City, Jamarce Bouyea had career highs of 27 points and nine assists, Ryan Dunn added 20 points and 11 rebounds, and the Phoenix Suns routed the Oklahoma City Thunder in a meaningless regular-season finale for both teams.

Koby Brea added 20 points for Phoenix (45-37), which was locked into seventh place in the Western Conference and did not play any starters. The Suns will face either Portland or the Los Angeles Clippers in a play-in game Tuesday night.

Rockets 132, Grizzlies 101

In Houston, Clint Capela had a season-high 23 points with 13 rebounds as Houston's stars sat out in rout of the injury-plagued Memphis Grizzlies to end the regular season.

Defending champion sits third in 10-team standings

Kohli hits 50 as Bengaluru outpowers Mumbai



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, in Mumbai, India. (AP)

MUMBAI, India, April 13, (AP): Half-centuries for Virat Kohli, Phil Salt and Rajat Patidar set up an 18-run victory for Royal Challengers Bengaluru over host Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League.

Kohli was out for a 38-ball 50, which included five fours and a solitary six. Co-opener Salt was quicker with 78 off 36, with six sixes and six fours. Skipper Patidar was the fastest of the trio, smashing 53 runs off only 20 balls with five sixes and four boundaries, as Bengaluru scored 240-4 in its 20 overs.

In reply, Mumbai reached 222-5, led by Sherfane Rutherford's undefeated 71 off 31 balls. But the game was effectively over when the hosts were down to 154-5 in 15.3 overs.

Defending champion Bengaluru is third in the 10-team standings with six points from four games. Mumbai is eighth with two points and has just one win in its four games.

Put into bat, Bengaluru got off to a superb start at the iconic Wankhede Stadium. Salt and Kohli sped to 50 off 26 balls and then 71-0 in the powerplay.

Salt hit his second half-century of the season as he and Kohli put on 120 off 65 balls until Salt's dismissal in the 11th over, caught off Shardul Thakur.

Mumbai's troubles didn't end there as Patidar reached 50 off only 17 balls.

Patidar and Kohli added 65 off 23 balls, before both fell within eight deliveries. Bengaluru was 194-3 in 16 overs.

Tim David struck 34 not out off 16 balls against his former team as Bengaluru breached 240 for the second time this season - and its sixth highest IPL score overall.

In reply, Rohit Sharma retired hurt for 19 off 13 balls. Ryan Rickelton scored 37 off 22 before he was the first of wrist spinner Suyash Sharma's two wickets in the eighth over.

Mumbai was down to 74-2 - and missing Sharma - as Suryakumar Yadav (33 off 22) and Hardik Pandya added 47 off 27 balls.

Krunal Pandya got rid of Yadav, while his younger brother Hardik Pandya hit 40 off 22 balls with six fours and a six. He was caught off Jacob Duffy in the 15th over, with Naman Dhir (1) following shortly after.

Rutherford entertained the crowd with nine sixes but Mumbai was never in the hunt for victory.

It was Mumbai's sixth loss in eight games against Bengaluru.

First overtime restart in 11 years after late yellow

Gibbs holds off Larson and Blaney to secure maiden NASCAR Cup win in Bristol Raceway

BRISTOL, Tenn., April 13, (AP): Outdueling two NASCAR Cup Series champions for the first victory of his career, Ty Gibbs made an emphatic and emotional breakthrough Sunday at Bristol Motor Speedway.

The win came in the 131st Cup start for the grandson of NASCAR Hall of Fame team owner and former Super Bowl-winning coach Joe Gibbs.

Ty Gibbs also is the son of the late Coy Gibbs, who also helped run his father's team before unexpectedly dying in his sleep on Nov. 6, 2022 - the day after his son won the championship in NASCAR's second-highest division.

Ty Gibbs, 23, moved to the Cup series the next year and had multiple near-misses (runner-up finishes at Darlington in 2024 and Chicago last year) before reaching victory lane in his fourth season.

"This is one of my best experiences," Joe Gibbs said. "When I think about Coy, he brought Ty up the entire time. I know he's probably watching."

