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THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026 / DHUL-QADAH 5, 1447 AH

emergency number 112

NO. 19186

16 PAGES

150 FILS

Strategy anchored in development needs

Kuwait PM speeds up state land reform



PM Diwan photo management and infrastructure planning, attended by senior ministers and officials.

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting Wednesday to discuss reinforcing infrastructure and setting a roadmap to inventory and classify state-owned land to enhance management efficiency and utilization per development priorities.

The meeting reviewed decisions on licensing land use for the state and developing the strategic storage system to serve public interest and support national readiness for various conditions.

Attendees included Minister of Public Works Dr. Nora Al-Mashaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Housing Abdulatif Al-Meshari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Al-Marzouq, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Refaei, Director General of KDIPA Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, KIA Managing Director Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah, and Kuwait Storage Company Chairman Hazem Al-Essa.



HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

This is how the Shah's throne fell and a revolution that devastated Iran began

The young prince grew up in an environment that combined power, military discipline, and royal luxury

Reza Shah was a strong ruler, known for decisiveness and harsh policies

In Switzerland, the prince became accustomed to a life of luxury and tranquility

He was quiet and polite, loved sports and horsemanship and was not deeply interested in politics

In 1941, Iran was invaded by British and Soviet forces

He ascended a throne marked by internal conflicts, foreign interference, and competing ambitions

In the early years of his reign, the Shah faced formidable challenges

The army was weak, British influence was pervasive, the economy was fragile

Operation Ajax aimed to overthrow Mosaddegh and restore the Shah's political power

Khomeini delivered a fiery speech against the Shah, sparking widespread unrest

The fire incident at the Rex Cinema became a symbol of public anger

The king left his palace gates without crowds or an official farewell, only silence and weary faces.

PAYROLL VIOLATORS IN KUWAIT FACE INSTANT SUSPENSION

PAM urges employers to pay wages on time

New 'Ashal' services streamline work permits for expats

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has urged employers to pay salaries on time to stabilize the labor market and ensure business continuity.

In a press statement Wednesday, PAM stressed that failure to comply will lead to the automatic suspension of the file of the violating company as per the regulations. It disclosed that it will intensify its auditing operations in the coming phase to guarantee the systematic transfer of salaries monthly through the official channels. It reiterated the need to abide by the regulations to safeguard operations and balance private sector management with legal requirements.

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36 lose status in citizenship pull

By Munif Naif
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff
KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Higher Committee for Kuwaiti Citizenship Investigation issued a decision on Wednesday to revoke the citizenship

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KUWAIT TIGHTENS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

Ceasefire extension fails to calm rising tensions in Hormuz waters

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (Agencies): The team tasked with establishing the National Crisis Management Center (Aman) discussed with the Ministry of Public Works ways to enhance infrastructure readiness, improve emergency response efficiency and ensure service continuity while minimizing impacts of crises.

The team said in a press statement Wednesday that the meeting was held in the presence of Public Works representatives led by Acting Undersecretary Eid Al-Rashidi, along with several ministry officials and members of the Aman team.

It added that the meeting focused on aligning emergency plans and developing response mechanisms to strengthen coordination speed among relevant entities and support timely decision-making during crises and emergency situations affecting infrastructure and essential services.

The team noted that discussions also reviewed the ministry's crisis management capabilities related to infrastructure, ways to enhance readiness of vital projects, and operational challenges that may affect business continuity within an integrated framework addressing various emergency scenarios.

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The Jordan flagged cargo ship 'Baghdad' sails in Arabian Gulf towards Strait of Hormuz in United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, April 22, 2026. (AP)

Day by Day

THOSE who bully individuals whose citizenship has been revoked are causing them immense pain.

Who knows, it may perhaps be for their best. Those who bully should fear God. Kuwait is not a racist country; it is a country of peace and love, and no one knows what tomorrow may bring or where they will pass away.

May God not bless those who mock others.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar



Education Ministry photo Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei and UK Ambassador Qudsi Rasheed with officials from both sides during their meeting at the Ministry of Education, reaffirming strong bilateral ties and cooperation in the education sector.

Education Minister meets UK envoy to boost academic ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei had a meeting with Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the State

of Kuwait Qudsi Rasheed at the headquarters of the ministry on Wednesday.

Also present at the meeting were

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Calls for comprehensive reform of women's housing framework

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The housing file is one of the most prominent social and economic issues in Kuwait, given its direct link to family stability and quality of life.

Despite legislative developments that have granted women wider opportunities to obtain housing, real estate legal consultant Iman Al-Hashash believes that implementation still faces numerous challenges, raising questions about the adequacy of these solutions in achieving genuine stability.

In an interview with the daily, Al-Hashash highlighted the dimensions of this issue, emphasizing that Kuwaiti women are not merely beneficiaries of housing assistance but essential partners in building and stabilizing society.

She stressed that a successful housing system must view women as independent entities with an inherent right to stability, rather than dependents on a



Marwa Al-Bahrawi sits down with Iman Al-Hashash to unpack the realities behind women's housing rights.

family situation that may change over time.

Below are the details of the interview held with Iman Al-Hashash:

Question: Why is housing a pivotal issue for Kuwaiti women?

Answer: Housing, in its essence, is not merely shelter or living space, but a fundamental pillar of psychological

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Appeal rejected

Court greenlights school relocation

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Constitutional Court, through its Appeals Review Committee, issued four rulings on various constitutionality appeals, all of which resulted in the rejection or dismissal of the appeals.

This is in line with the approach of the court in assessing the seriousness of claims of unconstitutionality and defining the scope of constitutional review.

In the first ruling, the court rejected the appeal of a private school against the decision

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8 Gulf Bank launches second phase of comprehensive Islamic Banking training program



9 tam signs a strategic partnership with Trolley



9 Markaz wins 'Best Investment Bank in Kuwait' title



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:51 Asr 15:22
 Sunrise .. 05:15 Maghrib .. 18:18
 Zohr 11:47 Isha 19:40

Pivotal role in health, education, tourism sectors

More young GCC women boost presence in labor market: statistics

MUSCAT, April 22, (KUNA): The Statistical Center for the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) said Wednesday that Gulf women continue to strengthen their role in development across GCC states, supported by a young population base and rising participation in the labor market.

The center said in a report that indicators highlight women's pivotal role, particularly in health, education and tourism sectors, reflecting steady progress in empowerment paths and sustainable development across GCC countries.

It noted that the number of females in GCC states grew by 15.8 percent during 2019-2024, reaching about 22.9

million in 2024, with an average annual increase of around 625,600 females.

Females aged 15-39 totaled about 13.8 million, representing 60.3 percent of all females, while those aged 15-64 reached 15.9 million, accounting for 69.5 percent of the total female population.

Regarding labor market participation, the center said the number of employed women rose from 5.7 million in 2020 to 7.3 million in 2025, while the number of employed female nationals increased from 1.7 million to 2.2 million over the same period.

Female labor force participation in GCC countries reached 39.3 percent in 2025, while the female unem-

ployment rate stood at 10.5 percent, and female nationals accounted for 40.5 percent of total employed nationals.

The center added that women's participation indicators improved during 2020-2025, with female labor force participation rising by eight percent, female unemployment declining by 26.1 percent, and the share of employed female nationals increasing by 11 percent.

It noted that the share of women employed in the government sector rose from 33.3 percent to 34.8 percent, while in the private sector it increased from 4.3 percent to 5.3 percent over the same period.

In health and education, Gulf women maintained a

strong presence, making up about 73.6 percent of nursing staff, 63.8 percent of general education teachers, and 41.2 percent of higher education personnel.

In tourism, women accounted for about 13.2 percent of the sector's workforce in 2024, with an average annual growth rate of 9.5 percent in female employment during 2019-2024, reflecting their growing contribution to a promising economic sector.

The GCC-Stat, headquartered in Oman, was established as the official authority for data, information and statistics related to GCC states, in addition to strengthening statistical and information work across national statistics centers and planning agencies.



People walk with penguins during a Penguin Walk interactive activity under staff guidance at The Scientific Center in Hawalli Governorate, Kuwait. The Scientific Center of Kuwait has recently launched a Penguin Walk interactive program, allowing visitors to observe penguins up close under staff supervision while learning about their habits and marine conservation. (Xinhua)

Kuwait vehemently slams settlers' Al-Aqsa storming

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed Tuesday Kuwait's strong condemnation and denunciation of the storming by some settlers of Al-Aqsa Mosque, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces.

The step is a flagrant violation of all international laws and norms, mainly the ones related to the protection of religious sanctities, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The Ministry warned of the continuation of these illegal practices as they provoke the feelings of Muslims across

the globe and undermine efforts aiming to achieve security and stability in the region.

It renewed Kuwait's unwavering position which calls on the international community, mainly the Security Council, to assume its responsibility to halt these repeated violations and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The Ministry also underlined the need of respecting the holy sites and providing full protection for the brotherly people of Palestine as well as protect their sanctity, the statement concluded.

10 contracts underway

MEW to expand services sector

By Mohammad Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The annual plan of the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy for supply and service contracts for fiscal 2026/2027 includes 10 contracts for the Customer Services Sector.

These contracts will be tendered through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT), as the estimated value of each contract exceeds KD75,000. The contracts will be awarded to the bidders that meet the technical specifications and requirements.

One of the contracts is for supplying smart water meters, which the ministry is prioritizing due to its crucial role in rationalizing water consumption and reducing waste to ease the financial burden associated with desalination and freshwater production.

This project supports the digital transformation efforts of the ministry, as part of the program to develop a connected and transparent government as stated in the develop-

ment plan.

The ministry formed a committee tasked to prepare the specifications and technical requirements for the smart water meter tender, emphasizing the need for the meters to be compatible with the climate in Kuwait, similar to those used in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries with the same climatic conditions.

The 10 contracts, which aim to modernize operational mechanisms in the Customer Service Sector to better serve the public, cover the following:

- Provision of personnel specialized in information systems and technology for the customer service, finance and planning sectors.
- Management of the smart meter system, including the software and communication networks for the main and backup sites of the sector.
- Supply and installation of smart water-filling card devices.
- Installation of surveillance cameras at water-filling stations.

New tree project to cut pollution, improve soil

Air monitoring systems eyed in power, water stations

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Rawda and Hawalli Cooperative Society launched an environmental project to replace unsuitable trees with more beneficial varieties that adapt to the Kuwaiti climate, coinciding with the Earth Day celebration.

This is in accordance with the commitment of the cooperative to promote sustainability and improve the environment surrounding its facilities.

Chairman of the Board of Directors of the cooperative Mohammad Al-Kandari confirmed to the newspaper that the project is being implemented now, indicating the tree replacement work at the central market has been completed. He said this will continue in the coming days

at other branches of the cooperative as part of a comprehensive plan to develop green spaces and the urban landscape in the area. He added that the new trees were carefully selected based on their adaptability to high temperatures and local climatic conditions.

He also mentioned the environmental benefits of these trees, such as improving soil quality, moderating the atmosphere, and enhancing the aesthetic appeal for visitors at the markets and facilities affiliated with the cooperative.

He pointed out that this step is part of a series of environmental initiatives adopted by the cooperative to solidify the concept of social responsibility and promote environmental conservation among residents and shareholders.

He also disclosed that the cooperative invited shareholders and residents to be involved in the project by participating in the replacement of unsuitable trees.

He affirmed that suitable varieties are provided at subsidized prices, in cooperation with local nurseries, which contribute to expanding green spaces and raising environmental awareness in

the community.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy intends to launch a project to develop and install an emissions monitoring system for the power generation and water desalination plants and link it to the Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) of the country.

Through this project, the ministry will supply air quality monitoring systems to power generation and water desalination plants to achieve the required environmental standards and prevent air pollution in these plants.

In a related development, the ministry included a contract for pollution monitoring system installation in its contracts for the current fiscal year, which will be tendered through the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT).

Meanwhile, the ministry participated in the global celebration of Earth Day, reaffirming its commitment to preserve natural resources, while emphasizing that rationalizing electricity and water consumption is a shared national responsibility for all members of society and its institutions.

Lawyers in soup as two law firms shut down

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Kuwait Lawyers Society (KLS) has suspended the registration of a number of lawyers due to their involvement in cases related to State Security until final court rulings are issued, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The society also decided to permanently re-

move one lawyer from the roll of practicing lawyers following a final conviction that disqualifies him from practicing law.

Furthermore, the society confirmed that it has referred several lawyers to the relevant disciplinary authorities for committing serious professional violations that warrant accountability

under the legal framework governing the profession.

In addition, it decided to close two law firms after it was established that they were being managed by expatriates who were not licensed to practice law, in clear violation of applicable laws and regulations.

MoCI shuts down firm selling worn-out tyres

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The commercial inspection teams at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry conducted an intensive field campaign in Al-Rai, leading to the confiscation of 330 used tyres from a commercial establishment in the area.

The erring establishment was immediately shutdown in accordance with the regulations.

Reliable sources told the newspaper that the operation was executed through the coordinated efforts of the emergency units, Capital Governorate teams and Shuwaikh Center.

The joint task force was led by Director of the Commercial Control Department at the ministry Faisal Al-Ansari and Head of Shuwaikh Center Saleh Al-Jundail, with the participation of inspectors Yusef Al-Kandari and Saad Al-Asaq.

Sources revealed that the inspectors discovered a concealed warehouse with hundreds of used tyres being sold at exorbitant prices, up to KD15 for two tyres. Sources pointed out that selling used tyres is a grave violation and a threat to public safety, as such tyres are susceptible to wear and tear, and could cause traffic accidents.

Sources confirmed that the concerned teams dealt with the incident efficiently, implementing legal procedures that included confiscating the prohibited goods and closing the establishment.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to develop work mechanisms and intensify monitoring in various sectors to protect consumers. It stressed that there is no leniency in imposing penalties on violators in order to protect the integrity of the commercial sector, and maintain balance between regulatory functions and market needs.



Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah talking to Kuwaiti citizen Ahmad Al-Rashidi.

Governor continues to receive citizens, listens to complaints

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received citizen Ahmad Al-Rashidi in his office on Wednesday morning, as part of his ongoing meetings with citizens to learn about their needs and follow up on their feedback regarding services in the governorate.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governor emphasized his commitment to strengthen-

ing direct communication with residents, understanding their needs, and working to address them in coordination with relevant authorities, thereby contributing to improving the level of services and enhancing the quality of life in Farwaniya Governorate.

Citizen Al-Rashidi expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the governor for the warm reception, his direct attention to citizens' demands, and his commitment to following up on them with the relevant authorities.

Other Voices

What does Iran, Israel, and Brothers have in common?

By Ahmad alsarraf

Professor Mohammad Al-Wahib says, "Just as there is no smooth hedgehog, there is no member of the Muslim Brotherhood who can be trusted or who remembers a favor. A Brotherhood member uses lies until he gains control over others, and then he will reveal his true colors and sting you."

Many of those who applaud Iran's attacks on Gulf states are members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

They did the same during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, when they supported Saddam Hussein despite the huge financial benefits they had received from Gulf countries.

Is it time for the Gulf states to realize that embracing the Muslim Brotherhood is like embracing a hungry tiger that cannot be tamed, and that it cannot be tamed except in a 'circus of illusions'?"

It has become clear that the Iranian aggression against the Gulf states was surprising, not only in its scale and intensity, but also in the insistence of the attackers on targeting innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure that has no connection to the causes or parties involved in the ongoing war.

We saw the same in Gaza. Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Israel base their hostility toward others on religious principles and biblical interpretations, with claims of dominance and the imposition of their beliefs on others.

The Iranian aggression also revealed the cooperation or sympathy of some parties toward it. Some charitable societies with religious affiliations linked to external Islamic organizations, both Shiite and Sunni, did not conceal their support for Iran.

Had it not been for the wave of criticism directed at these societies over their silence during the most dangerous and darkest times, they would not have issued their statement in which they declared, perhaps for the first time, their allegiance to the ruler.

These societies issued the statement out of fear that they could face dissolution due to the alleged social and

national harm attributed to them, including accusations of pushing young people toward extremism and the alleged loyalty of some members to external entities.

Therefore, the relevant authorities must review the legal status of these societies and revoke their licenses, as well as dismantle the oldest secret organization that has existed in Kuwait since the early 1950s, investigate its financial structures, companies, and investment portfolios, particularly those registered under the names of its members.

Their stance toward the nation has been consistent since the days of the occupation, when their leaders sought meetings with Saddam Hussein, supported him, and rejected the restoration of legitimate authority in the country. These societies called for the formation of an Islamic army composed of Arab, Pakistani, and Iranian forces to expel Saddam's forces from Kuwait, not to liberate it, without mentioning the goal of restoring the legitimate political leadership.

These societies committed crimes against Kuwait during the so-called Arab Spring uprisings. During that period, their leaders circulated speeches, social media posts, and videos suggesting that Kuwait could be the next country affected by political change similar to Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.

Members of the Muslim Brotherhood and members of the National Assembly participated in the "Dignity of the Nation" demonstrations, encouraging supporters to oppose the ruling system by calling for a change of government and promoting their preferred candidate.

The government must take quick action to review the structures of these secret societies, identify their leadership, and examine the membership of their executive bodies and Shura Council, which oversee vast financial resources.

This is a timely opportunity, and the confiscation must include non-profit organizations affiliated with other entities that have transformed into political parties. Their licenses must be revoked and their funds confiscated, including educational or women's organizations with known political and religious activities.



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HORIZON TALK

Ahmed Al-Jarallah



This is how the Shah's throne fell and a revolution that devastated Iran began

These lines offer not only a window into history but also an attempt to understand the transformation of a society that, within a few short months, became a source of concern for the world and its surrounding region.

The Shah's biography is closely tied to the biography of Iran, which today poses a daily threat not only to the Gulf, but also to the Arab world and the world at large.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was born on October 26, 1919, in Tehran. He was the eldest son of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the founder of the modern Pahlavi dynasty. The young prince grew up in an environment that combined power, military discipline, and royal luxury.

Reza Shah was a strong ruler, known for decisiveness and harsh policies. In his youth, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was sent to Switzerland, where he studied at the Le Rosey Institute. There, he was exposed to European discipline and became accustomed to a life of luxury and tranquility, far removed from the conflicts of Iranian politics.

Those years marked the beginning of the intellectual formation of the future Shah. He was a quiet, polite young man who loved sports and horsemanship and was not deeply interested in politics as his father.

In 1941, during World War II, Iran was invaded by British and Soviet forces. The occupation forced Reza Shah to abdicate in favor of his young son. Mohammad Reza was 22 years old when he ascended a throne marked by internal conflicts, foreign interference, and competing ambitions.

In the early years of his reign, the Shah faced formidable challenges. The army was weak, British influence was pervasive, the economy was fragile, and central authority was unstable. Despite this, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi tried to assert himself. However, one figure would soon shake the foundations of his rule - Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh.

In the early 1950s, Mosaddegh, a man widely respected by the people, rose to prominence as an outspoken intellectual and a strong advocate of Iranian independence. In 1951, he led a major campaign to nationalize Iranian oil, which had been under British control. Mosaddegh became a national icon and was appointed prime minister with unprecedented popular and political support.

The conflict between the Shah and Mosaddegh became increasingly public. Many Iranians considered Mosaddegh a national hero, while the Shah saw his own authority diminishing in the face of Mosaddegh's growing popularity.

In 1953, what later became known as Operation Ajax took place. It was a covert operation carried out by the CIA in coordination with British intelligence. The plan aimed to overthrow Mosaddegh and restore the Shah's political power. The Shah returned to Tehran with strong American support.

After several failed attempts, the operation succeeded. Mosaddegh was arrested, and his life came to an end that day.

The Shah's relationship with the United States, which became the pillar of his rule, was strengthened. Many Iranians, however, began to lose faith in the legitimacy of the regime in the 1960s.

With rising oil revenues, the Shah launched a massive modernization project known as the "White Revolution." This project included land reforms, granting women the right to vote, modernizing education, and expanding road networks and factories.

On paper, the White Revolution appeared to be a progressive project, but it widened the gap between social classes. The wealthy elite and those close to the regime benefited, while poorer segments suffered, as lavish palaces were built, corruption spread, and the Shah's inner circle grew rapidly richer.

During this period, a young cleric named Ruhollah Khomeini was closely observing the situation. He was known for his quiet demeanor, but his rhetoric was forceful. He criticized the Shah's rapprochement with the West and attacked what he viewed as corruption and moral decline.

On June 5, 1963, Khomeini delivered a fiery speech against the Shah, sparking widespread unrest. As a result, he was arrested for several months, then exiled to Turkey, and later to

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The king left his palace gates without crowds or an official farewell, only silence and weary faces.

Najaf in Iraq.

Khomeini's messages continued even in exile. He sent audio recordings into Iran that reached markets, mosques, and universities through cassette tapes that were secretly circulated, often hidden under clothing, inside books, or in travelers' luggage. These recordings became a spark, fueling growing public anger.

Meanwhile, the Shah appeared increasingly confident. In 1971, he celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire. The celebration was held in a lavish golden tent in the ancient city of Persepolis, attended by kings and presidents from around the world. The government spent enormous sums on food, decorations, and temporary structures.

While royal banquets featured caviar and fine silverware, many impoverished villages throughout Iran faced shortages of water, electricity, and food.

This spectacle became one of the most enduring symbols of extravagance in the public consciousness of the mid-1970s.

Even with rising oil prices, an economic crisis began to grip Iran. Corruption and mismanagement spread. Debt increased, slums multiplied, prices soared, and the regime became in-

creasingly repressive. The political security apparatus known as SAVAK played a powerful role in arresting dissidents, and its name was widely feared at the time.