Ty Gibbs interrupted his grandfather's post-race interview in the pits with a hug.

"This is the man right here," said Ty, whose mother, Heather, also is a co-owner of JGR. "I've never seen somebody work so hard in my life, him and my mom. I come to the shop at 6 a.m. or 7 p.m., and there's nobody there, but they are always there."

Gibbs led the final 25 laps at Bristol, inheriting first place under caution on a strategy gamble by staying on track in his No. 54 Toyota while Ryan Blaney pitted from the lead along with Kyle Larson, who led a race-high 284 of 505 laps.

Blaney and Larson both restarted outside the top five, and Gibbs was cruising toward a win before the yellow flew again on the 498th lap to set up the first overtime restart at Bristol in 11 years.

Despite Blaney and Larson having tires that were nearly 100 laps fresher, Gibbs fended off the star drivers on a two-lap shootout to the checkered flag.

"Honestly, I didn't really know or care if I was going to win or not," Gibbs said. "I thought the race was awesome. I really appreciate always racing Ryan Blaney and Kyle, too. Those guys always run me really well."

Blaney, the 2023 Cup champion who started from the pole position, finished second after leading 190 laps in the No. 12 Ford.

"Yeah, great battle for sure," he said. "I fought a lot of different cars. Gave it my best shot on the last restart. Was close but just couldn't get it done."

Larson, the defending Cup Series champion who won the first two stages, finished third and remained win-



Ty Gibbs, front right, celebrates with the trophy after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race as he and Steve Smith, president and CEO of Food City hoist the trophy in Bristol, Tenn. (AP)

less in the past 32 races with his No. 5 Chevrolet.

The Toyotas of Tyler Reddick and Chase Briscoe rounded out the top five.

"Super happy for Ty," Briscoe said of his Joe Gibbs Racing teammate.

"It's been a long time coming. To do it the way he did it, on old tires, to beat the two guys that dominated all day long, that was impressive. Just super happy for him and the whole family."

Gibbs became the sixth NASCAR driver to earn his first Cup victory at Bristol, joining Dale Earnhardt (1979), Rusty Wallace (1986), Ernie Irvan (1990), Elliott Sadler (2001) and Kurt Busch (2002).

"It's awesome to be with great people," the younger Gibbs said. "To be in this position is great. I'd love for my father to have seen this. I know he knew it was going to happen and expected it as well. Yeah, it was a great day for us. This is our family, so it's just such a great deal."

While Larson excelled at the front, two of his Hendrick Motorsports teammates were struggling mightily.

William Byron started from the rear because of unapproved adjustments to

his No. 24 Chevrolet, which had steering problems in practice and qualifying Saturday. Byron, who has led at every active track but Bristol, was off the pace from the start and finished five laps down.

Returning from missing four races because of vertigo, Alex Bowman started 27th and finished last after being involved in a multicausal crash started by Shane van Gisbergen.

"I was fine, just a frustrating day," Bowman said. "Thought we were OK in practice and then obviously qualified bad and then just really struggled with the handling today. Bummer. Hate that we didn't get a chance to work on it and make it better and finish the race, but it's kind of outside our control. When you run that bad, stuff can happen, and it happened to us."

The NASCAR Cup Series will race April 19 at Kansas Speedway, the first of three consecutive tracks 1.5 miles and longer. Hendrick Motorsports has won three of the past four races at Kansas with Kyle Larson and Chase Elliott winning last year at the oval in Kansas City, Kansas.

Change Name

I, MAHAMMED SHAFI (OLD NAME) S/O GULAM DASTHAGIRI, R/o 77/62, BALAJI NAGAR KODUR-516101, YSR Dist, A.P. Now I am Changed my Name to SHAIK MAHAMMED SHAFI (NEW NAME). Hence forth, I will be Known as SHAIK MAHAMMED SHAFI. Passport number: V3753126

Best of the Rest

Ghanaian Premier League player killed: Dominic Frimpong of Ghanaian Premier League club Berekum Chelsea was killed after the team's bus was attacked by a group of suspected armed robbers, the country's soccer association said.