In 1977, the Iranian newspaper Ettela'at published an article insulting Khomeini. The article sparked massive demonstrations in the city of Qom. Security forces shot at the demonstrators, killing several.

Forty days after the incident, new demonstrations erupted, followed by further protests, thus transforming into a continuous series of periodic protests.

On August 19 of the same year, a massive fire broke out at the Rex Cinema in Abadan. More than 400 people were killed.

To this day, the party responsible for the fire has not been definitively identified. Some accused the regime, while others accused extremist religious groups, but the truth remained uncertain.

The cinema became a symbol of public anger. By the beginning of 1978, Iran was in turmoil, with demonstrations spreading throughout Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz. People from all segments of society took to the streets, including students, clerics, workers, merchants, and government employees.

On September 8, Iran reached a critical turning point when thousands of protesters gathered in Jaleh Square in Tehran. Security forces and tanks were deployed, and gunfire erupted. Dozens, and according to some accounts hundreds, were killed. That day became known as "Black Friday," and it marked the beginning of the regime's end.

At the same time, the Shah was suffering from lymphoma, but his illness was kept a secret, unknown even to the public and many senior government officials.

The Shah appeared in public looking pale, hesitant, and agitated, while the revolution grew in the streets. He was waging a silent battle against his own body.

By September 1978, pressure on the government had intensified. The uprising spread, particularly in the oil sector, the backbone of the Iranian economy. The oil workers' strike brought the country to a near standstill. During that period, Khomeini moved from Najaf to Paris due to Iraqi pressure.

In the Paris suburb of Neauphle-le-Château, Khomeini lived in a small house surrounded by trees. Within weeks, the house became a global media hub, frequented by hundreds of journalists and serving as a center for press conferences and written messages in the form of letters sent to Iran. His voice carried an influence that many described as more powerful than any weapon.

By the end of 1978, state institutions were paralyzed. Ministries and schools were closed. Government offices were nearly empty, and the streets were in turmoil. The country stood between a politically weakened monarch and an increasingly determined and angry public.

On January 16, 1979, the Shah left Iran with his wife, Farah Diba. That moment was one of the most symbolic in the history of the Middle East - a king leaving his palace gates without crowds or an official farewell, only silence and weary faces.

The Shah boarded the plane that would take him to Egypt. Some accounts say he looked silently out of the airplane window at Tehran, as if he knew his return was impossible.

Two weeks later, on February 1, Khomeini returned to Iran after 14 years in exile. His plane landed at Mehrabad Airport, where he was greeted by millions of Iranians in a scene the Middle East had not witnessed for decades.

At that moment, the capital transformed into a scene of massive celebrations. On February 10, demonstrators seized military installations, and the army declared its neutrality.

The following day, February 11, 1979, the Pahlavi dynasty officially fell, bringing an end to nearly four decades of rule. A new era began, one that would impact the entire region for many years to come.

Thus fell the Shah's throne, and thus began the revolution that transformed Iran and opened a new chapter in the history of the Middle East.

Glory belongs to Allah and His Messenger. A miserable fate awaits those who usurped power in Tehran, sooner or later



We do not always receive what we want, for God chooses what is best for us. Perhaps within God's decree lies all good. Leave the matter to the One in control.



Every oppressor will one day face someone more oppressive than himself. Now those in power in Tehran are facing the consequences of their oppression. This is the nature of life - One day you are up, and then the next day you fall.



When a tooth is extracted, you feel discomfort and emptiness. Yet when remembering the pain caused by decay, you realize that this emptiness is more merciful than the pain that preceded it.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah receives the Deputy Director General for Inspection and Control Affairs at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Saud Al-Humaidi Al-Sahli and the Director of the Farwaniya Inspection Department Talal Mubarak Al-Daihani.

'Public health and food safety is primary target'

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received on Tuesday the Deputy Director General for Inspection and Control Affairs at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) Dr. Saud Al-Humaidi Al-Sahli and the Director of the Farwaniya Inspection Department Talal Mubarak Al-Daihani.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, they reviewed efforts in the inspection and control of food establishments in Farwaniya Governorate, in addition to discussing coordination and joint cooperation between Farwaniya Governorate and PAFN to enhance the efficiency of regulatory work and raise the level of compliance with approved health requirements.

Municipality Deputy DG referred for retirement

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdullatif Al-Mishari, has referred Maysaa Bushehri, Deputy Director General of Kuwait Municipality for Projects, to retirement effective April 6, reports Al-Jarida daily.

According to informed sources, she is required to submit her financial disclosure report to the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) within 90 days of the decision's issuance (starting April 19).



Bushehri

'No criminal intent in kill'

Jail cut in infant death

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Court of Appeals overturned a five-year prison sentence issued by the Criminal Court against a Kuwaiti citizen who was accused of murdering his seven-month old daughter, and reduced the prison term to two years' imprisonment which can be suspended upon payment of a KD 200 bail.



Al-Wuhaib

The Public Prosecution had charged the defendant with intentionally striking his seven-month-old daughter while assaulting his wife, resulting in injuries that led to the child's death. He was also charged with child neglect and domestic violence.

Lawyer Nawaf Al-Wuhaib stated that he requested an amendment to the legal charges and their classification, arguing that the charge of "assault leading to death" did not apply due to the absence of criminal intent to harm the child.

He demanded the application of the charge of manslaughter, stressing that the confession attributed to his client was invalid, as it was obtained under physical and psychological duress.

Lawyer Al-Wuhaib also challenged the forensic report, arguing that it violated scientific principles and that the elements of the crime,

including the causal link, were not established.

He further requested that both the investigating officer and the forensic doctor be summoned to discuss crucial points in the case.



5,000 bail frees GM: The Court of Appeals overturned the Criminal Court's ruling that sentenced the general manager of a cooperative society to three years' imprisonment with hard labor and a fine of KD 4,000 for allegedly soliciting a bribe. The court decided to suspend the sentence for bail of KD 5,000.

The official was accused of demanding KD 4,000 from a company in return for facilitating the cashing of a cheque owed to it.

The lower court had convicted the defendant and imposed imprisonment and a fine, but the Court of Appeals opted to suspend the sentence and require bail instead.

It is worth noting that the defendant had been detained pending investigation and trial before the Criminal Court since April 2025, before the Court of Appeals issued its ruling modifying the sentence.



Gang held with drugs: Officers from the Drug Control General Department (DCGD) apprehended a three-person gang involved in drug trafficking, and in possession of 4,000 narcotic pills and a firearm during a raid on a camp in Al-Subiya desert, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to security sources, DCGD had received confidential information about a gang specializing in distributing narcotics to young people. After several days of investigation, it was determined that the three suspects had prior convictions for drug-related offenses and theft. They were placed under surveillance, and their location was identified.

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Fishing, recreational boats permitted to sail Friday: Mol

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): The Ministry of Interior, represented by the General Directorate of Coast Guard, announced Wednesday that fishing and recreational boats will be permitted to sail during the day starting this Friday, from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

The Guard Director, Brig. Gen. (Navy) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Youssef Al-Sabah, said in a press release that the decision was made after assessing the current situation, with the aim to strike a balance between allowing sea enthusiasts to pursue their activities, and maintaining the safety and security of maritime navigation in the country.

He added that this decision also reflects the Ministry's commitment to regulating maritime traffic and ensuring the safety of all sea users.

He urged all sea users to strictly adhere to the permitted areas as indicated on the approved map and to avoid approaching or sailing near oil installations and vital sites, given the importance of maintaining public safety and security.

Al-Sabah emphasized the necessity of keeping the Automatic Identification System (AIS) activated at all times while at sea, as it plays a vital role in enhancing maritime surveillance and facilitating monitoring and rapid intervention when needed.

He added that the Coast Guard continues to monitor the maritime situation around the clock and called on everyone to cooperate with the issued instructions and guidelines to contribute to achieving the highest levels of safety and security.

Social Affairs to launch third phase of Co-op Kuwaitization

61 supervisory posts open

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Following the public lottery for candidates with equal scores to complete appointment procedures for supervisory positions in cooperative societies, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Khalid Al-Ajmi revealed that the third phase will soon be launched and will include 61 supervisory positions in 61 cooperative societies, indicating that this is the largest number offered so far across all implemented phases.

In a press release, he stressed that the lottery was previously held at the Ministry of Social Affairs headquarters in the presence of Deputy Director General for Labor Affairs at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) Nasser Al-Humaidi.

Al-Ajmi disclosed that the lottery began at the Sulaibikhat and



Ministry of Social Affairs photo
Dr. Khalid Al-Ajmi oversees a transparent public lottery at the Ministry of Social Affairs to fill supervisory posts in cooperative societies, as part of Kuwait's ongoing Kuwaitization drive.

Doha Cooperative Society between three citizens who had equal scores in both the written exam and personal interview, competing for the position of Deputy Director General for Commercial and Marketing Affairs.

He asserted that the selection process adhered to a rigorous regulatory framework that guaranteed transparency and equal opportunities through

a documented system.

He said 23 citizens participated in the public lottery, which was managed through a visual and audible system to ensure fairness and integrity.

Meanwhile, he stated that 15 citizens were recruited immediately, as they obtained the highest scores in the electronic exams conducted at a private university.

He indicated that seven positions

remained vacant as none of the applicants passed the test, leading to their disqualification in accordance with the technical criteria.

He added that a total of 147 citizens applied for supervisory posts in 17 cooperative societies, including general managers, deputy managers and department heads. He said the approved salaries for these posts are KD2,000 for general managers, KD1,500 for deputy managers and KD1,000 for department heads.

He confirmed that the final results will be published on the official website and social media platforms of the ministry to guarantee transparency.

He also reaffirmed the commitment to implement the Kuwaitization plan in accordance with the directives of the political leadership and Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah.

He stressed that the ministry is keen on upholding the principle of transparency and reassuring applicants within the regulatory framework for Kuwaitizing supervisory positions.

He pointed out that all interview and lottery procedures are documented through audio and video recordings in the presence of media representatives.

Global academic achievement

PAAET makes 1st entry in Higher Education Impact Rankings 2026

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) announced its inclusion in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2026, which are linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

PAAET affirmed its continued commitment to achieving qualitative advancements at both the academic and institutional levels, as well as its ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education and training, and expand local and international partnerships in line with the directives of the political leadership and the objectives of the New Kuwait 2035 vision.

PAAET noted that its inclusion in this ranking represents a significant milestone in its journey, and reflects its societal contributions and its active role in research, innovation, and educational outreach.

Director General Dr. Hassan Al-Fajjam explained that PAAET's inclusion in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for the first time is a new academic achievement that embodies the accelerated pace of institutional development, confirms the maturity

of its academic and training system, and strengthens its presence at both regional and international levels. This achievement represents a pivotal milestone in PAAET's journey and reflects the outcome of integrated institutional work and a unified team spirit.

He added that joining global and regional rankings embodies PAAET's commitment to adopting international best practices and enhancing the quality of its educational and



Dr. Al-Fajjam

training outputs.

Dr. Al-Fajjam praised the outstanding efforts of the ranking team, along with the various sectors and departments that contributed to achieving this accomplishment.

He affirmed that this achievement serves as an incentive to continue development and innovation, and empower students and trainees to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to meet labor market demands.

Parents, teachers drive input

MoE reviews new curriculum survey

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Ministry of Education announced that its relevant departments are currently studying and analyzing the feedback from the online survey on the new curricula, which was previously launched via the Sahel application and witnessed wide participation from various segments of the educational community, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The ministry explained that a total of 194,542 people participated in the survey, including 74,038 employees of the Ministry of Education (38.1 percent) and 120,504 parents (61.9 percent).

The results showed a diverse range of participation from the educational field, with teachers of various specializations ranking first among participants, followed by department heads and technical supervisors. School principals and assistant principals also took part, reflecting the interest of different educational levels in participating in curriculum development.

The General Department for Guidance, Research, and Curricula is analyzing the survey data using specialized programs and analytical systems supported by artificial intelligence technologies.

The feedback has been carefully categorized into organized themes to facilitate the process of drawing conclusions.

The guidance departments for core subjects at the primary and intermediate levels have been provided with special login credentials that grant them access to the survey database. This allows them to review and analyze feedback, enabling the preparation of detailed reports for each subject based on their respective areas of expertise.

The operational mechanism is based on organizing data within interconnected analytical frameworks, allowing for a comprehensive reading of feedback, identification of recurring patterns, and prioritization based on quantitative and qualitative indicators. These indicators support decision-making and the translation of feedback into actionable measures.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is conducting independent analyses of the new curricula according to international standards and frameworks, in parallel with national efforts in this regard.

This integration of local and international analysis enhances the comprehensiveness of the evaluation by combining feedback from the educational field with specialized scientific analysis. This, in turn, supports the adoption of accurate developmental decisions based on real needs and modern educational standards.

The ministry explained that its technical guidance teams are currently preparing comprehensive reports that include important observations and recommendations, in preparation for submitting them to the relevant committees for approval of the necessary amendments to the curricula and textbooks for the 2026/2027 academic year. The amendments aim to achieve a balance between content quality and accessibility, while taking into account the needs of students at all levels.

It emphasized that all observations are subject to thorough review based on modern educational standards and the scientific studies upon which the developed curricula were built, while also taking into account the specificities of the educational environment in Kuwait and its national values.

The ministry stressed that this phase represents a continuation of its policy of actively listening to education specialists and reflects its flexibility in addressing feedback and transforming it into opportunities that contribute to raising the quality of education and improving outcomes.

It reiterated that curriculum development is an ongoing process based on partnership among all stakeholders. The ministry affirmed that the analysis of the survey results will directly influence updates to textbook content and the development of curricula to keep pace with modern educational trends and align with New Kuwait 2035 vision.

Electricity activated in Al-Mutlaa N1

By Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: The Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, in cooperation with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), announced the activation of electricity in Al-Mutlaa

Residential City, specifically in N1 (part of Block Three).

The ministry stated that it has begun accepting applications for electricity connections for 378 plots in the suburb.

This is part of its efforts to complete the infrastructure and provide essential services to citizens in new residential projects.



Namaa Charity photo
Namaa Charity drills three artesian wells in the state of Hadjer Lamis in the Republic of Chad.

Namaa implements three artesian wells benefiting over 1,500 in Chad

KHARTOUM, April 22, (KUNA): Namaa Charity of the Social Reform Society implemented three artesian wells in Hadjer Lamis State in Chad, covering Malawi and Al-Masakat villages, alongside urgent relief aid benefiting over 10,000 people in need.

Deputy CEO Abdulaziz Al-Kandari told KUNA that water projects represent a vital lifeline for vulnerable communities, noting residents suffered severe hardship due to scarce water sources and long travel distances under harsh climatic conditions.

He said drilling the three wells provided a safe and sustainable water source for around 9,000 beneficiaries, stressing water is essential not only for drinking but also for public health, livelihoods, dignity and stability.

Al-Kandari added that Sudanese refugees in Chad face extremely difficult humanitarian conditions, prompting urgent aid including water, food and meat distributions benefiting over 1,000 refugees, reaffirming the charity's commitment to continuing humanitarian efforts.



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

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Continued from Page 1

PAM urges

In another development, PAM launched new electronic services on the 'Ashal' portal for business owners, in a significant stride towards the realization of the vision of the State on digital transformation and easing procedures for clients. These services include the 'Issuance of Work Permits - Transfer from Outside the Sector' and 'Cancellation of Work Permits - Expatriate Workers' for certain categories like the spouses and children of citizens, widows or divorcees who were married to citizens, and those who recently amended their legal status.

According to PAM, the 'Issuance of Work Permits' service is for expatriate workers who are in the country with valid residency permit and passport valid for the duration of the permit. The record of the employer must be free of suspensions or pending application.

It added that the 'Reversal of Work Permit Cancellation' service allows employers to reactivate permits for eligible categories, provided the residency of the worker in the private sector is still valid and there are no regulatory obstacles in the file.

Moreover, PAM announced the commencement of registration for the student summer training program, which will run from July 1 to Aug 31. This program aims to develop national talent and support professional development. It is considered a crucial move towards the improvement of work mechanisms and to equip the youths with skills required for future career horizons.

PAM stated that the registration will be online from April 26 to June 11 covering vital sectors like banking, cooperative societies, telecommunications and insurance. It confirmed that this entails a high level of integration between education and the manpower needs of the private sector.

Education Minister

Deputy Ambassador Stuart Summers, Second Secretary at the British Embassy Najina Akhtar and Director of the British Council Tony Skinner.

During the meeting, the two parties affirmed the depth and strength of the bilateral relations between the State of Kuwait and the United Kingdom, praising their continuous development and fruitful cooperation in various fields, particularly in the education sector, which is a pillar in supporting development paths and building human capacity.

They also expressed their shared commitment to strengthen cooperation and exchange educational expertise, contributing to the achievement of common goals and raising the quality of education in both countries.

Court greenlights

of the Municipal Council to relocate private schools from residential areas to alternative sites within the specified period. It stressed that this decision is in the interest of the public and aims to regulate land use in residential areas. It clarified that this decision is not arbitrary, discriminatory or an infringement on the right to education, and its application is immediate, not retroactive.

In the second ruling, the Court upheld the constitutionality of Article 150 of the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, specifically the provision that permits reconsideration of a petition in the same court and with the same panel that issued the original ruling.

The court ruled that this procedure does not violate the guarantees of impartiality or judicial autonomy, because the appeal is based on new facts or documents, which were not presented when the original ruling was issued. This is not an attack on the judges or a breach of the guarantees of fair trial.

In the third ruling, the court dismissed an appeal filed by a defendant who challenged the constitutionality of the provisions related to notification to the Public Prosecution in criminal cases, based on the invalidity of his notification in the Court of Cassation.

The court explained that the appeal is baseless, because the appealed ruling did not address the plea of unconstitutionality, thus, negating the requirement that the constitutional issue be relevant to the dispute.

In its fourth ruling, the court rejected the appeal filed by a citizen requesting disbursement of national employment support benefits. The citizen challenged the constitutionality of Cabinet Resolution No. 390/2001 on the social allowance.

The court affirmed that regulating the financial benefits of employees in government entities and wholly state-owned companies falls within the discretionary power of the legislature and does not violate the principle of equality, given the differences in legal status among job categories.

The court emphasized in its rulings that a plea of unconstitutionality is only admissible if it is essential for resolving the dispute and there is a serious suspicion of unconstitutionality.

It also stressed that its oversight is limited to compliance with the Constitution, not other legislation.

Ceasefire extension

In latest development, Iran fired on three ships in the Strait of Hormuz and seized two of them on Wednesday, intensifying its assault on shipping in the key waterway a day after U.S. President Donald Trump extended a ceasefire while maintaining an American block-

ade of Iranian ports. Iranian media said the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard was bringing the two ships to Iran after seizing them in the strait, through which 20% of the world's oil passes in peacetime. The standoff over Iran's closure of the strait and the U.S. blockade raised doubts about when or if talks would resume to end the crisis.

The conflict has already sent gas prices skyrocketing far beyond the region and raised the cost of food and a wide array of other products. The longer the strait remains closed, the more severe and widespread the effects will be - and the longer it will take the economy to bounce back.

The European Union energy commissioner, Dan Jørgensen, warned of lasting impact for consumers and business, likening the crisis to other major energy crunches over the last half-century. He said the war is costing Europe around 500 million euros (\$600 million) each day.

In a separate development, French President Emmanuel Macron said a French peacekeeper wounded in an attack in Lebanon over the weekend had died of his wounds. Another French peacekeeper was killed in the attack on Saturday, in which the force came under small arms fire in southern Lebanon. Macron blamed the attack on Iran-backed Hezbollah militants. Hezbollah has denied involvement.

Iran's leaders appear poised to drive a hard bargain with American negotiators after Trump said the U.S. would indefinitely extend the ceasefire that had been due to expire Wednesday, while Washington awaits a new proposal from Tehran.

Iranian media said the MSC Francesca and the Epaminodes were being escorted to Iran. The ships' owners could not be immediately reached for comment. The U.S. had earlier seized two Iranian vessels as the ceasefire talks were due to take place in Pakistan.

The Guard attacked a third ship, identified as the Euphoria, which had become "stranded" on the Iranian coast, Iranian media reported, without elaborating.

36 lose

of 36 individuals, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Decision No. 6/37 of 2026, which was published in the supplement of the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Youm," stipulates the revocation of citizenship in accordance with Article 11 of Amiri Decree No. 15/1959 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments.

Article 11 stipulates that a Kuwaiti man loses his 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 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 pertaining to that nationality, provided that the minor is Kuwaiti as per Article One of this law. They must inform the Minister of Interior of their desire to keep their Kuwaiti citizenship within one year of reaching the age of maturity.

Calls for

and social stability, and a source of security and human dignity. Women in Kuwaiti society today are no longer subordinate members of the family. They are often directly responsible for supporting their families or managing their lives independently, whether they are divorced, widowed, or unmarried. Therefore, women's access to housing has become a vital necessity dictated by ongoing social and economic changes in society.

Q: Does Kuwaiti law guarantee women's right to housing?

A: Yes, it can be said that Kuwaiti legislation has taken significant steps in this direction, providing women with multiple avenues to obtain this right, both directly and indirectly.

Women can benefit from housing assistance as wives or mothers within the family unit. The law also grants rights to divorced, widowed, and unmarried women under certain conditions, the most important of which are not owning suitable housing and not having previously benefited from housing support. These conditions apply to both men and women, reflecting the principle of fairness.

Q: What about the housing rights of divorced women?

A: A divorced woman with custody, in particular, has the right to obtain housing for her children, either through allocated housing or a rental allowance, with the father obligated to assume this responsibility.

Recent amendments have made it possible for a divorced woman with custody to obtain alternative housing under specific conditions. In some cases, a woman may apply for housing assistance in her own name, which reflects a trend toward empowering women and granting them greater independence.

Q: Are there other categories of women included in the housing support program?

A: Yes, the scope of benefit is not limited to a specific category, but rather includes various segments of women according to specific regulations. Among these categories are Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis, wid-

ows, divorced women without children, and unmarried women who have reached a certain age. These categories can apply for various forms of support, whether in the form of government housing, a housing loan, or financial allowances.

Q: What about the recent government amendments to the housing assistance regulations? What is their impact on women's housing issues?

A: The recent amendments to the housing assistance regulations have contributed to giving women a wider scope of benefit. Women are more clearly included in housing provisions, which is an important legal development, in addition to taking into account emergency family situations such as divorce or death, to ensure that housing stability is not lost. These steps reflect a clear governmental trend toward achieving greater equity. However, housing continues to be a major concern for women due to the gap between legislation and its practical application in some aspects.

One of the most prominent challenges women face is the long waiting periods for housing, which can extend for many years. Another challenge is the linking of housing rights in many cases to marital status, such as marriage or divorce, which limits women's independence.

Some women also face difficulty obtaining independent housing despite not owning any property, which highlights the need to reconsider some implementation mechanisms.

Q: What about single women?

A: Single women represent a real situation that cannot be ignored. This category includes unmarried women or divorced women without children, who may find themselves outside the scope of traditional housing assistance.

There are a number of proposals aimed at addressing this situation, such as providing affordable loans, rental allowances, and suitable housing units, in addition to introducing systems like rent-to-own and establishing funds specifically to support women's housing independence.

A demand has also been made to abolish the requirement to share accommodation with another woman, due to the practical complications and impact on privacy it entails.

Q: Some people believe that divorced women are the most affected in this matter. What is your opinion?

A: Indeed, I can say that divorced women who have lost their housing rights are among the most affected groups, especially if they do not have custody of their children or no longer have any legal status guaranteeing them stability. This situation reveals a clear gap between legal entitlement and actual need.

Q: What is the position of the Kuwaiti judiciary on these issues?

A: The Kuwaiti judiciary has ad-

ressed these cases in a number of rulings. However, these rulings sometimes reflect a disparity in approach depending on the specific circumstances.

In some cases, women were granted ownership documents if the procedures were completed before divorce. In other cases, their right to use housing was limited to a specific period, such as the custody period. This disparity indicates that the issue has not been resolved comprehensively through legislation.

Q: What is the solution from your perspective?

A: In my view, the solution is not limited to granting women a formal right to housing, but requires building an integrated system that guarantees them genuine stability, especially in cases where women's family circumstances change. It is essential to provide independent housing protection for women whose custody ends or who are left without family support, so that their right is not solely dependent on family circumstances. This requires a legislative and regulatory review that takes into account current social transformations.

Lowest-priced plots in the first quarter of 2026:

1. Al-Wafra Residential Area, Block 2 - 400 sq m, price KD 97,000
2. Khairan City, Block 2 - 400 sq m, price KD 98,000
3. Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential Area, Block 3 - 400 sq m, price KD 154,000
4. Abu Fatira, Block 3 - 500 sq m, price KD 280,000
5. Al-Masayel, Block 5 - 400 sq m, price KD 280,000
6. Funaites, Block 6 - 389.25 sq m, price KD 280,000
7. Jahra, Block 41 - 502.5 sq m, price KD 280,000
8. Egaila, Block 4 - 500 sq m, price KD 300,100
9. Al-Salam, Block 3 - 450 sq m, price KD 305,000
10. Rumaithiya, Block 10 - 375 sq m, price KD 335,000

Highest priced plots in the first quarter of 2026:

1. Abu Hasaniya, Block 11 - 2,542 sq m, price KD 4.64 million
2. Nuzha, Block 3 - 1,000 sq m, price KD 2.25 million
3. Shamiya, Block 8 - 500 sq m, price KD 1.2 million
4. Al-Nuzha, Block 2 - 500 sq m, price KD 1,000,200
5. Da'iyah, Block 4 - 1,000 sq m, price KD 780,000
6. Hiteen, Block 2 - 750 sq m, price KD 750,000
7. Sabah Al-Ahmad Marine City - 1,200 sq m, price KD 700,000
8. Zahraa, Block 6 - 679 sq m, price KD 679,000
9. Al-Siddiq, Block 7 - 732.5 sq m, price KD 675,000
10. Qadisiyah, Block 8 - 362.5 sq m, price KD 605,000



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INTERNATIONAL

America

Southern Poverty Law Center charged: The Southern Poverty Law Center was indicted Tuesday on federal fraud charges alleging it improperly raised millions of dollars to secretly pay leaders of the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups for inside information, acting Attorney General **Todd Blanche** said.

The Justice Department alleges the civil rights group defrauded donors by using their money to fund the very extremism it claimed to be fighting, with more than \$3 million paid to informants through a now-defunct program to infiltrate white supremacist and other extremist groups. Prosecutors allege some of the money was used by extremists to carry out other crimes, but court papers did not include specific examples.

"The SPLC was not dismantling these groups. It was instead manufacturing the extremism it purports to oppose by paying sources to stoke racial hatred," Blanche said.

The civil rights group faces charges of wire fraud, bank fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering in the case brought in the federal court in Alabama, where the organization is based.

The indictment came shortly after the SPLC revealed the existence of a criminal investigation into its disbanded informant program to gather intelligence on extremist group activities. The group said the program was used to monitor threats of violence and the information was often shared with local and federal law enforcement.

The SPLC said it "will vigorously defend ourselves, our staff, and our work" against what it described as false allegations. The group said its informant program saved lives.



Blanche

"Taking on violent hate and extremist groups is among the most dangerous work there is, and we believe it is also among the most important work we do," interim CEO and president Bryan Fair said in a statement. "The actions by the DOJ will not shake our resolve to fight for justice and ensure the promise of the Civil Rights Movement becomes a reality for all." (AP)

Rep Cherfilus-McCormick of Florida resigns: Democratic Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick of Florida resigned from office on Tuesday moments before the start of a hearing that could have led to a recommendation that she be expelled from Congress.

Cherfilus-McCormick was the subject of a more than two-year investigation by the House Ethics Committee, which had determined recently that she had violated multiple federal laws and House rules. Support from her own party was increasingly in doubt.

It's the third resignation in a little more than a week from a House lawmaker. Reps. Eric Swalwell, a California Democrat, and Tony Gonzales, a Texas Republican, announced within hours of each other that they were leaving Congress. Both men were facing sexual misconduct allegations and possible expulsion. (AP)

'Ex-Ohio State prez violated school policy': Ohio State University's recently resigned president violated school policy by attempting to help a woman with whom he had a close personal relationship get a job at the school and access the public institution's resources, the school said in a report released Tuesday.

The investigation was requested by the Ohio State's trustees following the abrupt resignation of Walter "Ted" Carter Jr. as school president following revelations about what it called an "inappropriate relationship."

In a statement, John Zeiger, Ohio State's board chair, said the investigation's findings were "deeply disappointing." (AP)

Virginia voters approve redistricting plan that could boost Dems' seats in Congress

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP) — Virginia voters approved a mid-decade redistricting plan Tuesday that could boost Democrats' chances of winning four additional US House seats in November's midterm elections that will decide control of the narrowly divided Congress.

The constitutional amendment backed by voters bypasses a bipartisan redistricting commission to allow the use of new districts drawn by Virginia's Democratic-led General Assembly. But the public vote may not be the final word. The state Supreme Court is considering whether the plan is illegal in a case that could make the referendum results meaningless.

The Virginia redistricting referendum marked a setback for President Donald Trump, who kicked off a national redistricting battle last year by urging Republican officials in Texas to redraw districts. The goal was to help Republicans win more seats in the November elections and hold on to a narrow House majority in the face of political headwinds that typically favor the party out of power during midterm elections.

The Texas gambit led to a burst of redistricting nationwide. So far, Republicans believe they can win up to nine more House seats in newly redrawn districts in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina



A person votes in the Virginia redistricting referendum at Mason Square on April 21, in Alexandria, Va. (AP)

and Ohio. Democrats think they can win up to five more seats in California, where voters approved a similar mid-decade redistricting effort last November, and one more seat under new court-imposed districts in Utah.

Democrats hope to offset the rest of that gap in Virginia, where they

decisively flipped 13 seats in the state House and won back the governor's office last year. But the back-and-forth battle is continuing in Florida, where the Republican-led Legislature is to convene April 28 for a special session that could result in more favorable congressional districts for Republicans.

Schumer calls budget workaround a 'partisan sideshow'

US Republicans launch new effort to fund Department of Homeland Security

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP) — The Senate voted on Tuesday to launch a new effort to reopen the Department of Homeland Security and end the longest partial government shutdown in history.

The 52-46 vote was the first step in a budget process that Republicans hope will unlock the funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol. Senate Democrats have blocked money for those agencies since mid-February, demanding policy changes after the fatal shootings of two protesters by federal agents.

Republicans are now trying to fund the two agencies through a complicated, time-consuming process called budget reconciliation, a maneuver that they also used to pass President Donald Trump's package of tax and spending cuts last year with no Democratic votes. The Senate has already voted on a bipartisan basis to reopen the rest of the department, but Republican leaders in the House say they won't take that bill up until the Senate shows progress toward funding ICE and Border Patrol, as well.

The budget process only requires a simple majority in the Senate, bypassing filibuster rules that require Republicans to find 60 votes on most bills when they only hold 53 seats. But it also comes with

increased scrutiny from the Senate parliamentarian and an open-ended series of amendment votes that could potentially alter the bill.

"It's not my preference, but it is reality," Thune said.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, called the budget workaround a "partisan sideshow" and said the resolution will pour money into immigration enforcement "without putting any restraints on these rogue agencies' rampant violence in our streets."

The Senate Budget Committee on Tuesday released the estimated \$70 billion resolution to fund ICE and Border Patrol for three years, through the rest of Trump's term. Thune and other GOP leaders say they hope to keep the bill narrowly focused and pass it by the end of the month.

But that could prove difficult as many in the party see it as the last real chance this year to enact their priorities. Republicans in both the Senate and House have pushed to add other items, including money for farmers and Trump's proof of citizenship voting bill, called the SAVE America Act.

Republican leaders say they would try to do a second partisan budget reconciliation bill to deal with some of



US Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, speaks to reporters following a closed-door party meeting, at the Capitol in Washington, on April 21. (AP)

those issues. But many of their colleagues are skeptical, especially with thin GOP margins in both chambers of Congress and an election approaching.

Senators who have been pushing for more to be included in the original resolution say they are preparing amendments to try and add them on the Sen-

ate floor. Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said he'll try to add parts of the SAVE America Act and proposals related to the economy.

"A lot of Americans are very worried about the cost of living and we need to address it," Kennedy said Monday.

But at a lunch meeting on Tuesday, Republican senators were mostly united around Thune's plan.

"I think people recognize that we have to act quickly," said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis. "The more you add the more that slows the process down."

Democrats say any funding bill should place restraints on federal immigration authorities, including better identification for federal officers and more use of judicial warrants, among other asks.

"After the killings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, people across the country demanded ICE be reined in," said Washington Sen. Patty Murray, the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee. "But instead of working with Democrats to enact real reform, Republicans rejected the most basic accountability measures, and now they're rushing to give ICE billions of dollars more."

After federal agents shot Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis in January, Trump agreed to a Democratic request that the Homeland Security bill be separated from a larger spending measure that became law. But bipartisan negotiations went nowhere, and the DHS funding lapsed with no agreement on changes to the

Trump administration's immigration enforcement tactics.

In March, the Senate passed legislation by voice vote that would separate out ICE and Border Patrol and fund the rest of the department, including the Transportation Security Administration as security lines grew long at some airports. But Republicans in the House refused to vote for it, saying they wouldn't support any bill that didn't include money for immigration enforcement.

Congress then left town for a two-week recess, leaving the issue unresolved. Trump has used executive orders to pay some department salaries in the meantime, but the future of those paychecks is uncertain.

During the recess, Thune and House Speaker Mike Johnson announced that they would pursue a two-track approach - pass the Senate bill that includes most of the department's funding through regular order and use the party-line bill to pass ICE and CBP funding.

Weeks later, though, Johnson has still not said when the House will take up the Senate's legislation funding the rest of the department. And it is unclear if members of his GOP conference will unite behind the narrowed budget bill.

Slovaks to vote in July referendum on lifelong payments for PM Fico and others

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, April 22, (AP) — Slovakia will hold a referendum this summer to decide whether to cancel lifelong payments for populist Prime Minister Robert Fico and other leaders after their terms in office expire, the country's president said Monday.

According to President Peter Pellegrini, the vote is set for July 4. Slovaks will at the same time also vote on whether to reopen the office of the special prosecutor that used to deal with major crime and corruption.

The referendum follows a petition organized by the Democrats, a non-parliamentary pro-Western opposition party, and signed by more than 350,000 citizens, the threshold required by law.

However, Pellegrini said the referendum would not ask people whether they support an early parliamentary election. Based on a 2021 ruling by the country's highest legal authority, the Constitutional Court, such a question is unconstitutional, he said.

Slovak prime ministers and parliament speakers who served at least two terms in office receive a lifelong payment - a monthly sum that equals the salaries of lawmakers in Parliament - as part of measures to boost security for leading politicians.

The payments were introduced following a 2024 assassination attempt on Fico, who was shot and gravely wounded at a pre-election event, shocking the small country and reverberating across Europe. Before, the benefit was provided



Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico gestures during joint statements with Romanian counterpart Ilie Bolojan, at the Victoria Palace, the Romanian government headquarters in Bucharest, Romania on March 27. (AP)

only to former presidents.

Later in 2024, Slovak lawmakers approved a plan by Fico's coalition government to abolish the special prosecutors' office, which handles serious crimes such as graft, organized crime and extremism.

Ukraine wants Zelenskyy-Putin summit to jolt stalled peace efforts

KYIV, Ukraine, April 22, (AP) — Ukraine is pushing for face-to-face talks between President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kyiv's top diplomat said, presenting a potential summit as a way of injecting new momentum into US-led efforts to end Russia's more than four-year invasion of its neighbor.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone attack deep inside Russia struck a residential building, killing a woman and a child, Russian officials said Wednesday.

Kyiv has asked Turkey to help facilitate top-level talks and has reached out to other capitals as potential hosts, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybha said, adding that Ukraine would consider any venue outside Russia and Belarus.

"We are ... advocating for a (summit) meeting now to bring new momentum to diplomacy," Sybha told reporters on Tuesday. His remarks were embargoed until Wednesday.

US-mediated talks over the past year between delegations from Moscow and Kyiv have made little or no headway on key issues, such as the future of four Ukrainian regions Moscow is trying to capture but doesn't fully control. With Washington's attention now gripped by the Iran war, the talks are on ice.

Zelenskyy has accepted an uncon-



In this photo provided by the Russian Emergency Ministry Press Service, Russian Emergency Ministry employees work at the side of the damaged multi-storey apartment building hit by a Ukrainian drone in Syzran in Russia's Samara Region on April 22. (AP)

ditional ceasefire demanded by US President Donald Trump but Putin has refused. Putin thinks that time is on his side, that Western military and financial support will fade and that Ukraine's resistance will eventually collapse, analysts say.

Meanwhile, a grim war of attrition continues along the about 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line that snakes along eastern and southern areas of Ukraine. Western officials and analysts claim Russia is suffering several

tens of thousands of battlefield casualties each month, drawing comparisons to the carnage of World War I.

Independent verification of battlefield casualties and which side has the upper hand is not possible.

Ukraine has developed a domestic arms industry which is increasingly producing long-range drones and missiles capable of striking deep inside Russia. It has taken aim at Russia's oil production and manufacturing plants that supply the Russian military.

Kazakhstan hosts Regional Ecological Summit 2026 in Astana

ASTANA, April 22: The Regional Ecological Summit 2026 (RES 2026) opens in Astana from April 22 to 24, bringing together heads of state, senior policymakers, international organizations, and financial institutions to address mounting environmental and climate pressures across Central Asia. Hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in partnership with the United Nations and a broad network of regional and global stakeholders, the summit aims to strengthen coordinated responses and advance practical, cross-border solutions.

Designed as both a political and implementation-focused platform, RES 2026 will concentrate on aligning regional priorities and mobilizing investment across interconnected sectors, including water, energy, land, and food systems. More than 20 thematic and country-specific sessions will accompany head-of-state plenaries, fostering dialogue between governments, scientists, civil society, private sector actors, and youth representatives.

Confirmed participants include regional leaders such as Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, Armenia's President Vahagn Khachaturyan, and Mongolia's President Ukhnaagin Khurelsukh. Senior international figures expected at the summit include UN Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, OSCE Secretary General Feridun H. Sinirlioglu, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo, and ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. CNN has been named the official media partner.

The summit takes place against a backdrop of intensifying environmental challenges in Central Asia, including water scarcity, glacier retreat, land degradation, and biodiversity loss - pressures compounded by climate change, rising demand for resources, and ageing infrastructure. With many of these risks crossing national borders, RES 2026 seeks to move beyond dialogue toward coordinated policy action, targeted investment, and scalable regional initiatives.

Discussions will focus on climate resilience, sustainable water and land management, energy transition,



RES logo

green finance, and technology-driven innovation. The summit's core objectives include strengthening regional cooperation, mobilizing climate finance, advancing practical solutions, aligning policy with implementation, and supporting long-term resilience across critical systems.

Positioned as one of the most comprehensive environmental gatherings at the head-of-state level in Central Asia, RES 2026 aims to enhance regional cooperation while linking local priorities to global climate and sustainable development agendas. It also seeks to position Central Asia as a more unified actor in addressing complex environmental challenges.

Kazakhstan, the host nation, has highlighted its environmental efforts, including wildlife restoration initiatives, partial recovery of the North Aral Sea, anti-desertification programmes, and national afforestation projects. The country has adopted a Green Economy Strategy targeting carbon neutrality by 2060, while expanding renewable energy capacity and promoting green finance through the Astana International Financial Centre.

Europe

Hungary's Magyar announces ministers: Hungarian election winner **Péter Magyar** on Monday announced the first round of his incoming government's Cabinet members, including nominees for ministers of foreign affairs, finance and economy, following the first meeting of his party's parliamentary group.

Magyar and his center-right Tiszta party defeated Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in a landslide election on April 12, securing a two-thirds majority in Hungary's next parliament which will make it possible to undo many of the policies Orbán implemented during his 16 years in power.

The opposition leader has vowed to restore democratic institutions and the rule of law which eroded under Orbán's rule, and to hold accountable those who he says were responsible for overseeing and benefiting from widespread official corruption.



Magyar

Magyar's party gained 141 seats out of 199 in parliament - the largest majority in Hungary's post-Communist history. Orbán's far-right, euroskeptic Fidesz party will control 52 seats, down from 135 before the election. (Xinhua)

Georgia faces low risk for terrorist attacks: Georgia faces a low risk of terrorist attacks, with international extremist groups showing limited interest in the country due to its geographic location, the Georgian Public Broadcaster reported Tuesday. The broadcaster was citing the latest annual report of the State Security Service (SSSG), Georgia's state agency responsible for national security, anti-terrorism, counterintelligence affairs. (AP)

Austria trolleybus accident kills 1, injures 7: One person was killed and seven others injured after a trolleybus crashed into a supermarket in the city of Salzburg on Monday, local media reported.

The accident occurred around midday, when the trolleybus struck the glass facade and entrance area of the store. According to the Red Cross, one person died at the scene. Two people were seriously injured and taken to hospital, while five others sustained minor injuries. (Xinhua)

2 killed, 10 injured in Sagaing region harbor fire

Head of Myanmar's army-backed govt proposes peace talks with armed resistance groups

BANGKOK, April 22, (Agencies): The leader of Myanmar's military-backed government has invited the country's armed resistance groups to fresh peace talks, state-run newspapers reported Tuesday, marking the first such call from President Min Aung Hlaing since he took office earlier this month.

Min Aung Hlaing's call for talks was framed as part of a self-styled 100-day program that he announced at a cabinet meeting on Monday in the capital Naypyitaw prioritizing peace and stability as well as development, reported the state newspaper Myanmar Alinn.

The president took office on April 10 after an election that critics say was neither free nor fair and was designed to maintain the military's grip on power five years after it ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government. As military chief, Min Aung Hlaing led the takeover and headed the unelected military government.

The army's seizure of power intensified longstanding armed resistance in Myanmar, as pro-democracy activists joined with ethnic armed groups that

had been battling for decades for greater autonomy, leading to a civil war still affecting most of the country. The military government had held a series of in-person peace talks with ethnic minority leaders starting in 2022 aiming to weaken the anti-military alliances, but with little result.

Myanma Alinn reported that on Monday Min Aung Hlaing said he is inviting ethnic armed groups to hold new talks by July 31.

However, Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the National Unity Government, the main group coordinating opposition to military rule, said Tuesday that it and the People's Defense Force units under its command would continue to fight alongside other resistance forces until their goals are achieved.