The incident happened on Sunday as Berekum Chelsea was returning from its game against Samartex in Sameboi in southern Ghana, the club said in a statement. "Masked men welding guns and assault rifles started shooting at our bus as the driver tried to reverse. The players and staff fled into near by bushes to take cover," the statement read. (AP)

Montreal fires coach Marco Donadel: CF Montreal fired coach Marco Donadel after a slow start to the Major League Soccer season.

Montreal fell to 1-6-1 after a 2-1 loss Saturday to Philadelphia its home opener. (AP)

Qatar making second World Cup appearance

World Cup co-hosts Canada look for breakthrough on home soil in Group B

MONTREAL, April 13, (AP) — The pressure is on co-host Canada to advance past the group stage for the first time at the World Cup.

Canada is in Group B along with Switzerland, Qatar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which eliminated Italy in the European playoffs for the World Cup.

The Canadians will have all three of their matches on home soil, which certainly means there will be big red-clad crowds on their side.

Known more as a hockey nation, Canada is hoping to make its mark on soccer as one of the co-hosts of the sport's biggest event.

Canada has been to the World Cup twice before, in Mexico 1986 and 2022, but the team has never advanced past the group stage.

American coach Jesse Marsch hopes the team's "aggressive, confident, powerful" style of play will make an impact at this year's tournament.

"I've just tried to bring a style of football that accesses and exposes their raw abilities and commitment at the highest level of how to play the game, and I think that they've enjoyed it, I've enjoyed it, and I think people watching the team have enjoyed it," Marsch said.



In this file photo, Qatar's Hassan Al-Haydos controls the ball during a World Cup Group A soccer match against Senegal at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha, Qatar. (AP)

The team finished at the bottom of its group in Qatar four years ago, but Alphonso Davies scored the nation's first World Cup goal in a 4-1 loss to Croatia.

Davies, who plays for Bayern Munich, is among the most prominent players in the squad, along with Juventus forward Jonathan David and Cyle Larin, who plays for Southampton.

Ranked No. 30 in the world, Canada opens the World Cup against Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 12 in Toronto.

The Swiss have played in the last five World Cups, making the knockout round in the last three but never advancing any further. Switzerland has been to the quarterfinals of the World Cup three times, but not since 1954.



In this file photo, Canada's Cyle Larin (9) drives between Curacao's Roshon van Eijma (4) and Joshua Brenet (20) during a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match in Houston, Texas. (AP)

Switzerland captain Granit Xhaka, who plays for Premier League club Sunderland, has made more than 140 appearances for the national team. The team is coached by Murat Yakin, a former center back who made 49 appearances with the national team.

The Swiss, ranked No. 19, did not drop a game during qualifying, conceding just two goals in six matches. But in friendlies in March, the team

fell 4-3 to Germany before playing to a scoreless draw with Norway.

Switzerland opens against Qatar on June 13 in Santa Clara, California.

Qatar is making its second World Cup appearance, after qualifying as hosts in 2022. Eliminated in the group stage, Mohammed Muntari scored the nation's only World Cup goal in a 3-1 loss to Senegal.

The squad, ranked No. 56 in the world, is led by Spanish coach Julen Lopetegui, a former goalkeeper, who took over the team after a six-month stint as head coach at West Ham.

The nation has been ambitious about building both a respectable national team and a domestic league. Nearly all of the team's players play professionally in Qatar.

Team captain Hassan Al-Haydos, who retired from the national team in 2024 but returned for World Cup campaign, has scored 41 goals in 184 international matches. Striker Almoaz Ali has 55 goals in 118 appearances.

Bosnia and Herzegovina earned one of the last spots in the World Cup after eliminating four-time world champion Italy in a penalty shootout on March 31, sparking a wave of celebrations across the Balkan country.

Striker Edin Dzeko, widely regarded as Bosnia's greatest player, injured his shoulder during the match. The 40-year-old, who plays for Germany's Schalke 04, is Bosnia's all-time top scorer, with 73 goals in 148 international appearances.