"We all already understood that the military's fake invitations are aimed at prolonging people's subjugation under military rule," Nay Phone Latt said. Myanmar has 21 established ethnic armed organizations with a history of armed struggle, 10 of which signed multilateral ceasefire agreements known as Nationwide Ceasefire Agreements or NCA, in 2015 and 2018



Myanmar's newly elected President Min Aung Hlaing, (second right), takes oath together with two elected Vice Presidents Nyo Saw, (third right), and Nan Ni Ni Aye, (right), during a swearing-in ceremony at Union Parliament in Naypyitaw, Myanmar on April 10. (AP)

under previous governments. However, four of the signatories spurned the agreement and resumed fighting after the 2021 army takeover.

"Both NCA signatories and non-signatories are invited to participate in the peace process," Min Aung Hlaing was quoted as saying. He also invited the

armed guerrilla groups, collectively called the People's Defense Force - formed to fight to restore democracy after the army takeover - to participate and enter the legal fold within the 100-day period.

Other aspects of the 100-day program cover social and economic measures and infrastructure.

For several decades, Myanmar has seen a cycle of ceasefires bringing in intermittent periods of relative peace, but none has led to a comprehensive political settlement that would grant the ethnic groups the degree of autonomy they seek in the frontier regions where they are dominant.

The new initiative comes after the army regained the upper hand in the nationwide conflict in mid-2025 following a series of China-brokered ceasefires with major rebel groups and a boost in the army's numbers after the activation of a conscription law in early 2024.

The army has retaken territory from ethnic militias, including the Three Brotherhood Alliance, which had launched powerful offensives along with pro-democracy resistance forces

in northeastern Myanmar near the Chinese border and in western Myanmar.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, a member of the alliance, congratulated Min Aung Hlaing on his presidency and said it looked forward to peace talks in a statement last Wednesday.

Also:

YANGON: Two people were killed and about 10 others injured in a harbor fire in Sagaing region, a local police officer told Xinhua on Tuesday.

An oil-carrying motorboat caught fire and exploded at a harbor in Homaalin town at around 6 p.m. local time on Monday, and the blaze spread to nearby motorboats, the officer said.

As a result, one man and one woman were killed and about 10 people were injured, the officer said, adding that around 10 motorboats were also destroyed in the blaze.

The fire burned through the night, and some parts were still burning on Tuesday morning, according to the officer.

The injured were taken to a local hospital for treatment, the officer added.

Xi and Chapo hold talks

China, Mozambique upgrade ties

BEIJING, April 22, (Xinhua): Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mozambican President Daniel Francisco Chapo held talks in Beijing on Tuesday, and the two heads of state agreed to upgrade bilateral ties to a China-Mozambique community with a shared future in the new era.

Noting that the time-honored friendship between China and Mozambique has set an example for China-Africa relations and South-South cooperation, Xi said that under the new circumstances, deepening China-Mozambique friendly cooperation meets the shared expectations of the two peoples and reflects the prevailing trend in the Global South to strengthen solidarity and collaboration in jointly tackling challenges.

China is ready to work with Mozambique to take the implementation of the outcomes of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges in 2026 as an opportunity to jointly pursue modernization, Xi noted.

Friendship and mutual trust are the defining features and political

strengths of China-Mozambique relations, Xi said, adding that the two sides should continue to firmly support each other on issues concerning each other's core interests and major concerns, promote exchanges at various levels and in various fields including governments, political parties, legislative bodies and local exchanges, and deepen experience sharing in party and state governance.

He pointed out that China and Mozambique enjoy strong economic complementarity and broad cooperation prospects. Noting that this year marks the beginning of China's 15th Five-Year Plan period, Xi said China stands ready to strengthen the alignment of development strategies with Mozambique, explore new models of cooperation, break new ground in infrastructure development and the comprehensive development of energy and mineral resources, foster new growth areas of cooperation in agriculture, new energy, digital economy and artificial intelligence, and advance high-quality and sustainable growth of practical cooperation between the two countries.



Chinese President Xi Jinping holds talks with President of the Republic of Mozambique Daniel Francisco Chapo, who is on a state visit to China, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, April 21. (Xinhua)

Libya fueled war in Sudan with Colombian mercenaries and equipment – UN report

CAIRO, April 22, (AP): An armed group in Libya helped the transfer of former Colombian military personnel to fight with the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary group against the Sudanese military, according to a United Nations report released days after the third anniversary of the start of the war in Sudan.

Libya's Subul al-Salam Battalion facilitated the transfer of recruits, including Colombian mercenaries, weapons and fuel across the border to support the RSF, adding to the chaos of the devastating conflict.

The battalion was part of the self-styled Libyan National Army, commanded by powerful Gen Khalifa Hifter, that runs eastern and southern parts of chaos-stricken Libya. It activities centered in the southern town of Kufra, which borders Sudan, Chad and Egypt. It controls crucial facilities, including an airport, which helped transfer arms and fighters to the RSF, the experts said.

The report of the UN's Panel of Experts on Libya, which covered October 2024 to February 2026, was released on Sunday.

The war in Sudan broke out on April 15, 2023, when a power struggle between the military and RSF exploded into open fighting in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere in the sprawling country.

The UN report detailed the benefits the RSF obtained through Libya, including a rear base about 75 kilometers



A child sits inside a bus, in Omdurman, Sudan, on the outskirts of Khartoum on April 21. (AP)

(46.6 miles) southwest of Kufra.

The Sudanese paramilitary group also benefited from an airbase in Kufra and other facilities that were used as transit points for Colombian fighters and as sites for the modification of vehicles imported through Libya, the experts found.

The UN experts said the battalion supported RSF operations in June 2025 through deploying units on the ground, providing fighters and "escorting them

across Libyan territory and facilitating access to fuel and spare vehicle parts."

Its support helped the RSF to advance on the Uwaynat area, a border triangle where Sudan, Egypt and Libya meet, but "weakened border security in southern Libya," the report said.

A spokesperson for RSF did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Subul al-Salam Battalion was not reachable for comment.

Mexico to beef up security at tourist sites after shooting at pyramids

MEXICO CITY, April 22, (AP): Mexico's government said it was beefing up security at tourist sites after a man opened fire on tourists at pyramids outside of Mexico City less than two months before the FIFA World Cup.

The Monday shooting, carried out by a lone gunman on top of one of the Teotihuacan pyramids – a UNESCO Heritage Site and one of Mexico's most frequented tourist attractions – killed one Canadian tourist and injured a dozen more.

It also set off a flurry of questions the next morning by reporters to Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum about what security protocols her government was taking ahead of the sports competition, which Mexico will jointly host with the United States and Canada over the summer.

About an hour from Mexico City, Teotihuacan was slated to be a key site for visitors during the festivities. Just days before the shooting, local lawmakers even pushed forward an initiative to revive a nighttime interactive light show projected on the pyramids for World Cup visitors, which was previously suspended at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unexpected act of violence comes as Sheinbaum's government has gone to great lengths to project an image of safety ahead of the soccer competition, following a surge of cartel vio-



National Guard troops patrol the Teotihuacan pyramids, which remained closed a day after a gunman opened fire on tourists at the archaeological site outside Mexico City on April 21. (AP)

lence February in the World Cup host city of Guadalajara.

"Events like this only further magnify the negative images that Mexico has on security issues, undermining the narrative that President Sheinbaum is trying to build that Mexico is a safe country," said Mexican security analyst David Saucedo.

On Tuesday, Sheinbaum acknowledged that the archaeological site

lacked security filters to prevent the attack in part, she said, because the shooting "was an isolated incident" that hasn't occurred before in such a public space.

While Mexico suffers from cartel violence, especially in strategic and rural areas, mass shootings in public spaces are rare in Mexico compared to the US, where it is much easier to legally obtain a gun.

ICC confirms jurisdiction in former Philippine president Duterte case

THE HAGUE, April 22, (Xinhua): The International Criminal Court (ICC) on Wednesday confirmed that it has jurisdiction over former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, allowing the case to proceed and rejecting the defense's request for his immediate and unconditional release.

The ICC said that, on Oct 23, 2025, its pre-trial chamber rejected the defense's challenge to the court's jurisdiction in this case. On Oct. 28, the counsel for Duterte filed a Notice of Appeal against that decision and subsequently submitted an Appeal Brief on Jurisdiction on Nov. 14.

The defense argued that the ICC lacks jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed in the Philippines, on the grounds that the country is no longer a State Party to the Rome Statute, the Court's founding treaty.

It further contended that allowing the Court to exercise jurisdiction indefinitely after a State's withdrawal would undermine that State's sovereign right to exit the Statute.

The Appeals Chamber of ICC countered that the alleged crimes occurred while the Philippines was still a member of the ICC, and therefore fall within the Court's jurisdiction and rejected all four grounds of appeal raised by the defense,



Relatives and supporters of victims on the deadly anti-drugs crackdowns of former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's administration, watch a livestream from the Hague of the International Criminal Court's rejection of Duterte's challenge to the court's jurisdiction in Quezon, Philippines on April 22. (AP)

including arguments related to the application of law and procedural issues.

"Having rejected the entire appeal, the Appeal Chamber considers that the Defence's request for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Duterte is moot," said Luz del Carmen

Ibanez Carranza, the presiding judge of the Appeals Chamber.

Prosecutors, Duterte's defense and legal representatives of other parties were present in court, while the over-80-year-old Duterte was not present in the court.

Lat/Am

MS-13 members on mass trial: Prosecutors in El Salvador opened a massive, joint trial of nearly 500 alleged members of the MS-13 gang on charges that include homicide, extortion and arms trafficking.

The trial, which opened Monday in San Salvador, is the latest in a practice that has been criticized by human rights groups as an infringement on the right of the accused to defend themselves. Such trials form part of President Nayib Bukele's iron-fist approach against criminal groups in El Salvador, which has been under a state of emergency for four years to fight organized crime.

The 486 defendants are accused of being members of MS-13, or Mara Salvatrucha, and accused of ordering more than 47,000 crimes from 2012 to 2022, according to the Salvadoran government. The charges also include femicide and enforced disappearances. (AP)

Peru's election chief resigns: The head of Peru's national election agency resigned Tuesday over logistical problems that have affected the nation's bitterly disputed presidential election, a contest for which officials still have not named the winners more than a week after voting took place.

In a letter sent to Peruvian authorities, Piero Corvetto denied any wrongdoing but said the problems encountered during the April 12 election prompted him to resign in order to "generate more confidence" in a runoff vote that will be held June 7.

More than 30 candidates participated in Peru's presidential election on April 12 as well as hundreds of others running for congressional seats. (AP)

Pope Leo XIV urges Equatorial Guinea to work for justice

MONGOMO, Equatorial Guinea, April 22, (AP): Pope Leo XIV urged Equatorial Guinea on Wednesday to work for justice and to close the gap "between the privileged and the disadvantaged" as he opened a day drawing attention to the vast income inequalities and human rights abuses in the Central African country.

Leo began the day with Mass in Mongomo, an eastern city on the border with Gabon that has experienced major development since Equatorial Guinea's oil boom in the 1990s. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has been accused of widespread corruption and authoritarianism, comes from Mongomo and the city, with opulent buildings and curated gardens behind gilt-tipped gates, has benefited from government investment and infrastructure, even though no official institutions are located here.

Obiang and his wife were on hand for Leo's Mass, as was their son, Teodoro "Teddy" Nguema Obiang. The son, who is the country's vice president, was convicted of embezzling millions of euros by a French court, which handed him a three-year suspended sentence, a 30-million euro (\$35.2 million) fine and ordered the seizure of his luxury homes and cars in France worth tens of millions of euros. The country has protested the seizures at the International Court of Justice.

Last year, the United States gave the younger Obiang a temporary waiver on US corruption sanctions so he could travel to a UN gathering and visit other American cities. Obiang also met with US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau.



Pope Leo XIV

Oil price drops \$4.87 to \$93.64 pb

KUWAIT CITY, April 22, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil dropped by USD 4.87 to reach USD 93.64 per barrel in Tuesday's trading, compared with USD 98.51 pb on Monday, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on

Wednesday.

In global markets, Brent crude rose by USD 4.22 to reach USD 99.67 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate crude increased by USD 2.52 to stand at USD 92.13 pb.

Business

To support strategic transformation

Gulf Bank launches second phase of comprehensive Islamic Banking training program

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: As part of its preparations to transition into a Shariah-compliant bank, the Training & Talent Development team at Gulf Bank has launched the second phase of its employee training program on Islamic Banking principles, reaffirming the Bank's commitment to embedding Shariah-compliant practices across all key departments, in line with the requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Gulf Bank announced the launch of the second phase of its comprehensive Islamic Banking training program for employees, reaffirming its commitment to supporting the Bank's strategic transformation into a fully Shariah-compliant financial institution and embedding Islamic banking principles across its core functions.

The program forms part of Gulf Bank's broader Strategy 2030 roadmap, which

aims to position the Bank as a leading Islamic financial institution that delivers innovative, customer-centric solutions aligned with evolving market needs and the highest professional standards.

Building on the success of the first phase, the second phase focuses on strengthening practical and applied capabilities while developing specialized expertise across key business areas including Retail Banking, Corporate Banking, Risk Management, Treasury, Finance, and other core functions.

The expanded program is designed to equip employees with the knowledge and skills required to effectively apply Islamic finance principles and solutions across their respective roles, further enhancing Gulf Bank's readiness for its planned transition to Islamic banking.

The training is being delivered in col-



Hamed Al-Tamimi

laboration with the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies and the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance, with the objective of establishing a strong institutional knowledge base in Islamic banking and increasing awareness of the key distinctions

between conventional banking services and Shariah-compliant solutions.

Through practical case studies and specialized learning modules, participants will gain hands-on exposure to Islamic finance applications, including corporate banking products, Shariah-compliant financing structures, transaction documentation, and client advisory solutions that support customers throughout the transition journey.

Mr. Hamed Al-Tamimi, Acting Chief Human Resources Officer at Gulf Bank stated:

"This program reflects Gulf Bank's continued investment in its people as a key driver of our strategic transformation. By enhancing our employees' capabilities in Islamic banking, we are building the expertise required to support our transition, strengthen our core business, and unlock new opportunities for sustainable growth."

Mr. Al-Tamimi reaffirmed: "Our ambition extends beyond conversion. We aim to create integrated ecosystems that embed Islamic finance solutions across sectors such as housing, trade, and SME financing, while continuing to meet the changing needs of our customers and the wider market."

It is worth noting that Gulf Bank received initial approval from the Central Bank of Kuwait on 18 August 2025 to transition into a Shariah-compliant bank, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. (32) of 1968 on Currency, the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Organization of the Banking Businesses amended, and based on the outcome of the Feasibility Study of conversion, which was conducted by a specialized international consultancy firm, following the successful completion of all required technical, legal, and regulatory assessments submitted to the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Job sentiment drops but remains elevated in Kuwait

Kuwait consumer confidence remains stable despite prolonged regional war

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Despite the war that extended throughout March, ARA Consumer Confidence Index maintained the level recorded at the end of February, remaining stable at 112 points. It is noted that the General Index had increased during the early days of the war, which was expected to end within a few days.

However, its continuation did not affect the confidence of Kuwaitis. On the contrary, the index rose by 1 point among Kuwaitis, while it dropped by 2 points among Arab residents. It also increased by 1 point among men, while it decreased by 1 point among women.

The sub-indices composing the General Index showed mixed results, with slight fluctuations.

ARA analysts attribute the stability of the results to the continued confidence of Kuwait's population, both citizens and Arab residents, despite the prolonged and dangerous nature of the war (the survey was conducted between 25 and 31 March, i.e. before reaching the two weeks ceasefire agreement).

This reflects the success of the state in instilling a sense of reassurance and stability despite the threats and risks surrounding the security conditions during March.

Record Increase in the Current Economic Situation Index

The Current Economic Situation Index continued its upward trend for the second consecutive month, reaching 119 points, its highest level since the establishment of the index more than twenty years ago. The largest increase was recorded among Kuwaitis, who added 9 points, while it decreased by 3 points among Arab residents. The index also rose by 4 points among women, versus a 1-point increase among men.

ARA analysts note that the significant difference in confidence in the current economic situation between citizens and Arab residents, and the notable increase of the index among citizens, likely reflects the impact of the increase in oil prices in Kuwait by approximately 15 percent within one month.

Decline in the Expected Economic Situation Index

The Expected Economic Situation Index recorded 111 points, retracting by 4 points at the end of March. This may be due to expectations that oil prices may not remain at elevated levels. The index declined by 6 points

among Kuwaitis and by 5 points among Arab residents. The largest decrease was among women, at 13 points, while it remained unchanged among men.

Current and Expected Personal Income Indexes Maintain Their Levels

The Current Personal Income Index recorded 105 points, decreasing by 1 point at the end of March. However, this overall result masks a significant divergence in confidence levels between Kuwaitis and Arab residents. The index increased by 10 points among citizens, while it decreased sharply by 18 points among Arab residents, reaching low levels. Moreover, it declined by 8 points among men and rose by 8 points among women.

As for the Expected Personal Income Index, it maintained the level recorded in the previous month, closing March at 111 points. Results in this case did not vary significantly across respondent groups.

The index decreased by 2 points among Kuwaitis, while it increased by 2 points among Arab residents. It also rose by 1 point among women and remained unchanged among men.

Employment Opportunities Index Loses Part of Its Previous Gains

The Employment Opportunities Index decreased by 11 points in March following the major increase recorded in the previous month, reaching 131 points. The decline was particularly notable among women, where it dropped by 24 points, and among Kuwaitis, where it decreased by 29 points. Meanwhile, it continued its upward trend since the beginning of the year among Arab residents, adding 18 points in March.

Purchase of Durable Goods Index Recovers Part of Its Losses

After the sharp decline in the willingness to purchase durable goods at the beginning of the war in the region, the Purchase of Durable Goods Index recovered, and recorded 99 points, with an increase of 20 points within March, despite the continuation of the war.

The index increased among both Kuwaitis and Arab residents by 20 points and 22 points respectively, and among men and women by 29 points and 7 points respectively.

IDC commends ZainTECH's scalable, secure AI capabilities

ZainTECH named leader in IDC MarketScape for GCC AI services

DUBAI, April 22: ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, has been recognized in the Leaders Category of the IDC MarketScape: Gulf Countries AI Professional Services 2025 Vendor Assessment, (Doc #META52993125, October 2025) published by International Data Corporation (IDC), a global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets.

The IDC MarketScape evaluates providers based on execution capability and long-term strategy. ZainTECH's placement reflects its ability to deliver secure, scalable, and industry-led AI solutions across regulated and mission-critical environments in the GCC. The IDC MarketScape notes that ZainTECH demonstrates strong vertical expertise in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) and telecom sectors, investing in industry talent and centers of excellence to drive consultative, value-led AI engagement.

A key trend highlighted in this IDC MarketScape is the accelerated growth of the AI professional services market in the GCC, driven by organizations positioning AI as a core pillar of their digital transformation agendas. The IDC MarketScape underscores the importance of industry context, certified delivery capability, regional execution strength, and governance-driven frameworks that enable intelligence to be secure, compliant, scalable, and built for long-term impact.

ZainTECH's industry-focused AI



strategy spans banking and financial services, telecommunications, retail, public sector and energy. The company enables high-value use cases including fraud and AML analytics, AIOps and predictive maintenance, AI-driven inspections and asset performance optimization, and customer intelligence and personalization. Clients are guided through a defined progression covering AI readiness, advanced analytics and machine learning, generative AI, and emerging agentic systems.

Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH, commented: "As organizations shift from experimentation to embedding intelligence into core operating models, the priority is ensuring AI is secure, governed, and resilient. This recognition reaffirms our ability to deploy production-grade

AI solutions aligned with regulatory requirements and industry realities across the region."

ZainTECH operates multi-country AI Centers of Excellence across the MENA region, delivering sovereign, hybrid, and 100% in-country execution models tailored to national data residency and regulatory mandates. Through continued investment in AI talent, governance frameworks, and sustainable infrastructure, ZainTECH enables organizations to scale AI responsibly while driving measurable business outcomes aligned with Group innovation priorities and long-term sustainability goals.

To learn more about ZainTECH's positioning in the IDC MarketScape, visit: <https://services.zaintech.com/idc-ai-marketscape>

Businesses brace for sustained cost increases

Iran war could drive up costs for petroleum-derived products like clothes and crayons

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP): It might be hard to imagine the Iran war weighing on stuffed toys with names like Snuggle Glove, Bizzikins and Wobblies, but even plush playthings are not immune when oil shipments from the Middle East are constrained.

Like many soft toys, the creatures developed by a manufacturer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, are made with polyester and acrylic, synthetic fibers derived from petroleum. Three weeks after the war started, suppliers in China notified Aleni Brands that getting the materials already was costing them 10% to 15% more, CEO Ricardo Venegas said.

"I think this situation demonstrates how much oil permeates throughout our system, and we can't get away from it," said Venegas, who founded Aleni Brands last year and is in the process of adding product lines. "Who would have thought that the price of a toy would have a direct relationship with oil?"

It's not just toys. Petrochemicals derived from oil and natural gas go into making more than 6,000 consumer products, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Computer keyboards, lipstick, tennis rackets, pajamas, soft contact lenses, detergent, chewing gum, shoes, crayons, shaving cream, pillows, aspirin, dentures, tape, umbrellas and nylon guitar strings are just a few of them.

So far, the war's most tangible and immediate effect for many people outside the conflict zone has been spiking gasoline prices. Travelers also are seeing higher airfares and flight fees as airlines respond to the rising cost of jet fuel. Consumers may find themselves paying more for food, furniture or any of the myriad of goods transported by trucks that run on diesel.

But crude oil isn't just refined as fuel. It gets turned into chemicals, waxes, oils and other mixtures that appear in a vast array of everyday items, including most made with plastic and rubber. Petroleum derivatives also are used in a lot of packaging. With disruptions to global oil supplies now in their eighth week, higher production costs also could make things more expensive for shoppers, according to trade groups and some companies.

Venegas, a 30-year toy industry veteran, said he would absorb higher material costs for now but expects to increase prices for customers by early 2027, if the war goes on another three to six months.

While 85% of global oil consumption is in the



Plush toys are displayed at a Camp store in New York Camp, Nov. 21, 2019. (AP)

form of fuel, the rest goes into a wide range of consumer products, according to Gernot Wagner, a climate economist at Columbia University's School of Business.

Crude oil is mostly a complex mixture of hydrocarbons, which are compounds made of carbon and hydrogen atoms. Refineries and chemical plants separate and break them down to convert them into smaller chemical building blocks known as petrochemicals.

Six petrochemicals - ethylene, propylene, butylene, benzene, toluene and xylenes - are the major foundations of plastics and synthetic materials like nylon and polyesters, which manufacturers in turn use to design and deliver products. More from the Department of Energy: Automobile parts, ballpoint pens, curtains, dice, eyeglasses, fertilizer, golf balls, hearing aids, insect repellent, kayaks, luggage, mops and nail polish.

Materials account for a big share of production costs for many manufacturers, including those that supply carpets, clothing and tires, according to Andrew Walberer, partner and global lead in the chemicals practice of global strategy and management consultancy Kearney.

Take a button-down shirt, for example. Walberer estimated that materials account for 27%-30% of how much it costs a manufacturer to make one. Labor costs contribute 10% to 30%. Business expenses tied to marketing, distribution and administration comprises the rest, he said.



Toothbrushes are pictured in Alexandria, Va., Thursday, March 6, 2025. (AP)

Experts say if oil holds above \$90 per barrel for the next several months, cost pressures will accelerate throughout the supply network.

Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America CEO Matt Priest said most of the trade organization's members keep a two- to three-month inventory of finished products, providing a temporary cushion against higher materials costs.

Roughly 70% of the materials in synthetic shoes are petrochemical-based, and 30% of the costs for those materials are directly tied to oil price rate swings, according to a report the organization published last month on the U.S. footwear industry's "exposure to oil prices & the impact on shoe costs."

The FDRA analysis estimated that between materials, factory energy and transportation, companies paying more for petroleum could translate into a 1.5% to 3% increase in the price shoppers pay for a pair of shoes by late summer and the fall.

By the end of April, U.S. shoe and clothing manufacturers need to start signing contracts with suppliers, mostly outside the U.S., for orders of polyester staple fiber and polyester filament yarn to get their designs on retail shelves and online for the holiday shopping season, according to Nate Herman, executive vice president of the American Apparel & Footwear Association.

One kilogram, or a little over two pounds, of the materials used in polyester textiles, has increased in price from an average of 90 cents before the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran to \$1.33 per kilogram, Her-

man said. He estimated that each garment will cost 10 cents to 15 cents more to produce as a result.

Some businesses are looking for ways to offset rising costs.

Lisa Lane is the founder of Rinseroo, which sells portable shower head, bathtub and sink attachments for cleaning, pet grooming, and bathing. She recently tripled the number of the slip-on hoses she procures from China each month after her manufacturer said the cost would be 30% higher in another 30 days. She had a few days to decide whether to place a three-month advance order.

The components of Rinseroo's products include petroleum derivatives like polyvinyl chloride, Lane said. After purchasing 240,000 units instead of her usual 80,000, she is also evaluating cost-cutting options.

Lane said she wants to hold off on increasing prices for retailers that sell the attachments since Rinseroo did that last year to offset higher U.S. tariffs on imports from China. For example, a hose for washing pets in a bathtub went up to \$33.95 from \$29.95 on retail websites, she said.

"We want to stay at that sweet spot where people want to continue to buy from us and feel like they're getting a good value," Lane said.

Another company, which sells wound care products like bandages, dressings, pads and sponges to nursing homes and other medical facilities, plans to raise its prices by 15% in a matter of weeks. Gentell CEO David Navazio noted that adhesives in the products rely on several petrochemicals.

Including energy for production and materials, Navazio estimated the company's costs are going up by 20%.

Gentell, which is based in Yardley, Pennsylvania but has its main manufacturing location in Toronto, also makes private label products for other companies, including a medical technology firm that supplies retail stores like CVS.

Because bandages and dressings are necessities, Navazio said he doesn't think his business will suffer if it raises customer prices. Less certain is whether prices will come down once the war ends and oil shipments stabilize.

"In the past, I've seen transportation costs come down, but I've never seen prices of raw material come down," he said.

Economic rating falls to 30%

Trump economic approval slides amid war, inflation

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): President Donald Trump's approval rating on the economy has slumped over the past month as the Iran war drives prices higher, according to a new AP-NORC poll, with even Republicans showing less faith in his leadership.

The findings from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research show a president who is struggling with unfulfilled promises to tame inflation and testing Americans' patience with a conflict in the Middle East that has dragged on longer than expected.

Trump's approval rating on the economy dropped to 30% in April from 38% in a March AP-NORC poll. A similarly low share of U.S. adults, 32%, approve of the president's leadership on Iran, which is unchanged since last month.

The poll was conducted April 16-20, during which time the Strait of Hormuz was reopened by Iran, then closed again, an example of the whiplash that has characterized the conflict.

The president's policies and pronouncements have often been at odds with each other. Gasoline prices - which he promised to slash - jumped after the U.S. attacked Iran in February. His tariffs have kept much of the economy in limbo and hiring has slowed despite his boasts of a "golden age."

Only 33% of U.S. adults approve of Trump's overall job performance, down slightly from 38% last month.

Trump's falling approval ratings could create problems for his party as it tries to defend House and Senate majorities in the midterm elections. The poll finds that Trump is especially weak on cost of living, and enthusiasm about Trump's performance has waned over the past year among his own supporters.

Kathryn Bright, 60, a retired captain in the U.S. Air Force, regrets that she supported Trump in the last election.

"I feel disgusted with myself, I feel betrayed, like he was a wolf in sheep's clothing," she said.

Bright lives in a small town far out on Colorado's prairie and has several disabling medical conditions. She was initially drawn to Trump because of his vows to support veterans, avoid foreign wars and lower costs.

"It's like high school class president: 'I'm gonna promise we are going to get pizza every single day,'" Bright said. "Then as soon as they get elected they are like, 'Oh, I lied.'"

In a sign of just how unpopular Trump's approach on prices has become, the poll found that only about one-quarter of U.S. adults approve of his handling of the cost of living.

The consumer price index climbed 3.3% in March from a year ago, and inflation is slightly higher than the 3% that Trump inherited upon returning to the White House last year. Yet Trump has shown little interest in inflation and played down the rising energy costs caused by the war prompting Iran to effectively shutter the Strait of Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

Trump on Tuesday dismissed the war as a "little journey" and portrayed the roughly 35% jump in oil prices as a positive compared to what he thought would happen.

He told CNBC in an interview that he was "surprised" that oil prices were only around \$90 a barrel, compared to the \$200 that he claimed to have expected.

Public disenchantment with that attitude is visible among his own supporters. Only about half of Republicans approve of Trump's handling of the cost of living.

Younger Republicans are particularly unhappy. About 6 in 10 Republicans under 45 disapprove of how Trump is handling costs, compared to about 4 in 10 older Republicans.

Most Republicans who identify as supporters of the Make America Great Again movement are still largely behind the president. About 9 in 10 MAGA Republicans approve of Trump's job performance, compared to 44% of non-MAGA Republicans, although only about 7 in 10 MAGA Republicans approve of him on cost of living.

Miguel Cortes, a 67-year-old retired aircraft mechanic in South Carolina, believes the increase in prices from tariffs and the Iran war is simply a temporary price to pay. As for gasoline costs rising, "it is what it is, I'm not going to complain," he said. "People are just going to have to deal with it."

"From deep in my soul, I believe God put him there for a reason," said Cortes, who has a tin sign of "Make America Great" in his garage near a National Rifle Association plaque.

About three-quarters of U.S. adults described the U.S. economy as "very" or "somewhat" poor in April, up from about two-thirds in February.

The drop in confidence comes as the economy remains unsettled, with gasoline prices higher than they were, as the financial markets for stocks, bonds and oil continues on a rollercoaster ride that veers wildly based on Trump's claims of a coming peace with Iran one day and a threat to destroy the entire civilization the next.

Americans such as Heidi Bunting, 35, a student with two children, see an economy in which basic needs such as health care and transportation are unaffordable.

"It's awful, and not just for me," said Bunting, who lives in Bowling Green, Ohio. "I'm sure the only people doing well in this economy are those who started with a lot of money."

Despite efforts to tout last year's tax cuts and brush off economic concerns, Trump's economic approval remains low among independents and has even eroded among Republicans.

About 2 in 10 independents approve of Trump's performance on the economy in the new poll, down slightly from about 3 in 10 in March. Far more Republicans, 62%, have a positive view of the way Trump is handling the economy, but that's also down from 74% last month.

In general, Republicans are less enthusiastic about Trump's overall performance than they were shortly after he took office. In March 2025, 51% of Republicans "strongly" approved of the way he was handling the presidency, a figure that has dropped to 38% now.

Immigration, another signature issue of Trump's, is a relative bright spot for the president. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults approve of his performance on that issue, which is unchanged from last month and higher than his overall approval.

Trump's approval ratings are in line with his predecessor Joe Biden's lowest approval rating in AP-NORC polling - 36% - which came during July 2022 after inflation spiked to a four-decade high. Biden's approval ratings recovered slightly as inflation eased, raising a question as to whether Trump can quickly regroup to show tangible progress.

Trump came into office last year with relatively low approval - 42% in March 2025 - which has until now remained fairly stable.

Traders remain cautious

Global markets tread carefully on war risks

TOKYO, April 22, (AP): Asian shares were mixed in cautious trading Wednesday, as investors watched for next steps in the U.S.-Iran conflict after President Donald Trump extended a ceasefire that was set to expire.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 0.4% to 59,585.86. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 1.2% to 8,843.60. South Korea's Kospi added 0.5% to 6,417.93.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.2% to 26,180.51, while the Shanghai Composite gained 0.5% to 4,106.26.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 erased an early rise to fall 0.6% after U.S. Vice President JD Vance called off a trip to Pakistan, where he was expected to lead U.S. negotiators in talks with Iran to extend the ceasefire. It closed at 7,064.01.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.6% to 49,149.38. The Nasdaq composite also slipped 0.6%, to 24,259.96. Less than 10 minutes after the U.S. stock market finished trading for the day Trump said he would extend the ceasefire to give Iran time to submit a proposal to end the war.

Oil prices have been wavering. In Asian trading Wednesday, benchmark U.S. crude fell 86 cents to \$88.81 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 68 cents to \$97.80.

Oil prices were mixed in cautious trading Wednesday, as investors watched for next steps in the U.S.-Iran conflict after President Donald Trump extended a ceasefire that was set to expire.

The U.S. stock market remains near its most recent record, which was set Friday, indicating investors remain optimistic that the United States and Iran will avoid a worst-case scenario for the economy.

Much of the tension in financial markets has focused on what will happen to the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway off Iran's coast that oil tankers use to exit the Persian Gulf. Japan, for instance, imports just about all its oil, and much of it previously came through the strait. The government has released its oil reserves and is working on alternative routes.

"Trump's decision essentially extends the uneasy status quo rather than resolving the conflict. While the pause has reduced immediate tail risks, the absence of a genuine breakthrough means traders remain inclined to tiptoe rather than trade with real conviction," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury climbed to 4.31% from 4.26% late Monday, and the gains accelerated late in the day with oil prices.

A collaboration designed to reward the bank's customers

tam signs a strategic partnership with Trolley

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: tam digital bank has signed a strategic partnership with Trolley, a leading home-grown convenience and retail chain with a network of branches located across Kuwait offering daily groceries and essential items.

Under this partnership, Trolley has joined tam Rewards program, allowing customers to transfer their tam points directly to Trolley Rewards. Transferred points are automatically added to the member's balance in the Trolley app, where they can be used for purchases at any Trolley store.

"This collaboration aligns with tam's continuous efforts to provide customers with the best benefits, activate rewards programs and maximize the points usage coverage," Executive Manager Tam Banking, Ahmed Alotthman stated. "The partnership with Trolley represents a significant step in linking customer behavior at Trolley stores with the tam rewards program, enabling customers to redeem points for direct purchases or take advantage of various promotional offers," he added.

Alotthman added that the tam Rewards program, available on smartphones, is designed to enhance the user experience, offer greater flexibility, and provide marketing and promotional opportunities for partners



Ahmed Alotthman

Alotthman: Offering the best benefits to customers and activate rewards programs



Mohammed Yaqoub Boodai

nationally. Customers can also access a full range of redemption options, including redeeming points for shopping vouchers at participating merchants, exclusive deals and special offers through the online marketplace.

Meanwhile, Group CEO and Vice Chairman of Trolley, Mohammed Yaqoub Boodai, expressed his delight regarding the strategic partnership with tam Digital Bank, stating: "We are pleased to collaborate with tam, an innovative digital platform that aligns perfectly with the aspirations of today's youth. At Trolley, we recognize the importance of keeping pace with modern lifestyles; we strive to support our customers by providing a fast, flexible shopping experience

and participating merchants. "Additionally, tam customers can enjoy a unique shopping experience through a wide range of opportunities, allowing them to earn points for every purchasing transaction paid through their tam prepaid cards at participating stores," he explained.

He further highlighted the diverse benefits available to tam cardholders, noting that they can use their prepaid cards to earn reward points on every transaction, whether locally or inter-

tailored to their high-energy routines. This partnership allows tam's young customers to transfer and redeem their points directly into our stores, offering instant value and smart payment options that simplify their daily needs. We are proud to be part of their journey and to contribute practical solutions that meet their expectations."

As Kuwait's first Sharia-compliant digital bank, tam is designed for modern lifestyles and digital-first customers. It marks a major milestone in the evolution of digital banking services.

To open a Tam account and access banking services, applicants must be at least 15 years old and hold a valid Civil ID. The process is entirely digital via the app, with no paperwork or branch visits required.

tam Bank offers a wide range of distinguished services, including instant account opening, digital card issuance, earning of points, and student allowance transfers. Customers can also track expenses and transfer funds with ease, supported by 24/7 contact center assistance.

tam Bank offers unlimited support for youth across all levels. Its digital offerings enable customers to earn and redeem reward points at leading brands, while enjoying exclusive weekly and year-round deals.

Webinar hosted by Kamco Invest & PGIM

Regional geopolitical shifts reshape global markets as investors navigate more fragmented 'old normal'

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Kamco Invest, a regional non-banking financial powerhouse with one of the largest assets under management in the Middle East, and PGIM, a leading global investment manager, hosted a webinar titled "Regional Geopolitical Developments: Economic Impact and Investment Outlook". The session brought together global and regional experts to examine the rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape in the Middle East, represented by the escalation and implications of the conflict between Iran on one side and the United States and Israel on the other, and its far-reaching implications on global and regional economies, capital markets, and key asset classes.

The webinar featured a distinguished panel including Daleep Singh, Vice Chair and Chief Global Economist at PGIM; Faisal M. Sarkhou, Chief Executive Officer of Kamco Invest; and Sarah Dashti, Vice President - Equity & Fixed Income at Kamco Invest. The discussion was moderated by Faisal Al Othman, Director of Investment Advisory at Kamco Invest, who guided a timely and insightful dialogue on the intersection of geopolitics and investment strategy.

The webinar highlighted how recent geopolitical developments in the Middle East are not only creating short-term market disruptions but are also accelerating deeper structural shifts in the global economy. Panelists emphasized that the current environment reflects a transition toward a more fragmented world, where economic policy, supply chains, and capital flows are increasingly influenced by geopolitical considerations rather than pure market efficiency.

Speakers noted that the immediate impact of regional tensions has been most visible in energy markets and global trade routes, with heightened volatility in oil prices, supply chain disruptions, and rising costs across key commodities. These dynamics are contributing to upward pressure on inflation and moderating global growth expectations, while also complicating the outlook for central bank policies and delaying the pace of monetary easing, with two interest rate cuts expected during the year.

Despite these challenges, the discussion underscored the relative resilience of GCC economies, supported by strong fiscal buffers, ongoing diversification efforts, and strategic investments in infrastructure and future sectors, underscoring prioritization of infrastructure buildout. The region is increasingly positioned to benefit from long-term structural trends, including energy transition dynamics, industrial policy shifts, and growing global demand for stable investment destinations.

The discussion also highlighted that, despite elevated geopolitical risk premiums, GCC markets have demonstrated notable resilience, albeit in a differentiated manner across countries. Rather than moving as a single bloc, performance has been driven by country-specific dynamics, with Saudi Arabia acting as a key stabilizing force due to its market depth, liquidity, and strong institutional participation. Kuwait has maintained a more defensive profile supported by valuations and quality names, while the UAE has exhibited greater volatility alongside selective recovery opportunities. This divergence reinforces the importance of selective investing, where alpha generation is increasingly driven by country and sector allocation rather than broad regional exposure.

Panelists further emphasized that this resilience is underpinned by structural factors, including the significant role of sovereign wealth funds which account for roughly



Kamco Invest, PGIM discuss geopolitics and markets.

- Rising geopolitical tensions are driving structural shifts in global growth, inflation, and energy markets, reinforcing a more volatile and fragmented investment landscape.
- The GCC continues to demonstrate resilience, supported by strong fiscal positions and long-term strategic transformation agendas.
- GCC markets are no longer a proxy for oil and more like a multi factor equity market with structural institutional support
- Investors are encouraged to focus on high-quality companies and adopt a selective approach in a complex market environment.
- As we move through this crisis, we are shifting from uncertainty to clarity

one third of the global sovereign assets, as long-term providers of capital, strong fiscal positions supported by oil revenues, and sustained institutional inflows into key markets. At the same time, the traditional relationship between oil and GCC equity markets has evolved, with markets increasingly reflecting a multi-factor framework driven by fundamentals such as earnings quality, dividend sustainability, and balance sheet strength. In this context, investors are encouraged to focus on high-quality companies with resilient cash flows, while adopting a more active and selective approach to portfolio construction in an increasingly complex and differentiated market environment. The GCC markets are no longer a proxy for oil and more like a multi factor equity market with structural institutional support.

The GCC growth story remains intact, but it is increasingly being reshaped by a shift from ambition-led expansion to resilience-led development. National visions continue to guide long-term direction, yet greater emphasis is being placed on economic stability, supply chain security, and infrastructure robustness. Investors are also becoming more selective, differentiating across GCC markets based on execution strength, fiscal discipline, and institutional resilience, while large projects are facing higher scrutiny on strategic value and returns.

Priorities are being reordered around shock resilience and strategic autonomy, with focus on logistics, energy security, industrial diversification, and digital infrastructure. Post-conflict dynamics are expected to accelerate

infrastructure redesign with a stronger focus on redundancy and connectivity. At the same time, financing is evolving into a hybrid model where sovereign wealth funds anchor investments alongside deeper capital markets and greater private sector participation, reinforcing a more disciplined and selective growth approach across the region.

Looking ahead, panelists stressed the importance of scenario-based investing, as markets remain sensitive to geopolitical outcomes ranging from prolonged ceasefires to potential re-escalation. In this evolving environment, investors are encouraged to adopt a disciplined, long-term approach, with a focus on portfolio resilience, diversification, and exposure to real assets, as the global economy adjusts to what was described as a return to a more uncertain but opportunity-rich "old normal".

The discussion outlined a range of forward-looking scenarios for the region, each carrying distinct implications for global markets and investor positioning. A base case of a fragile, extended ceasefire suggests continued volatility with oil prices remaining elevated and monetary easing delayed, while a more constructive scenario involving a negotiated settlement could lead to easing inflationary pressures, lower energy prices, and improved risk sentiment. Conversely, a re-escalation of tensions or a more severe regional conflict would likely result in significant supply disruptions, sharply higher oil prices, tighter financial conditions, and increased recession risks globally.

Secures its 13th Global Finance Award

Markaz wins 'Best Investment Bank in Kuwait' title

KUWAIT CITY, April 22: Reinforcing its position as one of the region's leading financial institutions in asset management and investment banking, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" announced that its Investment Banking team has won the "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait" award from Global Finance. This recognition marks Markaz's 13th award from Global Finance, extending a track record of continued recognition from the prestigious institution since 2011, and bringing the firm's total accolades to 99 awards across various awarding bodies. This achievement reflects the depth of Markaz's expertise, its sustained excellence, and its firmly established position as one of the most prominent financial institutions in the sector. The award ceremony took place on April 21, 2026, in London.

Global Finance's awards are among the most prestigious in the financial sector, with winners selected based on a range of criteria that include market share, the number and size of transactions, quality of services and advisory, structuring and execution capabilities, innovation, market reputation, and the ability to respond effectively to rapidly



Ahmed Al Falah

evolving market conditions. This recognition reflects the strength of Markaz's investment banking platform, its deep specialized expertise, and its strong execution capabilities, as well as its continued success in delivering tailored financial and investment solutions that respond to clients' needs and support their long-term objectives. It also underscores Markaz's ability to combine strategic vision with disciplined execution, enabling it to create added value for clients in a financial environment that demands deep market understanding and



agile responsiveness. Commenting on this achievement, Ahmed Al Falah, Managing Director - Investment Banking at Markaz said: "We are proud to receive this recognition from Global Finance, which reflects the expertise of our Investment Banking team and its continued commitment to delivering high-quality advisory services and capital markets execution. This achievement also reinforces our ongoing focus on developing innovative financial solutions that meet and surpass our clients' expectations, while further

strengthening our position as a trusted financial partner in Kuwait and the region."