It is the team's second World Cup; they also made the field in 2014 but were eliminated in the group stage.

Inter moves closer to Serie A title



Bologna's Nicolò Casale, left, jumps for a header with Lecce's Lassana Coulibaly during a Serie A soccer match between Bologna and Lecce, in Bologna, Italy. (AP)

ROME, April 13, (AP) — Inter Milan came back from two goals down for a 4-3 victory at Como and extended its Serie A lead to nine points with six rounds remaining.

Marcus Thuram and Denzel Dumfries each had braces for Inter, which took advantage of second-place Napoli being held 1-1 at Parma earlier to increase its advantage.

Alex Valle and Nico Paz scored for Como late in the first half before Thuram started the comeback with a goal in first-half added time.

Lucas Da Cunha pulled one back with a penalty for Como in the 89th.

The teams will meet again in the second leg of the Italian Cup semi-finals later this month after a 0-0 first leg.

It was another encouraging sign for Inter after a 5-2 victory over Roma last weekend ended a three-match winless streak.

Cristian Chivu is attempting to win Serie A during his first season in charge at Inter after replacing the departed Simone Inzaghi.

Como dropped from fourth to fifth and just outside the Champions League places.

Napoli conceded a goal after 33 seconds in a draw that may end its chances of successfully defending the Serie A title.

Scott McTominay equalized on the hour mark for Napoli after Gabriel Strefezza scored early on with a play that began with a long ball from Parma goalkeeper Zion Suzuki.

The result ended a five-match winning streak for Napoli.

Parma moved nine points above the relegation zone in 14th. Also, Bologna beat Lecce 2-0 with goals from Remo Freuler and Riccardo Orsolini and Genoa beat Sassuolo 2-1 with goals from Ruslan Malinovskyi and Caleb Ekuban.

In Paris, Lille maintained its

strong push for an automatic Champions League place with a 4-0 win at Toulouse in Ligue 1.

Lille moved up to third and one point ahead of fourth-placed Marseille, with the top three entering the lucrative Champions League directly next season and the side in fourth going through qualifying.

Lyon climbed into fifth place and one point behind Marseille after beating Lorient 2-0 at home to snap a nine-game winless run in all competitions.

Lille was leading 1-0 through right back Thomas Meunier's goal when American defender Mark

McKenzie was sent off early in the second half for pulling back forward Matias Fernandez-Pardo as he ran through on goal.

Lille dominated after that red card, with left back Romain Perraud and Fernandez-Pardo scoring before veteran striker Olivier Giroud added a late penalty.

Lyon coach Paulo Fonseca had benched Brazil teenager Endrick after criticizing his recent performances.

"I am very honest when I talk," Fonseca said before the game against Lorient on Sunday. "I say what I think."

Whatever he told Endrick, it seemed to work.

Endrick set up Ukraine striker Roman Yaremchuk's headed goal four minutes into the second half with a pinpoint cross from the right.

Endrick was also involved in the second goal in the 56th when his shot from the left was saved and captain Corentin Tolisso headed in the rebound.

The 19-year-old Endrick had made a great start with Lyon after joining on loan from Real Madrid before his form faded.

Fonseca also had goalkeeper Dominik Greif to thank for a stunning point-blank save against striker Bamba Dieng in first-half stoppage time.

In other game, Nice drew 1-1 at home to fellow struggler Le Havre. Both sides are hovering just above the relegation zone.



Napoli's Scott McTominay, right, celebrates after scoring the equalizing goal during the Serie A soccer match between Parma and Napoli, in Parma, Italy. (AP)

Flying Roos wins Rio SailGP to retake series lead

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 13, (AP) — Tom Slingsby and his Flying Roos peaked on Sunday to win the SailGP event at Rio de Janeiro and regain top spot in the series standings.

Flying Roos entered the South America debut event with a win in Auckland, New Zealand and a second-place finish to the British crew in Perth but Slingsby said his crew didn't find its rhythm in Brazil until sweeping the four races on Day 2 on Guanabara Bay.