This recognition comes as an extension of Markaz's strategic approach to developing differentiated financial solutions that combine innovation with strategic relevance, while continuously enhancing its advisory and execution capabilities and elevating the quality of its service offering. It also reflects Markaz's commitment to building long-term client relationships founded on trust, understanding priorities, and delivering solutions tailored to evolving needs and future ambitions.

The award adds to Markaz's distinguished record of recognition from leading regional and international institutions, underscoring the consistency of its strong performance and leadership across investment banking and asset management. Markaz will continue to build on this achievement by further reinforcing its innovation-led approach and enhancing its ability to deliver high-value financial solutions, reaffirming its long-standing commitment to clients and strengthening its standing as a leading financial institution in the region.

Rachel Reeves warns war driving up costs

UK inflation hits 3.3% as fuel prices surge

LONDON, April 22, (AP) — Inflation in the U.K. climbed in March after a sharp jump in prices at the petrol pump in the wake of the disruption to energy supplies caused by the Iran war, official figures showed Wednesday.

The annual consumer price inflation rate increased to a three-month high of 3.3%, from 3% the previous month, according to the Office for National Statistics. The rise was in line with market expectations.

The main reason behind the inflation spike was higher motor fuel, which increased by a monthly 8.7% — the largest increase since June 2022, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Airfares and food prices, both related to the spike in energy prices, were also higher.

Treasury chief Rachel Reeves, whose hopes over the cost-of-living have been blown off course by the crisis in the Middle East, said this is “not our war, but it is pushing up bills for families and businesses” as a result.

The economic fallout has put paid to any expectations that the Bank of England would cut borrowing costs. Prior to the start of the war on Feb. 28, there had been an expectation in financial markets that the bank would cut its main interest rate from 3.75% given that inflation was predicted to fall back toward its 2% target during the spring.

Inflation is set to rise further in coming months, possibly to 4%, as higher energy prices impact household bills. No economist at present thinks inflation will get anywhere near the four-decade highs above 11% in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, partly because oil and gas prices have not spiked as much and partly because interest rates are higher.

But Bank of England policymakers will be keeping a beady eye on whether the evident inflation spike starts to spread through the economy, via higher wages for example. For now, economists think the bank will keep interest rates on hold at the next policy meeting on April 30.



Prices are shown on a board at a gas station in London, England, Monday, March 30, 2026. (AP)

Luke Bartholomew, deputy chief economist at asset management firm Aberdeen, said that it will be “hard” to see workers and firms being able to push through higher wages and prices, given the relative weakness of both the labor market and the British economy.

“That should ultimately limit the size and extent of the coming inflation shock,” he said. “For now though, the Bank of England is likely to remain in wait-and-see mode, keeping policy on hold next week and maintaining maximum optionality about whether interest rates ultimately end up increasing or decreasing later this year.”

How inflation develops will depend on what

happens in the war and the crucial waterway of the Strait of Hormuz, which has been largely closed to oil tanker traffic since the onset of hostilities, stoking fears over oil and gas supplies in many parts of the world.

A resolution sooner rather than later will limit the long-term impact. With the current ceasefire seemingly uncertain, financial markets remain on edge and energy prices will stay volatile. Over the past couple of weeks, oil prices have oscillated between the \$90-\$100 a barrel range, having gone even higher during the conflict.

Before the war, oil prices were pretty stable around \$60 a barrel.

Pierre Yared to step down

Trump picks a University of Minnesota professor to lead his economic council

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday nominated University of Minnesota economist Christopher Phelan to be the next chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, a key position for conducting analyses of the economy and the administration's policies.

If confirmed by the Senate, Phelan would succeed Stephen Miran, a Harvard University-trained economist who worked at investment funds and joined the Federal Reserve Board of Governors last September. The council's vice chairman, Pierre Yared, had served as acting leader after Trump shifted Miran to the Fed.

Phelan's resume suggests a keen interest in the operations of central banks, a major inter-

est of Trump, who has pressured the Fed to dramatically cut its benchmark interest rates to drive stronger growth, even though doing so could risk higher inflation.

Phelan has worked as a consultant with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. He received his undergraduate degree from Duke University and obtained his doctorate from the University of Chicago.

“President Trump has assembled the best and most experienced economic team in modern history,” said White House spokesman Kush Desai, who called Phelan “a key addition.”

Desai said that Yared, the current acting chairman, is returning to his professorship at Columbia University's business school.

Donald Trump-linked media firm swaps CEO after 67% dip

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP) — The Trump business behind Truth Social is replacing a former congressman and big supporter of the U.S. president as leader of the social media platform after a stock collapse that wiped out billions in investor wealth.

Devin Nunes, a former California congressman in Donald Trump's first term, is being replaced temporarily by digital media executive Kevin McGurn as chief executive officer. The company, Trump Media & Technology, didn't give a reason for Nunes leaving or provide a timeline for his permanent replacement.

After soaring shortly before Trump's reelection in November 2024, stock in the company plunged 67%, wiping out more than \$6 billion in investor wealth.

Trump Media was formed by the Trump family as an alternative to social media giants that had barred him from posting on their platforms after the January 6, 2021 Capitol riots. It said it would not only take on Facebook and Twitter as a “free speech” alternative, but eventually could become a media giant competing with streaming services such as Netflix.

The stock soared, but it never gained traction with a wide audience despite the president's frequent use of it for major political announcements, slammed by government ethics experts as a conflict of interest with the presidency.

Since it went public two years ago, Trump Media has lost more than \$1.1 billion. Nunes got total compensation of \$47 million in 2024, the last year for which figures are available.

The new CEO McGurn said in statement that the company was “poised to take off.”

“In carrying President Trump's unique, singular vision and message, Truth Social stands for the most powerful brand and voice in history of social media and beyond,” he said.

The Trump Organization didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The company has recently branched into cryptocurrency and another hot business, prediction markets. The latter are online betting venues in which people can wager on sports, entertainment and political events.

Both cryptocurrencies and prediction markets have gotten boosts from the Trump administration, in terms of lighter regulation and outright promotion. Last year, for instance, the Trump established a national bitcoin reserve, pushing up the value of that currency.

McGurn, has worked at NBC Universal, Hulu and DoubleClick, among other companies, according to his LinkedIn profile. He is also the CEO of a new shell company that Trump's two oldest sons, Donald Jr. and Eric, joined last year to buy U.S. manufacturers. That company originally stated in regulatory filings that it would be targeting businesses hoping to tap federal contracts, which would be awarded by the same government run by their father.

The Trump Organization and the White House have repeatedly denied that there are conflicts of interest between Trump's role as president and the family business.

Sánchez unveils 7 bln housing plan

Spain triples public housing investment

MADRID, April 22, (AP) — Spain's government on Tuesday approved a sweeping plan to alleviate the country's housing problem, one of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's main political vulnerabilities ahead of elections next year.

Rising rental and housing costs are pricing many Spaniards out of the market, despite a recent economic boom. Incomes have failed to keep up. Analysts say tourism and population growth in cities driven by immigration have further strained supply.

The new plan, worth 7 billion euros (\$8.23 billion), triples government investment in public housing over the next four years. It ensures that subsidized housing cannot be reclassified after a few years. It also includes help for young renters and home buyers.

“It is a significant step forward. For the first time in decades, there is a serious budgetary commitment,” said Raluca Budian, associate director of the Observatory for Decent Housing at the Barcelona-based Esade business school.

About 40% of the money will be earmarked for growing the public housing supply, which

Spain lacks compared to the European average, while 30% will be set aside for property renovations, the government said. That will include funds for making homes more energy-efficient and building in depopulated parts of the country.

The rest will go toward subsidies, with a focus on young people.

“The public is demanding an agreement to address the main problem currently affecting them,” Housing Minister Isabel Rodríguez said Tuesday. Housing routinely comes up as Spaniards' top concern, according to state pollster CIS.

Housing costs in Spain rose nearly 13% year-on-year at the end of 2025, according EU statistics agency Eurostat.

Spain ranks near the bottom of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries with public housing for rent, with under 2% of available supply. The OECD average is 7%. In France, it is 14%, Britain 16% and the Netherlands 34%.

In the past, Spain built housing with public funds that later passed into private ownership. Once they were sold, they disappeared from the public housing stock.

Exports rebound but annual deficit persists

Japan records fifth straight fiscal year of trade deficits as Trump's tariffs weigh on auto exports

TOKYO, April 22, (AP) — Japan's trade deficit was 1.7 trillion yen (\$10.7 billion) in the fiscal year that ended in March, the government said Wednesday, the fifth straight fiscal year of deficits.

Exports rose 4% from the previous year, while imports inched up just 0.5%, the Finance Ministry reported.

U.S. President Donald Trump's higher tariffs on imports from Japan and other countries have proven to be a harsh blow for global automakers and other manufacturers. Japan's overall exports to the U.S. fell 6.6% in the last fiscal year, with shipments of autos dropping 16%.

However, Japan's trade surplus rose 26% in March from a year earlier in a sign that the export sector is recovering from last year's shocks. Exports jumped nearly 11.7% in March and imports rose almost 10.9%.

Japan's auto giants, like Toyota Motor Corp., have moved much of their production to nations where the vehicles are sold to avoid suffering from such policy shifts. But some automakers still export a large share of their vehicles to the U.S. from Japan.

Japan imports nearly all of its oil and gas and the war with Iran has raised worries over disruptions of oil shipments from the Middle East. Apart from the impact on energy, shortfalls of oil can af-



Containers are stacked at a port in Yokohama, near Tokyo on Aug. 1, 2025. (AP)

fect production of naphtha-related products which are key for medical supplies and other plastics.

The Japanese government has tried to assuage the public by noting the country's 254-days of oil reserves for such emergencies, which were established after the so-called “oil shock” of

the 1970s. The government is releasing some reserves to stabilize supplies.

Japan is also working on alternative routes other than through the Strait of Hormuz, the main supply route for much of Asia's oil and gas. It is effectively closed because of the war.

Commodity futures trading commission clash fuels prediction market battle

NY sues Coinbase, Gemini over prediction markets

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP) — New York is suing Coinbase and Gemini, two of the newest players in the prediction market industry, arguing that the companies' unregulated and unlicensed platforms are illegal gambling operations.

Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit, filed Tuesday in state court in Manhattan, seeks to bar the companies' platforms from operating in the state unless and until they obtain licenses from the state Gaming Commission.

“Gambling by another name is still gambling, and it is not exempt from regulation under our state laws and Constitution,” James said in a statement. “Gemini and Coinbase's so-called prediction markets are just illegal gambling operations, exposing young people to addictive

platforms that lack the necessary guardrails.”

Messages seeking comment were left for Coinbase and Gemini. Both companies began as cryptocurrency trading platforms before branching into the prediction space, which has been dominated by Kalshi and Polymarket.

Gemini, founded by brothers Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, launched Gemini Predictions in December. Coinbase started its prediction markets service in January.

“Crypto was just the beginning,” Gemini's website said Tuesday, next to a prediction box offering bets on such things as the winner of that day's Chelsea-Brighton Premier League soccer match, when Kevin Warsh will be confirmed as the chairman of the Federal Reserve, and what

the price of oil will be Friday.

New York's lawsuit alleges that the Coinbase and Gemini are seeking “to avoid the legal and financial consequences” of the state's close regulation of gambling “by offering what is quintessentially wagering under the guise of offering ‘event contracts’ on a ‘prediction market.’”

By operating without licenses, the lawsuit says, Coinbase's and Gemini's prediction market businesses aren't paying the same taxes as licensed casinos and mobile sportsbooks, which are taxed by the state at a rate of approximately 51% of gross revenues. In addition, the lawsuit says, Coinbase and Gemini allow users as young as 18, while state law prohibits wagering by anyone under 21.

New potato strains cut waste, improve storage

Researchers have spent decades breeding better potatoes for chips, and their work isn't done

EAST LANSING, April 22, (AP) — There's a surprising amount of science in a bag of potato chips.

Researchers have spent decades developing potatoes for chip makers that can grow in all kinds of climates, avoid diseases and pests, sit in storage for months and still deliver a satisfying crunch. They've also kept an eye on consumer trends; a shift to snack-size portions has increased the demand for smaller chipping potatoes, for example.

“The potato industry is dynamic,” said David Douches, a Michigan State University professor who leads the school's Potato Breeding and Genetics Program. “The needs change, the costs, the pressures that they have, and the markets change. So we have to adapt to that with our varieties.”

Douches has developed five new potato varieties for chips in the last 15 years. His latest breakthrough is a bioengineered potato that can maintain a proper sugar balance when stored at colder temperatures, which can help keep potatoes from rotting. He is currently growing seeds for commercial testing of the potato, which is not yet on the market.

Douches' work helps fight world hunger; he has developed disease-resistant varieties for farmers in Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda and Bangladesh. But he's also helping U.S. chip makers, grateful snackers and Michigan's \$2.5 billion potato industry. While Idaho leads the U.S. in potato production, Michigan is the top producer of potatoes for chips.

There are around 50 unique potato varieties grown for chips in the U.S. right now, according to the National Chip Program, a cooperative that brings together Michigan State and 11 other university breeding programs with growers, companies that make chips, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Efforts to improve those varieties are constant. The National Chip Program evaluates around 225 new potato varieties each year and selects 100 for further trials, said Tim Rendall, the director of production research at Potatoes USA, a trade group that oversees the chip program.

The close partnership between researchers, farmers and potato chip companies is unusual in the food industry, said Phil Gusmano, the vice president of purchasing at Better Made Snack Foods, which has pro-



David Douches, a Michigan State University professor who leads the school's Potato Breeding and Genetics Program, holds a potato chip in his hand during a taste testing in East Lansing, Mich., on Tuesday, March 24, 2026 (AP)

duced potato chips in Detroit since 1930. Better Made worked closely with Douches when he was developing two of the varieties the company uses now, Gusmano said.

“We were able to talk about size profile and different needs that make a really good chip,” Gusmano said. “And the great thing is, they're willing to listen to what we have to say, because if they put together a potato that doesn't really meet the needs for the end processor, it doesn't do them any good.”

Breeding a new type of potato can take up to 15 years, Douches said.

The simple potato has a surprisingly complicated genetic structure, with four chromosomes in each cell compared to two in most species, including humans. That makes it harder to predict which traits that cross-bred plants will inherit, he said.

“We're never able to fix a trait and carry that over to the next generation, so it's very difficult to find a potato that has all the traits that we want,” Douches said.

Douches became fascinated with potato breeding and genetics while in graduate school. At Michigan State, he focuses on chipping potatoes, since Michigan is a leading producer. Around 70% of the state's potato crop is destined for chip processing, according to the Michigan Ag Council. The trade group estimates that one of every four bags of potato chips produced in the U.S. contains Michigan potatoes.

Breeding potatoes that can sit in storage for nearly a year has been one of the biggest challenges in Douches' 40-year career. Historically, farmers harvested potatoes and then stored them in huge piles at around 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius). Temperatures any colder cause sugar levels to rise in the root vegetables, and higher sugar content leads to darker potato chips. But warmer storage conditions can lead to rot.

“You think they're just these inanimate objects, but they actually are respiring and breathing,” Douches said. “When you do that to them, you've got, like, a two- to three-day window where they're happy.”

His Manistee variety, which was released in 2013, can be safely stored until July at 45 F (7.2 C) degrees. His new bioengineered potato can be stored at 40 F (4.4 C).

Gusmano said Better Made used to source potatoes from outside of Michigan for half the year because the Michigan potatoes it harvested in the fall only could be stored until February. The company now uses newer varieties, like Douches' Mackinaw potato, which can be stored until July and is resistant to several common diseases.

“We're not shipping potatoes from all over the country to be fried here in Michigan,” Gusmano said. “Instead, they're being shipped from an hour and a half away all year long.”

First black woman to represent S. Africa at Miss World dies

Alan Osmond, the eldest member of the Osmonds, dies at 76

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP) — Alan Osmond, the eldest member of the chart-topping family act The Osmonds, died Monday after decades with multiple sclerosis. He was 76.

According to a family spokesperson, Alan's wife, Suzanne Osmond, and their eight sons were with him at his home in Lehi, Utah, at the time of his death. Prior to his passing, Alan used a wheelchair and spent a week in intensive care before returning home Thursday on hospice.

A talented songwriter and performer, Alan Osmond helped write some of the Osmond Brothers' biggest hits, including "One Bad Apple," "Crazy Horses" and "Are You Up There?"

Born in Ogden, Utah on June 22, 1949, Alan Osmond's storied musical career began in the 1950s, when he and his brothers Wayne, Merrill and Jay formed a barbershop quartet. He was the oldest of the performing group and the third oldest of his siblings.

The brothers worked the state fair circuit in Utah until a visit to Disneyland led to a television debut on "Disney After Dark" in 1962. The group became regulars on "The Andy Williams Show," where they made their name and forged their wholesome and peppy image, peaking as a quintet in the early 1970s, as younger brother Donny Osmond became the breakout star. In 1971, the Osmonds tallied nine gold records, surpassing single-year bests by Elvis and the Beatles.

In the mid-to-late 1970s, Alan became a principal pro-

ducer on ABC's hit television show "The Donny and Marie Show," starring his brother and sister.

The original Osmond Brothers - Alan, Wayne, Merrill and Jay - returned to the stage in 1982 as a country group and had a handful of hits, including "I Think About Your Lovin'." At the time, Alan told The Associated Press he switched from recording rock to country music because it better fit their wholesome image.

"Country music really is the backbone of America," he said. "It doesn't just come and go. And we're kind of flag-wavers. You find that in the country area, too."

In 1987, Alan Osmond was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. It caused him to retire from performing with his family. His brother Wayne Osmond died at the age of 73 in 2025 after suffering a stroke.

In a statement on social media Tuesday, Donny Osmond called Alan Osmond his "protector" and "guide," saying he was "the one who quietly carried so much responsibility so the rest of us could shine."

Merrill Osmond also paid tribute in a social media post, explaining that he saw his ailing brother two days prior.

"We talked as brothers do, heart to heart. He was struggling, but when I shared a joke or two, he found the strength to chuckle ... and then he smiled," he wrote on Facebook. "I need you to know this ... he has not left me. I have felt him. I have felt his quiet encouragement telling me to keep going ... to keep building faith ... to keep sharing light."



Alan Osmond performs during a taping of the Osmonds 50th anniversary show in Las Vegas on Aug. 14, 2007. (AP)

Alan is survived by his wife, Suzanne; his eight sons, Michael, Nathan, Doug, David, Scott, Jon, Alex, and Tyler; 30 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, brothers Viri, Tom, Merrill, Jay, Donny, Jimmy and sister Marie.

Also:

CAPE TOWN: Cynthia Shange, the first black woman to represent South Africa at Miss World during apartheid,

has died at the age of 76.

The multi-award-winning actress and model passed away in the early hours of Monday at a hospital in Kwa-Zulu-Natal Province following an illness, her family confirmed.

Born in 1949 in Durban, Shange rose to prominence in the early 1970s when she became the first black woman to win a Miss South Africa title in 1972 and went on to represent the country at the 1972 Miss World pageant in London.

In a statement issued late Monday, South Africa's Parliament paid tribute to Shange, saying that "Ms. Shange was more than an actress -- she was a cultural pioneer, a trailblazer, and a powerful symbol of African excellence at a time when the dignity and humanity of Black South Africans were systematically denied under apartheid."

Parliament added that at the height of apartheid when black people were excluded from mainstream recognition, Shange's presence on the global stage affirmed the dignity and humanity of black women, and that her career inspired generations, particularly young black women in the arts.

In a separate statement, South Africa's Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Gayton McKenzie and his deputy, Peace Mabe, described Shange as a fearless pioneer who transformed the landscape of representation.

"Cynthia Shange was a barrier-breaker for black people and for women at a time when both were systematically excluded from global platforms.

Film



Jaafar Jackson as Michael Jackson in a scene from 'Michael.' (AP)



From left: Judah Edwards as Young Tito, Jaylen Hunter as Young Marlon, Juliano Krue Valdi as Young MJ, Nathaniel McIntyre as Young Jackie and Jayden Harville as Young Jermain in a scene from 'Michael.' (AP)



This image released by Lionsgate shows Jaafar Jackson as Michael Jackson in a scene from 'Michael.' (AP)

Polished biopic moonwalks past the complications

'Michael' resurrects the King of Pop

LOS ANGELES, April 22, (AP) — "Michael" slides a sequin glove over the pop star's tarnished legacy, shrouding Michael Jackson's complications with a conventional biopic that, if you cover your ears, sounds great.

Antoine Fuqua's movie is sanctioned by Jackson's estate and its producers include Jackson's executors. So it is, by its nature, a narrow, authorized perspective on Jackson. The film ends before the flood of allegations of sexual abuse of children, or Jackson's own acknowledgment of sleeping alongside kids. Jackson and his estate have long maintained his innocence. In his only criminal trial, in 2005, Jackson was acquitted.

"Michael" doesn't even subtly nod to these facts. It moonwalks right past them. The result is a kind of fantasy film, one that relives the extraordinary highs of Michael Jackson while turning a blind eye to the lows.