"Today we finally showed what we're capable of when everything comes together," the Olympic gold medalist said. "It's a really satisfying feeling - not just as a driver, but also seeing it from a broader perspective."

The Flying Roos had enough cushion to secure the victory despite a five-point penalty following a collision with the Swiss team at the start of the sixth race.

"It was a challenging day, especially with the conditions and that in-

cident at the start - the sun made it really hard to judge distances, and I misjudged it, which led to contact," Slingsby said. "It's the first time we've hit another boat in SailGP, so not ideal, but we were lucky it didn't impact the final result."

In the Grand Prix Final, Flying Roos held off Artemis SailGP, the Swedish entry which earned its first podium finish, and Los Gallos of Spain.

After four events, Slingsby, whose Australia team includes actors Hugh Jackman and Ryan Reynolds as co-owners, has a seven-point lead over defending champion Emirates GBR and an eight-point lead over third-place U.S. team.

The series features identical high-tech, high-speed 50-foot foiling catamarans. The next event will be staged next month in Bermuda before the series continues with stops in New York, Halifax (Canada), Britain, France and Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

Van Aert beats Pogacar in dramatic finish to win Paris-Roubaix classic

ROUBAIX, France, April 13, (AP) — Belgian rider Wout van Aert beat cycling great Tadej Pogacar in a dramatic sprint to the line to win the prestigious Paris-Roubaix one-day classic for the first time.

They were neck and neck entering the finish at the vélodrome in Roubaix after more than five hours of grueling racing. Van Aert had the better sprint credentials and timed his attack perfectly to surge past Pogacar on the right and hold him off.

"Beating him mano a mano in a sprint is really special to me," Van Aert said.

Van Aert raised his right finger and pointed to the sky as he crossed the line and then got off his bike and lay on his back, thoroughly exhausted.

He dedicated the victory to his former teammate Michael Goolaerts, who died at the age of 23 after collapsing during the 2018 race.

"It means everything to me. It's been a goal since 2018, when I first did this race, and in that race I lost a teammate, Michael Goolaerts," Van Aert said. "Ever since then, it has been my goal to come here and point my finger to the sky. This victory is for Michael."

It was a rare defeat for four-time Tour de France champion Pogacar, looking to become the first Tour champion to win Roubaix since Bernard Hinault in 1981. He was also second last year.

Last month, Pogacar fought back from a crash to win Milan-San Remo for the first time, leaving only Roubaix to complete the set of five monuments in one-day cycling. He had already won the Tour of Flanders, Liège-Bastogne-Liège and the Tour of Lombardy.

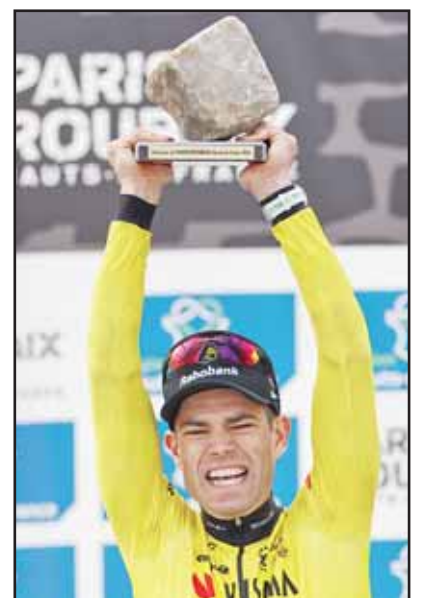
But the 31-year-old Van Aert is one of the world's most versatile riders.

A three-time cyclocross world champion, he won Milan-San Remo in 2020, the Tour de France best sprinters' green jersey in 2022, finished third at Roubaix in 2023 and third again at Milan-San Remo last month.

The 258.3-kilometer (160.1-mile) Paris-Roubaix race is called "The Hell of the North" because of its multiple cobblestone sections - totaling about 55 kilometers - and reputation for crashes and punctures.