There's something understandably hard to resist about that. Who wouldn't love to forget all the bad that comes with Michael Jackson? "Billie Jean," alone, is good enough to give you amnesia. We're talking about one of the greatest song-and-dance entertainers of the 20th century. The connection he forged with millions shouldn't be taken for granted. And it can feel downright giddy to once again bask in Jackson's former glory - or, at least, an uncanny approximation of it by Jaafar Jackson, his nephew. But that also makes "Michael" as much a fairy tale as Peter Pan's Neverland.

"Michael" originally included scenes dealing the sexual abuse allegations, but those were cut due to stipulations in an earlier settlement. The finished film, scripted by John Logan ("Gladiator," "Aviator"), is largely structured as a father-son drama. In the film's early Gary, Indiana-set scenes, Joe Jackson (a typically compelling Colman Domingo) forcefully drills his children into becoming the Jackson 5 and whips young Michael (an excellent Juliano Krue Valdi) with his belt.

While "Michael" spans the Jackson 5 and "Off the

Wall" and "Thriller," its through-line is Michael's struggle for emancipation from his overbearing father and manager. In that way, it's quite similar to 2022's "Elvis," which likewise turned on the dynamic between Presley and the controlling Colonel Tom Harper.

Similarly, the broad-strokes, play-the-hits biopic approach is very much at work in "Michael," produced by Graham King ("Bohemian Rhapsody"). Fuqua, best known for muscular thrillers like "Training Day" and "The Equalizer," is maybe an unlikely pick for the task. But he cleverly stages some scenes, like when young Michael first lays down a track in a recording studio. While his father looms outside and producers tell Michael not to shuffle his feet so much, Fuqua moves inside the booth. We hear nothing but Michael's voice. The noise stops and there's just his pure, not-yet-corrupted vocal power, singing "Who's Lovin' You."

Success

What happened to Jackson as he became an adult, many would consider both an astonishing success story and an American tragedy. "Michael" doesn't try for that balance. It mainly follows the emergence of an icon, albeit a peculiar one who takes shelter in a room full of children's toys and whose need to be "perfect" drives him to cosmetic surgery in his early 20s. These and other developments (like the arrival of Bubbles the chimp) are mostly met with eye rolls by family members: the idiosyncrasies of a man-child genius.

At nearly every turn, you can feel the narrative being twisted, sometimes by those still alive. (Joe Jackson died in 2018, nine years after his son's death at 50.) Katherine Jackson (Nia Long), Michael's mother, is downright saintly. John Branca (Miles Teller), co-executor of Jackson's estate and a producer of the film, is seen as a heroic ally to Michael.

Branca, perhaps, deserves the victory lap. Such a big-screen revival for Jackson was once unthinkable. But "Michael" is the latest in a string of successes for the former King of Pop, including Cirque du Soleil

shows and "MJ the Musical" on Broadway - all despite the evidence presented by the 2019 documentary "Leaving Neverland." "Michael" isn't really a rebuttal to that film. It's pure pop shock-and-awe. And turning up the volume on "Beat It" will win you some arguments.

What's on screen is constantly running, in our minds, alongside what isn't. Even the glossiest of biopics allow some negative characteristics to show, but Fuqua's film sticks almost entirely to Michael, the myth. He visits kids in hospitals, makes Black history on MTV, writes the "Thriller" album in near solitary. (Kendrick Sampson plays a seldom seen Quincy Jones.)

As played by Jaafar Jackson, Michael is a wide-eyed innocent who bore the scars of abuse and yet nevertheless maintained a childlike belief in music: king and casualty of pop, at once. If there's one thing that needs no embellishment here, it's the fervor of audiences for Jackson at his astonishing peak. Fuqua lingers on the fans losing their minds for Michael, but that ardor was real. Jaafar Jackson's performance is a remarkable, charming facsimile not just for the dance moves and singing voice but, more crucially, for channeling Jackson's sweetness.

"Michael" concludes on an oddly and - considering where things would ultimately go for Jackson - completely false note of triumph. But when the movie sticks to the music, as it often does in copious concert performances, it's hard not to be moved. There is an undeniable thrill in being transported back to a more innocent America awakening to the power of pop spectacle, when arenas sang in unison to "Man in the Mirror" and "Human Nature." The nostalgia of "Michael" is for more than Michael Jackson. But blindly believing only in that celebrity, in that fantasy, is repeating a sad history all over again.

"Michael," a Lionsgate release in theaters Thursday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for some thematic material, language, and smoking. Running time: 127 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.



Marlon Jackson, (from left), La Toya Jackson, Prince Jackson, Jermaine Jackson and Jackie Jackson arrive at the premiere of 'Michael' on Monday, April 20, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. (AP)



Jaafar Jackson, (left), and Maddie Simpson arrive at the premiere of 'Michael.' (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Prosecutors once again portrayed Harvey Weinstein as a onetime Hollywood power player who used his sway as a tool of sexual assault, repainting a familiar but fraught picture Tuesday at a rape retrial nearly eight years after the former movie tycoon's arrest.

"This case will come down to power, to control and to manipulation," Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Candace White told jurors as opening statements began in the bellwether #MeToo case, with DA Alvin Bragg watching from the audience.

Weinstein lawyer Jacob Kaplan countered that the case actually "is about consent, about choice and about regret," echoing Weinstein's longtime defense that his accuser had recast a willing encounter as a crime.

Since Weinstein became a major target of the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct nearly a decade ago, he has been convicted of some sexual assault charges and acquitted of others in trials on two US coasts. A couple of charges ultimately were dismissed. But the rape charge involving a 2013 encounter in a Manhattan hotel has lingered, due to an overturned conviction followed by a jury deadlock.

The allegation is, by now, well known. But the contours of the case have changed. The prior trials included other accusers and charges. This trial is pared down to the single question of what happened in a hotel room one morning between Weinstein and hairstylist and actor Jessica Mann, though jurors will again also hear a lot about their relationship before and after.

Weinstein also switched his legal team, and with it the rhetorical style and perhaps some strategic choices in his defense. His new attorneys have made clear that they intend to be more circumspect about broaching, for example, Mann's compensation from a claims fund for women who said Weinstein sexually mistreated them.

Weinstein has pleaded not guilty and denies ever having nonconsensual sex. He said in court in January that he had been unfaithful to his then-wife and "acted wrongly, but I never assaulted anyone." (AP)



Weinstein

NEW YORK: Mike Tomlin is going from the glare of an NFL sideline to the glare of television lights.

The former Pittsburgh Steelers coach will join NBC's

"Sunday Night Football" coverage as a pregame analyst, two people briefed on the move told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity because NBC has not announced the move. The Athletic was the first to report on Tomlin.

Tomlin stepped down in January after 19 seasons as Steelers coach and was the most sought after free agent by the networks. NBC had a studio opening as it is retooling its "Football Night in America" pregame show. Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy announced last month that he was told he would not be back after 17 years.

Host Maria Taylor and former Cowboys coach Jason Garrett are expected to return. Devin McCourty's contract expired at the conclusion of last season, but NBC would like to re-sign him. Pro Football Talk's Mike Florio and fantasy sports expert Matthew Berry are also expected to continue their roles. (AP)

Rock band makes high-energy return with some risks

Foo Fighters find fun again on 'Your Favorite Toy'

LOS ANGELES, April 22, (AP) — Frontman Dave Grohl and Foo Fighters had a tumultuous two years.

In 2024, Grohl announced he fathered a child outside his marriage. In 2025, the band parted ways with drummer Josh Freese after just one tour - and two months later, hired Ian Rubin to replace him. There has been plenty of change, uncertainty and introspection to sort through.

But on "Your Favorite Toy," Foo Fighters' 12th full-length studio album out Friday, the 15-time Grammy winners are clearly having fun.

While 2023's "But Here We Are" was largely therapeutic in the wake of the deaths of longtime drummer Taylor Hawkins and Grohl's mother, "Your Favorite Toy" is the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame band's return to their 1990s, garage rock beginnings.

When you have a catalog as dissected as Foo Fighters, the next album always has a massive challenge to find its

place. "Your Favorite Toy" takes a few potentially polarizing risks - some might consider them flaws - with an aggressive, fast-paced punk style, distorted vocals and occasional overly compressed production. But for Foo Fighters, it's an energy-lifting listen.

"Caught In The Echo" is a thunderous tone-setter for the mostly loud and brisk 10-track album, recorded at Grohl's home studio. After a blistering opening riff, Grohl shouts: "Do I? Do I? Do I? Do I?" - Foo Fighters' most lively leadoff track since "Bridge Burning" on 2011's "Wasting Light."

In the thrashing "Of All People," Grohl grapples with the mixed emotions of thinking "I'd seen a ghost" while encountering an unsavory person from his past.

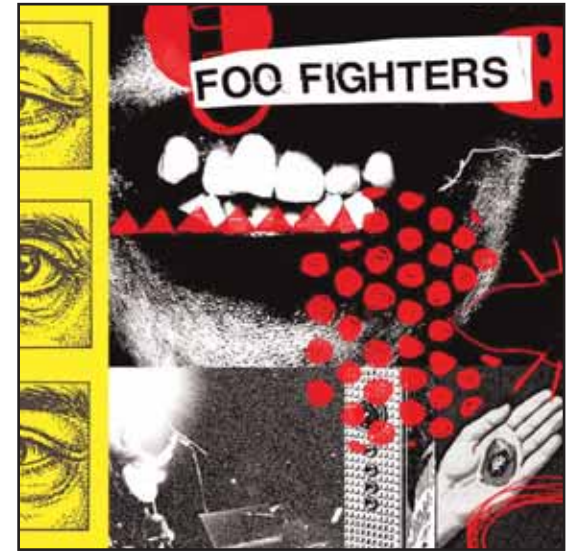
"Of all people you survived," Grohl growls. "When no one else could stay alive / You know you should be dead / But you're alive instead."

The title track raises an eyebrow at first because it's strikingly different with Grohl's fuzzy-sounding vocals, during which it seems he's shouting at himself. But it's punchy, catchy and stadium tour ready.

"If You Only Knew" might become a fan favorite with its "classic" Foo Fighters feel, defined by tempo changes and shifts from a gravelly Grohl to melodic, softer tones. There's also some inspiring drumming by Rubin, most recently of Nine Inch Nails, who makes a solid first impression throughout this, his debut album with Foo Fighters.

On the blistering-paced "Spit Shine," Grohl screeches about refocusing: "The grass is never greener / Time ain't no redeemer / Pull yourself together Mr. Man." Validation is the theme on the foot-tapping "Child Actor."

"Unconditional" has a 1980s new wave, post-punk style with hints of The Cure as an optimistic Grohl insists: "There are better days awaiting."



This album cover image released by RCA Records shows 'Your Favorite Toy' by Foo Fighters. (AP)

Design



A large inflatable pink octopus wraps around the facade of a building, an installation by Moncler called 'Puffy Summer', during the Design Week, in Milan, Italy, Monday, April 20. (AP)



Alessandro Scandurra, displayed at the Statale University, during the Design Week in Milan, Italy, Monday, April 20. (AP)



A visitor enjoys an installation created by designer Piero Lissoni called 'UN_Material' displayed at the Statale University, during the Design Week in Milan. (AP)



An installation by Andrea Olivari, called 'My stomach when I'm with you' is displayed at Gae Aulenti square, during the Design Week, in Milan, Italy, April 20. (AP)



An architect of Zaza Maizon brand stands next to interior furniture creations displayed at the Salone Raritas, collectible design pavilion, during the Milan Design Week, in Rho, Italy, April 21. (AP)

Variety

NEW YORK: Nearly a year since she was abruptly fired by President Donald Trump as librarian of Congress, **Carla Hayden** stood before hundreds of cheering members of the literary community as she received a Champion of Writers Award from the Authors Guild on Monday.

Hayden, 73, who headed the Library of Congress from 2016-2025 and worked in libraries for much of her adult life, cited her profession as a vital bridge between writers and the general public.

"Libraries are where storytelling meets opportunity," she told the audience gathered for the Guild's annual dinner-gala, held at Cipriani Wall Street. "They are where a child discovers a first favorite book, where a new American finds language and belonging and where research uncovers hidden history, and where communities see themselves in the pages of literature. Libraries do more than house books. You know that. They connect people to ideas, to knowledge, and to one another. They ensure that storytelling is not reserved for the few, but shared by all."

Hayden, was among three honorees, along with Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Percival Everett and "The Joy Luck Club" author Amy Tan. Hayden, the first woman and first Black person to be appointed Librarian of Congress, didn't refer to Trump or her ouster during her brief remarks. But her speech was an implicit rebuttal to Trump's attacks against what he calls "woke" culture that have been directed at her and at such cultural institutions as the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian Institution.

She praised libraries as "engines of accessibility and inclusion" and as havens for free expression at a time of record-high book bans.

"In many places today, librarians are under attack for believing in the power of the written word and in the principle that free people should be able to read freedom," she said. "Yet librarians remain steady and hopeful."

The gala was a forum for opposing bans and for other causes crucial to the Guild and to the thousands of published writers its represents. (AP)

Television

Netflix series premieres on Earth Day

Galifianakis brings humor to gardening

LOS ANGELES, April 22, (AP) — You might not realize it, but watching Zach Galifianakis poke around in the dirt like he's just discovered it is exactly what you need right now.

In "This Is a Gardening Show," a six-part series premiering April 22 on Netflix for Earth Day, the actor and comedian brings a kind of wide-eyed curiosity to gardening that feels at once sincere and ridiculous.

The episodes run an easily digestible 15 to 20 minutes each - just long enough to learn something new without feeling overwhelmed.

Galifianakis, who says he's been gardening "on and off" for 25 years, doesn't come across as polished, but it's clear he's not trying to. Instead, he leaves experts in charge of their own domains - apples, tomatoes, foraging, root vegetables, corn and compost - taking it all in with the wonder of a kid who just realized food doesn't come from the grocery store.

Those laid-back experts show him - and us - the ropes, demonstrating, among other things, how to graft an apple tree, and how to add nitrogen-rich ingredients to a compost bin.

Each episode features amusing sit-downs with students from Brooklyn Elementary School in Comox, British Columbia. At first, you might think you're watching a kids' show. But then you realize you're the kid.

Galifianakis interviews them with the same deadpan style he used on celebrities in his satirical talk show "Between Two Ferns," which ran from



This image released by Netflix shows Zach Galifianakis, right, interviewing a child about root vegetables in a scene from his gardening series 'This Is a Gardening Show.' (AP)

2008-2018. He asks questions like "How many children do you have?" and lets their sometimes off-the-wall responses land however they may ("11," in this case).

From the kids' perspective, though, he's probably the one saying the darndest things. Galifianakis tosses out a knock-knock joke about Benjamin Netanyahu, suggests urinal cakes when asking about their favorite foods, and commits to an unexplained running gag about Ryan Reynolds, all of which go over their heads. It's quirky

and silly. There's a callback for fans as he walks through greenery: "It's nice to be between two ferns again," he says.

Bloopers are woven into each episode, along with lines like, "If I were to offer a remedy to the human condition, it would be a garden ... or acid."

The humor doesn't upstage the gardening, though. "The future is agrarian," he says, adding that gardening is "good for your heart."

And so is this show.

'Education must evolve'

What makes us human? Forum confronts AI age

BOSTON, April 22, (Xinhua) — The 17th annual China Education Symposium, held over the weekend at Harvard, brought together educators, scholars, diplomats and students under a theme that felt less like a conference slogan than an existential prompt: "A Thousand Leaps of Change: Illuminating the Future of Education."

The symposium organized by students at Harvard's Graduate School of Education has a clear focus: Education must evolve in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by AI and technological advancement.

With six sub-forums on topics ranging from well-being to educational technology, the event highlighted a consensus among keynote speakers that the ultimate goal of education is to nurture fully realized human beings, and that AI is making this task even more urgent.

Prof. Huang Ronghuai, co-dean of the Smart Education Institute at Beijing Normal University and UNESCO chair on AI in education, argued that AI challenges the traditional education system. "The pace of learning is beginning to outstrip the pace of schooling," he warned.

Huang proposed a "pact" for an intelligent society, in which learners are self-directed, capable of judgment and growth, and prepared to navigate tensions among efficiency, independent thought, and intellectual engagement.

Yu Yougen, education counsellor at the Chinese Consulate in New York, cast education as both "engine" and "compass" in an AI-shaped world, outlining the scale of China's own system -- thousands of universities, tens of millions of students, and millions of teachers as "guardians" of quality and access.

David Perkins, a founding member of Harvard's Project Zero, criticized current curricula for prioritizing content memorization over deep understanding. In an era where AI can provide instant answers, education should focus on transferable thinking and problem-solving skills. His message was clear: The value of education lies in helping students engage meaningfully with the world.

Junlei Li, co-chair of the school's Human Development and Education Program, emphasized that technology should never replace human connection in learning. Reflecting on his own experiences in orphanages and rural villages, Li proposed a vision for "human human scholars" -- students who grow not only in skills but as empathetic, embodied individuals.

He raised a question that Chinese American philosopher and activist Grace Lee Boggs considered central for the next century: "What makes us better humans -- more human humans?"

2,500-year-old golden helmet returned to Romania after Dutch museum raid

BUCHAREST, Romania, April 22, (AP) — A priceless golden helmet dating back 2,500 years was returned to Romania on Tuesday after the national heirloom was stolen from a Dutch museum where it was on loan last year.

The ornate Cotofenesti helmet and three golden bracelets - some of Romania's most revered national treasures from the Dacia civilization - were taken from the Drents Museum in January 2025 in a raid which shocked the art world and devastated Romanian authorities.

But after 14 months of investigations, diplomatic tensions, and three suspects in an ongoing trial, most of the artifacts arrived at Bucharest Henri Coanda International Airport on Tuesday from where authorities transported them under

guard to Bucharest's National History Museum. They were displayed in a glass cabinet, flanked by masked, armed guards.

Cornel Constantin Ilie, the museum's interim director, said that the artifacts have been returned "not as simple patrimony items, but as relics of our historical memory, as the legacy of a civilization that continues to define us."

"For us, this is a moment of joy, but also of contemplation," he said. "For months, we have lived with the fear that part of our past could be lost forever. Today we can say that an essential part of this treasure has returned."

Robert van Langh, the Drents Museum director, described the recovery and return of the relics as "an emotional moment for all involved,"



Dacian gold items, including a 2,500-year-old helmet, displayed after return in Bucharest, Romania, April 21. (AP)

and acknowledged "the grief, the anger and now the relief have naturally been even greater" in Romania than in the Netherlands.

"Romanian national heritage has returned home," he said. "The impact of this robbery was already significant in the Netherlands, but here it must have been truly unparalleled ... The police and judicial authorities of both countries have done extraordinary work."

Dutch prosecutors unveiled the recovered items at a news conference in the eastern Dutch city of Assen earlier this month. The whereabouts of the third golden bracelet remains unknown, but van Langh vowed the search would continue and that a judicial verdict is expected in the coming weeks.

HEALTH/SCIENCE



South Korean environmental activists march during a campaign to mark Earth Day in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, April 22. (AP)



Protesters display posters during a rally marking the Earth Day outside the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry office in Jakarta, Indonesia, Wednesday, April 22. (AP)



An Indian rag-picker searches for recyclables at a garbage dump on the outskirts of Jammu, India, on Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22. (AP)

Earth Day 2026: 'Our Power, Our Planet' urges collective action

Earth Day started as US 'teach-in' 56 years ago, now a global event

NEW YORK, April 22, (AP): Millions of people around the world paused Wednesday, at least for a moment, to mark Earth Day. It's an annual event founded by people who hoped to stir activism to clean up and preserve a planet that is now home to some 8 billion humans and assorted trillions of other organisms.

Here are answers to some common questions about Earth Day and how it came to be:

Earth Day has its roots in growing concern over pollution in the 1960s, when author Rachel Carson's 1962 book "Silent Spring," about the pesticide DDT and its damaging effects on the food chain, hit bestseller lists and raised aware-

ness about nature's delicate balance.

But it was a US senator from Wisconsin, Democrat Gaylord Nelson, who had the idea that would become Earth Day. Nelson had long been concerned about the environment when a massive offshore oil spill sent millions of gallons onto the Southern California coast in 1969. Nelson, after touring the spill site, had the idea of doing a national "teach-in" on the environment, similar to teach-ins that were being held on some college campuses to oppose the war in Vietnam.

Nelson and others, including activist Denis Hayes, worked to expand the idea beyond college campuses, with

events across the US, and came up with the Earth Day name.

A history of the movement by EarthDay.org, where Hayes remains board chair emeritus, says the date of the first Earth Day - April 22, 1970 - was chosen because it fell on a weekday between spring break and final exams and the aim was to attract as many students as possible.

It's not a federal holiday. But many groups use the day to put together volunteer events with the environment in mind, such as cleanups of natural areas. You can see a list of events worldwide, or register your own event, at EarthDay.org.

It has. The overwhelming public response to the first Earth Day is credited with adding pressure for the US

Congress to do more to address pollution, and it did, passing landmark legislation including the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act.

More broadly, it's seen as the birth of the modern environmental movement. In later years, Earth Day expanded to become a truly global event. It now claims to have motivated action in more than 192 countries.

In 2000, Earth Day began taking aim at climate change, a problem that has grown more urgent in recent years.

This year's Earth Day centers around the slogan "Our Power, Our Planet" and encourages collective action against environmental impacts.