So it proved again as Pogacar and Dutch three-time defending champion Mathieu van der Poel both punctured.

Pogacar punctured with about 120 kilometers left and, with his team car be-



Belgium's Wout van Aert celebrates on the podium after winning the Paris-Roubaix cycling race in Roubaix, France, Sunday, April 12, 2026. (AP)

hind, he took a neutral service bike from a nearby repairs car. Visibly annoyed, he had to wait several minutes for his team car to give him one of his race bikes.

The energy he spent catching up to the leading group may have cost him at the end.

Van Aert was on Pogacar's wheel entering one of the notorious cobblestone section called Carrefour de l'Arbre, a 2-kilometer stretch near the end where a number of riders have fallen.

In 1984, Frenchman Alain Bondue crashed when leading and ended up third, and Pogacar almost fell when his front wheel slipped.

It was a straight sprint heading into the André-Pétrieux vélodrome, where a huge crowd awaited a thrilling denouement.

"I was already cooked and there was not much freshness in the legs to really maybe have a chance," Pogacar said. "I saw quite fast that it would be mission impossible."

Pogacar has not decided whether he will try again next year.

"I can't say no," he said. "It is just my second time here so let's give it time."

Belgian rider Jasper Stuyven finished third ahead of Van der Poel, who went over to hug a tearful Van Aert, his former cyclocross archrival.



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Scottie Scheffler hits his tee shot on the 12th hole during the final round of the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga. (AP)

Sports

McIlroy rewrites history with Masters repeat

Rory holds on for victory over Scheffler

AUGUSTA, Ga., April 13, (AP): Rory McIlroy is the Masters champion again, this time without falling to his knees on the 18th green and sobbing over finally achieving his lifelong dream.

That didn't make Sunday at Augusta National any easier.

McIlroy coughed up a six-shot lead in the third round. He fell two shots behind two players, Cameron Young and Justin Rose, in an electric final round. And then he delivered two big birdies around Amen Corner to join more elite company.

A year ago, his playoff victory over Rose made McIlroy only the sixth player with the career Grand Slam. With another green jacket, McIlroy joined Tiger Woods, Nick Faldo and Jack Nicklaus as the only repeat winners of the Masters. "I thought it was so difficult to win last year because of trying to win the Masters and the Grand Slam, and then this year I realized it's just really difficult to win the Masters," McIlroy said after holding on for a one-shot victory over Scottie Scheffler. "Just incredible."

As usual, he kept everyone on edge until the very end.

His wedge barely cleared the false front of the par-5 15th, a shot that could have been disastrous. His putt from behind the 16th green made a sharp turn down the slope to inches away save par. He saved par with a tough chip on the 17th. Staked to a two-shot lead, his tee shot on the 18th wound up closer to the 10th fairway.

"I'd say walking off the 18th tee not knowing where my ball was, that was the moment of greatest stress," McIlroy said.

He drilled 8-iron around the trees into a bunker, blasted out to 12 feet and took two putts for bogey and a 1-under 71. He thrust both arms in the air and made good on a promise.

"My parting message last year was I can't wait to come back and put the jacket on myself," McIlroy said at the trophy presentation. "I wasn't quite correct."

For the first time since Woods won back-to-back in 2002, it was left to the Augusta National chairman - Hootie Johnson for Woods, Fred Ridley for McIlroy - to do the honors. "It still fits," McIlroy said.

Better than ever.

He now has six majors, tied with Faldo, Lee Trevino and Phil Mickelson. And that sense of freedom he brought back to Augusta National as a champion carried him to the finish line.

McIlroy seized control for good with a bold shot over Rae's Creek to 7 feet for birdie on the par-3 12th. Then he blistered a 350-yard drive on the par-5 13th - he had been in the trees the previous three rounds - that set up another birdie to move three shots ahead.

He finished at 12-under 276.

President Donald Trump congratulated McIlroy on social media as he flew back to Washington from Florida.

"With each year, Rory is becoming more and more a LEGEND!" Trump wrote. McIlroy's next tournament is likely to be the Cadillac Championship in two weeks at Trump Doral outside Miami.

It was more heartache for Rose, and frustration for the others who had a chance.

Rose had a two-shot lead that evaporated around Amen Corner with two bogeys and a three-putt par. He had to settle for a third close call at the Masters.

Young lost his two-shot lead much earlier with a long three-putt bogey on the par-3 sixth and taking bogey on the next hole when he hit wedge from the fairway into a bunker. One shot behind going to the back nine, Young closed with nine straight pars.

"There is no negative to take away other than obviously I would've loved a different result," Young said. "I pretty much had a birdie chance on every hole and didn't make any. That's how it goes sometimes."

As for Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player was in position to shatter the Masters record with the largest 36-hole comeback in history. He was 12 behind going into the weekend. He was two shots behind as he approached the turn. But he ran off 11 straight pars, and that wasn't going to cut it during a final round with accessible pins to create excitement.



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, holds the trophy after winning the Masters golf tournament at the Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Ga. (AP)

Scheffler had to settle for his third runner-up finish in the majors to go along with four titles. His 65-68 weekend made him the first player since 1942 to go bogey-free on the weekend at Augusta.

"I put up a good fight in order to give myself a chance," Scheffler said. Rose, at age 45 trying to become the second-oldest Masters champion behind Jack Nicklaus (46) in 1986, made a most improbable birdie with a shot out of the trees to a foot on the seventh. That was the start of three straight birdies to close out the front nine and give him the lead.

But his approach to the 11th was well to the right and he failed to save par. His tee shot on the 12th was long, and his delicate chip didn't reach the green, leading to another bogey. And his 30-foot eagle putt on the par-5 13th ran 8 feet by the hole and he missed the birdie putt.

"Chance that got away," Rose said. "I was by no means free and clear and was nowhere kind of close to having the job done, but I was right in position. ... I was

playing great, but just momentum shifted for me around the Amen Corner."

That's where McIlroy thrived. No shot at Augusta is more terrifying than the par-3 12th with the deceptive, swirling wind. McIlroy said he thought back to a practice round at his first Masters in 2009 when Tom Watson told him to wait for the right wind and hit.

His three-quarter 9-iron aimed at the middle bunker drifted more to the right than he imagined, but it turned out perfect, closer than anyone all day.

"That was a really good golf shot at the right time," he said. "Huge shot in the tournament."

Once tormented by his chase for the green jacket, McIlroy is now a two-time winner whose love for the Masters only deepens.

He was so ecstatic a year ago that he asked the media when it was over, "What are we going to talk about next year?" Now the topic is easy. No one has ever won three in a row.

Potential changes loom

KFA closes nominations ahead of key elections

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The nomination window for members of the General Assembly of the Kuwait Football Association closes at 9:00 p.m. today, after opening on April 5.

The KFA has set May 20 as the date for elections to form a new Board of Directors for the 2026-2030 term.

KFA President Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef has unveiled his electoral list, which includes Mubarak Abdulaziz as Vice President for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Ayman Al-Husseini as Vice President for Technical Affairs, along with Fahad Al-Hamlan, Majed

Awad, Dr. Ahmed Ajab, and Dalal Al-Mudhaf, who represents the women's seat.

Despite the opening of nominations last week, only one candidate has submitted so far. Al-Tadamon Club confirmed on Sunday via its official website the nomination of General Assembly member Salem Saadoun as an independent candidate. Saadoun brings prior experience in football administration, having served on the KFA Board in 2018, as well as holding roles in the executive office, media committee, and competitions committee.

Sheikh Ahmed Al-Yousef has been leading

the current board in an interim capacity since October 2024, following the resignation of the previous board headed by Abdullah Al-Shaheen.

The current board included Osama Hussein (who stepped down last year), Mubarak Abdulaziz, Hamlan Al-Hamlan, Dr. Ahmed Ajab, Ayman Al-Husseini, and Hanan Al-Hardan (who resigned at the end of last year).

While early indications suggested a consensus election for the new board, recent developments among clubs indicate growing interest in representation, leaving the door open for possible changes in the final lineup.



Kuwait Football Association headquarters.

World Aquatics ends neutral rule for Russia and Belarus

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, April 13, (AP): The governing body for international swimming and aquatic sports will allow athletes from Russia to compete without restrictions and with their national flag and anthem.

World Aquatics said Monday it will remove restrictions which had required Russian and Belarusian athletes to be vetted and to compete under neutral status.

"Senior athletes with Belarusian or Russian sport nationality will be permitted to compete in World Aquatics events in the same way as their counterparts representing other sport nationalities, with their respective uniforms, flags and anthems," World Aquatics said in a statement. It had previously relaxed the rules for junior athletes.

World Aquatics President Husain Al Musallam added: "We are determined to ensure that pools and open water remain places where athletes from all nations can come together in peaceful competition."

World Aquatics oversees sports like swimming, diving and water polo and is an influential voice in the Olympic movement.

Its decision applies only to its own events like the world championships but could add momentum within the Olympic world for a full return of



World Aquatics President Husain Al Musallam

Russian athletes ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

There was no immediate response to a request for comment from the International Olympic Committee.

In December the IOC recommended removing restrictions on Russian and Belarusian athletes for international youth events and letting them compete under national flags. The IOC still kept its neutral requirements for senior competitions and Russians and Belarusians were officially referred to as "Individual Neutral Athletes" at the Winter Olympics in February.

Liverpool counts on Anfield atmosphere to fuel another famous comeback

3 of European soccer's storied clubs on brink of Champions League elimination

MANCHESTER, England, April 13, (AP): Three of European soccer's most storied clubs stand on the brink of Champions League elimination.

Real Madrid, Liverpool and Barcelona must all overturn first-leg defeats in this week's quarterfinals.

Between them they have won European club soccer's greatest prize 26 times. But they have left themselves with mountains to climb to advance to the semifinals.

Record 15-time champion Madrid trails 2-1 to Bayern Munich after a home defeat in last week's first leg at the Bernabeu.

Liverpool is 2-0 down to defending champion Paris Saint-Germain ahead of Tuesday's return match at Anfield and Barcelona suffered a shock 2-0 home loss to Atletico Madrid at the Nou Camp.

In the other quarterfinal Arsenal leads Sporting Lisbon 1-0 going into Wednesday's match at the Emirates.

Trailing leader Barcelona by nine points in the Spanish league, Madrid's best chance of success this season may be in the competition that defines it - the Champions League.

But it faces a major challenge to overturn its tie against Bayern in Munich on

Wednesday.

The German giant has been one of the standout teams in Europe this season - finishing second in the league phase with seven wins from eight games and routing Atalanta 10-2 on aggregate in the round of 16.

Bayern has won 39 of its 45 games in all competitions this season - losing just twice. Vincent Kompany's team looks well-placed to win a seventh European Cup, which would see it move level with AC Milan as the second most successful team in the competition's history.

In Harry Kane, Michael Olise and Luis Diaz, Bayern has one of the most lethal attacks in Europe, but had to rely on the enduring brilliance of 40-year-old goalkeeper Manuel Neuer to keep Madrid at bay in the first leg.

That should serve as encouragement for Madrid that it managed to create so many chances against Bayern's defense, but it will have to find a way past Neuer to avoid elimination.

PSG put an end to Liverpool's Champions League campaign last season and looks primed to repeat the act this year.

The first-leg win in Paris last week did not reflect the superiority of Luis Enrique's team on the night, which had a host of chances to rack up an even more commanding lead.

"Paris Saint-Germain was the better team, but we didn't give up and that's why we have a chance now still in this tie, because they kept us alive by not scoring a few open chances," Liverpool coach Arne Slot said.

Six-time champion Liverpool will be relying on the famous Anfield crowd to try to inspire another famous comeback in the fashion of its 4-0 win against Barcelona in 2019 after losing the first leg 3-0.



Liverpool fans cheer their team ahead of the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Fulham in Liverpool, England. (AP)