How the world connects with nature this Earth Day

Barefoot trails: a natural path to wellness

GUTACH, Germany, April 22, (AP): At the edge of a trail in Germany's picturesque Black Forest region, waterlogged steps sink into ankle-deep water and mud, requiring careful footing. An ocean away, a sandy trail in the ponderosa forests of northern Arizona demands treading just as deliberately when walkers reach a line of tree stumps arranged as stepping stones.

The pathways are located nearly 9,700 kilometers (6,000 miles) apart but share a notable feature: they were designed for visitors to use without wearing socks or shoes.

Barefoot trails exist around the world, inviting people to get closer to nature through sounds and sensations. Feeling cool mud squish between toes, stepping on pine needles and exploring meditation caves, scent stations and dark rooms transform a routine walk into an immersive experience.

Walking shoeless on varied surfaces also may contribute to emotional well-being and overall foot health, according to podiatrists and barefoot enthusiasts.

Below, more about where and why some people are bringing themselves down to earth one step at a time.

Theories about the benefits of going barefoot have gained popularity among runners and other athletes in recent decades, as well as with environmentalists and as an alternative mental health treatment, but the idea has been around for well over a century.

Sebastian Kneipp, a 19th century German Catholic priest and early pioneer of naturopathy, promoted nature exposure, water therapy and barefoot walking as exercise and a way to stimulate circulation and support overall health, including immune function. He



A path of tree stumps lines a portion of a barefoot trail near Flagstaff, Ariz., on Thursday, April 16. (AP)

recommended walking barefoot over "dew-wet grass" or snow and is said to have called shoes "foot-bending machinery."

His philosophy inspired trails and paths across Europe, where they are sometimes known as Kneipp paths, and to a lesser extent in the United States. In Asia, reflexology trails made of stones, pebbles and grass are intended to stimulate acupressure points on the soles of the feet, a concept linked to traditional medical therapies.

Germany's Park mit allen Sinnen, which in English translates to "park with all senses," reflects a broader focus on wellness tourism in the Black Forest, which covers more than 6,000 square kilometers (2,317 square miles) and where visitors can breathe mountain air, soak in thermal baths and visit spas offering treatments that incorporate local plants and herbs.

The park charges an admission fee. Its website says that meandering barefoot over the 2 kilometer-long (1-mile-long) trail's different surfaces "is ideal for exercising your back and spine, and at the same time, it's a perfect foot reflexology massage in the fresh air."

Leah Williams, the owner of The Barefoot Trail park near Flagstaff, Arizona, opened a manicured trail of the same length near Route 66 two years ago after a family trip in Europe. Tickets are required, though Williams operates the park as a nonprofit charitable foundation.

Williams said her mother, who is from Germany, encouraged her to go barefoot as a child climbing trees and playing in the forests and creeks around Seattle — a practice Williams carried into adulthood and passed on to her own children. While living in the Netherlands, her family visited a barefoot trail in Belgium.

"I loved everything about it. I saw all ages, and I loved seeing older people at the park because you don't see that here in the United States," Williams said. "I thought, 'Wow, when I get back to the United States, I'm going to build one of these parks myself.'"

She offers educational materials for schools, summer programs and camps to children who visit the park.

"Being good stewards of nature is really our job as human beings, and we have taken 13 acres (5 hectares) of land at our park for our community enjoyment, ... for local, statewide and regional enjoyment," Williams said, her eyes moist with emotion.

Most people don't walk outside barefoot regularly, and exposing their tender feet to different textures, temperatures and types of contact can take getting used to.

"You should see people's faces when they start walking," Williams said, chuckling at the thought.

While many parks with barefoot trails encourage users to walk the paths sans shoes, naked feet are not required. Guests with neuropathy, diabetes or other foot conditions are welcome to keep their shoes on at the parks in Arizona and Germany. Some barefoot trails are designed to engage multiple senses.

At Park mit allen Sinnen, a sign that reads "Please be quiet" in German identifies a spot described as a meditation cave. Inside, a long bench faces tall windows overlooking the forest, and soft music plays through hidden speakers. Elsewhere at the park, visitors can squeeze red bulbs to release the scent of papaya or apricots, or place their hands inside a box filled with wild boar fur.



The Blue Origin New Glenn rocket lifts off from LC36 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force station, Sunday, April 19, in Cape Canaveral, Fla. (AP)

New Glenn grounded after 'orbital mishap'

Jeff Bezos' rocket company, Blue Origin, blamed a bad engine Monday for a failed weekend launch that left a satellite in the wrong orbit, dooming it. Launches of the huge New Glenn rocket are grounded until Blue Origin and the Federal Aviation Administration complete their investigation.

The rocket blasted off from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station on Sunday. The recycled first-stage booster performed well, landing on an ocean barge several minutes into the flight. But the upper stage was unable to put the satellite into a high enough orbit to begin operations.

Preliminary data indicate that one of the upper stage engines failed to produce enough thrust, Blue Origin CEO Dave Limp said.

The satellite was supposed to join AST SpaceMobile's orbiting network of satellites designed to provide direct space-to-smart phone service.

The rocket's upper stage and satellite reentered the atmosphere Monday, according to the U.S. Space Force. No additional detail was available.

It was only the third flight for New Glenn, Blue Origin's hulking rocket for delivering spacecraft to orbit. NASA is counting on New Glenn to launch Blue Moon lunar landers for the Artemis moon program. SpaceX's Starship is also in the running to land astronauts on the moon as early as 2028.

Towering more than 320 feet (98 meters), the rocket is named for John Glenn, the first American to orbit Earth in 1962. (AP)

New research may improve early diabetes screening

Umbilical cord blood may hold clues to a child's risk of Type 1 diabetes

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

By Angelica P. Ahrens and Eric W. Triplett, University of Florida, and Johnny Ludvigsson, Linköping University

Your early life may quietly set the stage for developing Type 1 diabetes, an increasingly common, lifelong condition that can significantly affect daily life.

Our team's research, published in the journal Nature Communications, shows that biological pathways associated with future Type 1 diabetes may begin as early as pregnancy, and that these signals could be detected in umbilical cord blood.

As a group, we study how living systems respond to stress. Understanding the early biology of Type 1 diabetes can help uncover windows of opportunity to treat the disease sooner. Type 1 diabetes affects the pancreas. Specifically, its insulin-producing beta cells that help control blood sugar are progressively destroyed.

While this condition has typically been attributed to a dysfunctional immune system, a growing body of research suggests that beta cells themselves play an active role in disease development. Beta cells become stressed when overworked or exposed to harmful conditions. In some cases, they may even self-destruct before the immune system shows signs of affecting the pancreas. Potential stressors include infection, increased energy demands and smaller pancreas size.

Type 1 diabetes does not fit neatly within the traditional definition of an autoimmune disease. It ultimately develops when the body can no longer make enough insulin. During periods of increased demand

for insulin, such as after consuming a large amount of carbohydrates or during infection, beta cells are forced to work harder. When stressed beta cells stop working properly or die, they release molecular signals that can activate an immune response. This raises the possibility that immune responses may, in some cases, follow rather than initiate beta cell injury.

These observations suggest that stressed beta cells are not merely a consequence of Type 1 diabetes but also a contributor to its onset.

Our team wanted to see whether we could detect early signs of beta cell vulnerability before Type 1 diabetes symptoms start - or even before the immune system begins attacking the pancreas.

While genetics does play a role in Type 1 diabetes, an increasing number of people without a family history of diabetes are developing the disease. Much of the existing research has focused on children with high genetic risk. This is in part because, although Type 1 diabetes is increasing, it's relatively rare - affecting less than 1% of people globally - making it hard to study before the disease starts.

In contrast, we sought to study children from a general population, not just those known to be at high risk for Type 1 diabetes. So we used data from the All Babies in Southeast Sweden cohort, a longitudinal study founded by one of us, Johnny Ludvigsson, which has been following mothers and their children since the late 1990s.

As part of the study, researchers collected and stored umbilical cord blood samples. Decades later, we selected samples from babies who later developed Type 1 diabetes for this study and screened them for proteins known to be involved in inflammation. We then used machine learning tools to identify factors

linked to disease risk.

We found that the levels of several proteins in umbilical cord blood predicted the likelihood of whether a child in this cohort developed Type 1 diabetes in the future. These protein biomarkers fell into a few categories, including ones that help molecules get to where they need to be; ones that do not belong in the body, such as pollution; ones involved in the maintenance of cell structure; and ones that help regulate immune responses.

Our machine learning tool also identified some proteins that were associated with the absence of future Type 1 diabetes. These proteins, like tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinases-3 (TIMP3) and adenosine deaminase (ADA), are known to regulate inflammation by suppressing overactive immune responses, supporting healthy cellular communication and improving insulin production. Researchers have previously found that TIMP3 plays a role in glucose stabilization.

We found that levels of two specific proteins best predicted whether a baby would eventually develop Type 1 diabetes: IDS, which helps break down the long sugar molecules giving tissues strength and flexibility, and HLA-DRA, which is involved in activating the immune system. Type 1 diabetes is known to affect the long sugar molecules that IDS breaks down in several organs.

Importantly, the ability of these proteins to predict disease risk wasn't heavily reliant on genetics. Although some differences were more pronounced in children with certain variants of HLA linked to increased risk of Type 1 diabetes, including this information in our machine learning algorithm only marginally improved accuracy. Instead, the proteins themselves were driving disease risk. (AP)

Wild animals treated, released back into the wild

No cuddles, just care: Paris wildlife hospital keeps rescued animals wild

MAISON-ALFORT, France, April 22, (AP): A wildlife hospital in a southeastern Paris suburb is a place of no cuddles but lots of care. It helps injured, sick and orphaned animals - often victims of human activity and increasing urbanization - heal so they can return to their natural habitat.

Last week, a female fox cub was found alone in a garden on the city's outskirts, with no sign of her mother nearby. Now a team of volunteers takes care of her around the clock.

"We'll make sure she's eating well," animal caretaker Valentin Delon said. "If that's not the case, we might provide supplemental bottles to ensure she gains enough weight."

Over the past year, the Wildlife Veterinary Hospital in Maisons-Alfort has taken in more than 10,400 wild animals, including a wide variety of birds and European mammals such as foxes, deer and hedgehogs.

Like the little brown-furred cub, the animals can easily capture a caretaker's heart - but bonding with humans is not an option when the goal is to eventually return them to the wild.

The baby fox was found by residents who own hunting dogs. Estimated to be about 2 weeks old, she was far too young to survive on her own. At the Maisons-Alfort hospital, veterinarian Julie Piazza carefully examined her and aside from a minor injury, possibly caused by a wild animal or a dog's bite, she was found to be in good health.

The cub was fed artificial milk - a product matching the composition of animal-produced milk - and because of that, her abdomen was swollen, Piazza said.

"That's common in a young one that has had a disruption in its diet," she added. Once healed, the animals are transferred to outdoor enclosures and aviaries to prepare for a reintroduction into their natural environment.

Delon, the caretaker, says that "any



An animal caretaker treats a baby fox at the Wildlife Veterinary Hospital in Maisons-Alfort, outside Paris, April 17. (AP)

kind of imprinting" - measures that attach the animals to their caregiver long-term - must be avoided.

"So we don't cuddle them, we don't talk to them," she said. "There's really a distance to maintain for their own good in the end, so they can be released later."

Because she is just a cub, once she grows sufficiently, the baby fox will first be transferred to a rehabilitation center and placed with other foxes in an enclosure.

"We can't just release her into the wild like that," Delon said. "She really needs to go into an enclosure first, and then gradually we'll open the door so she can come and go while still being fed. Then we'll gradually reduce the food, and that's how we achieve a truly gradual release."

The hospital ran by the Faune Alfort group is the only facility in the greater Paris area that treats a wide range of wild species. Some 86% of its patients are birds.

Last week, there was a swan with a broken wing, injured hedgehogs, dozens of ducklings often found on bal-

conies and elsewhere without parents, and lots of pigeons that are treated just as carefully as rarer birds.

Elisa Mora, head of communications for Faune Alfort, a nonprofit group running the Maisons-Alfort hospital, said a record 200 admissions were reported in a single day last summer. The hospital is mostly financed by donations from individuals and charities, and relies on volunteers to help feed and care for the animals.

April to September is the "juvenile period when wild animals reproduce" and the admissions peak, Mora said.

"Wild animals are already vulnerable, but juveniles even more so," she said. Those too badly injured or unable to return to the wild have to be euthanized.

Veterinarian Jean-François Courreau launched Faune Alfort in 1987, inspired by students willing to better treat wild animals. Six years later, the idea turned into a proper hospital, hosted by the National Veterinary School of Alfort, established in the 18th century.

Malinga claims key wickets of top-scorer Rana and Miller

Sharma's ninth T20 century propels Hyderabad to big win over Delhi

HYDERABAD, India, April 22, (AP): Opening batter Abhishek Sharma equaled Virat Kohli's Indian record of nine centuries in T20s and led Sunrisers Hyderabad to a 47-run victory over Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League.

The left-handed Sharma hit 10 sixes and 10 fours in his unbeaten 135 off 68 balls to anchor Hyderabad to 242-2 after they lost the toss and Delhi elected to field.

Sri Lankan fast bowler Eshan Malinga halted Delhi's chase at 195-9 with 4-32, claiming the key wickets of top-scorer Nitish Rana (57) and David Miller on successive balls midway through the run chase. Harsh Dubey took three wickets in the last over of Delhi's innings and finished with 3-12.

Delhi briefly tried to challenge a tall target when Rana and Lokesh Rahul (37) added 86 runs for the second wicket before they lost three quick wickets.

Rahul missed out a full toss and was caught by Sharma at deep mid-wicket and then Malinga struck two vital blows when Rana was held by a diving Sharma at mid-on and Miller was clean bowled for a golden duck as the old ball started to reverse swing and Delhi slipped to

107-4, losing three wickets in space of five balls.

Earlier, Sharma set up the platform of Hyderabad's fifth 200-plus score of the season by combining in a blistering opening stand of 97 runs with Travis Head (37) and provided a late flurry with Heinrich Klaasen, who scored 37 not out off 13 balls.

"I love playing here and want to entertain the crowd," Sharma said. "The environment we had at SRH from 2024 was a game changer for us, I always wanted to play like this, for Punjab as well. Playing for Hyderabad has always felt like that."

Sharma and Head breezed Hyderabad to 67-0 inside the power play as Sharma raised his half-century off 25 balls when he flicked Patel for two runs to mid-wicket in the 9th over. Patel broke through in the same over when Head smashed the left-arm spinner but couldn't clear the mid-wicket fence and was caught by Sameer Rizvi.

Captain Ishan Kishan (25) and Sharma then smashed Yadav for 22 runs in the 11th over before Sharma raised his second IPL hundred off 47 balls with back-to-back sixes off Nitish Rana (0-55). Despite Kishan getting run-out and Sharma getting slowed down in the death overs, Klaasen's cameo set up Hyderabad's third straight win.



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhishek Sharma takes the catch to dismiss Delhi Capitals' Nitish Rana during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals in Hyderabad, India. (AP)

Former Premier League champion Leicester relegated to third division



Chelsea's Pedro Neto, left, is tackled by Brighton and Hove Albion's Georginio Rutter during the English Premier League soccer match between Brighton & Hove Albion and Chelsea in Brighton, England. (AP)

Chelsea Champions League hopes hang by thread

LONDON, April 22, (AP): Former Premier League champion Leicester will be playing in the third tier of English soccer next season.

Leicester, which sealed the unlikely title win of the Premier League era in 2016 at odds of 5,000-1, needed a victory to maintain hope of avoiding relegation but drew 2-2 with Hull.

The midlands club, which also won the FA Cup in 2021 and played in England's top flight last season, is second to last in the second-tier Championship.

In a statement to fans, Leicester chairman Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, said responsibility sat with him.

Relegation comes after Leicester was docked six points in February for breaching the English Football League's financial rules when it earned promotion in the 2023-24 season. Earlier this month, it lost its bid to overturn that punishment, leaving it mired in the relegation zone.

It is a dramatic fall after Leicester's fairytale-like title triumph 10 years ago.

It had spent the 2014-15 season battling relegation from the top flight and only an unlikely winning run in the final weeks of that cam-



Brighton and Hove Albion's Danny Welbeck, center, celebrates scoring their third goal during the Premier League soccer match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Chelsea in Brighton, England. (AP)

aign.

What followed was a remarkable title charge that saw it finish 10 points clear of Arsenal at the top of the standings.

In 142 years of existence, Leicester has played just one season in the third tier of English soccer. It won the League One title in 2008-09 and was promoted back to the Championship.

Wrexham took advantage of Hull's draw to move into the play-off spots on goal difference.

A 1-0 win against Oxford lifted Wrexham above Hull and into sixth in the standings with two

rounds to go in the Championship. Josh Windass' goal in the 40th minute was enough to seal victory.

A 5-1 win for Coventry against Portsmouth confirmed the Championship title for Frank Lampard's team.

Meanwhile, Chelsea's season slumped deeper into crisis after a 3-0 defeat to Brighton left its hopes of Champions League qualification hanging by a thread.

The result leaves Chelsea seventh in the Premier League and seven points adrift of fifth place Liverpool having played a game more.

The top five qualify for the Champions League, but with just four more rounds of the season to go, Chelsea is on the verge of being cut adrift.

Goals from Ferdi Kadioglu, Jack Hinshelwood and Danny Welbeck at the AMEX Stadium did not reflect Brighton's dominance on the night. Victory saw it leapfrog Chelsea and move up to sixth in the standings and boosted its own pursuit of European soccer next season.

It has lost its last five without scoring, which, according to the league's official stats provider Opta, is its worst run since 1912 - the same year the Titanic sank.

Rosenior said it was the most difficult night of his career.

"Some of the things I was witnessing today I never want to see again," he said.

Chelsea - a team that cost in excess of \$1 billion to assemble - is now left facing up to the likelihood of missing out on the lucrative Champions League.

While it has an FA Cup semi-final against Leeds on Sunday, its campaign has unraveled in recent weeks, including elimination from the Champions League at the hands of Paris Saint-Germain.

The decision to let go of Club World Cup-winning coach Enzo Maresca in January now looks like a costly one, with his replacement Liam Rosenior overseeing the team's slide.

Maradona case heats up as daughter targets doctor in court

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, April 22, (AP): One of Diego Maradona's daughters lashed out at neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque, who was considered her father's primary physician at the time of his death, during a negligence trial.

Gianinna Maradona, in a court in the Buenos Aires town of San Isidro, testified in the trial of seven medical professionals accused of negligence her father's death in 2020.

"I heard on television that he said he wasn't his doctor, and it makes me very angry that he won't take responsibility," Gianinna Maradona said.

Luque and six others are standing a new trial

because last May the court declared a mistrial after Julieta Makintach, one of the original three presiding judges, stepped down over criticism about her participation in a documentary on the case.

The negligence case accuses Maradona's medical team of failing to provide adequate care in the weeks leading up to his death at a home outside Buenos Aires. Maradona died at age 60 from cardiac arrest while recovering from surgery for a blood clot on the brain.

The defendants, who deny all accusations, were charged with culpable homicide, a charge similar to involuntary manslaughter in that it im-

plies the accused were aware of the risk caused by their alleged reckless conduct and ignored it. Maradona's daughter said that Luque, psychiatrist Agustina Cosachov and psychologist Carlos Diaz were responsible for Maradona's health and the home confinement where, she said, the star's health deteriorated day by day without anyone apparently remedying it.

Luque's defense alleges that Gianinna Maradona and her sister Dalma - the former soccer star's eldest daughters from his relationship with Claudia Villafañe - were responsible for not acting with the necessary speed to care for their father during a long process of declining health.

'We will run even under 2:01'

Honestly, it's hard despite marathon record run: Lokedi

BOSTON, April 22, (AP): Maybe the Boston Marathon isn't that hard after all.

After a second straight year of blistering times, a course record on the men's side, and a pair of repeat winners, back-to-back champion Sharon Lokedi said it won't be the last time that runners ignore the hype and the hills and attack the historic Boston course.

"Honestly, it is hard," she insisted Tuesday, a day after running the second-fastest time ever in the women's race to win for the second year in a row. "But I think it's also people are starting to realize that if (you get good conditions), it just makes for a really good day. And even, you know, a fast one."

Defending men's champion John Korir took advantage of cool weather and a tailwind on Monday to outrun the strongest field in race history and win in a course record 2 hours, 1 minute, 52 seconds. That was 70 seconds faster than Geoffrey Mutai's then-world best in 2011, and the fifth-fastest marathon of all time.

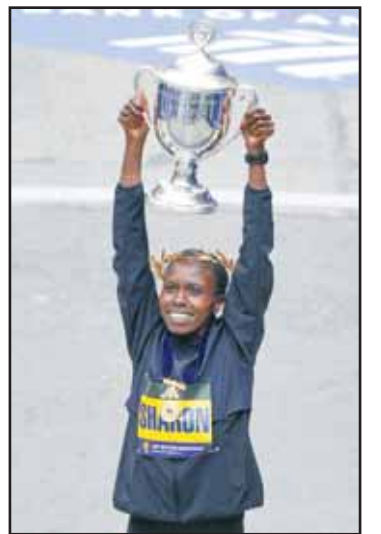
Korir, who ran alone for the last 5 miles, said Tuesday that he could have gone even faster if another runner had been out front with him.

"I think we will run even under 2:01," he said. "Because if someone were to push me, we would have tried to run away from each other, and that is why I think it will be faster."

With its hills and unpredictable weather, Boston has always been known as a course that rewards strategy more than outright footspeed. Eliud Kipchoge, the world record holder at the time and considered the greatest marathoner ever, flopped in his only Boston attempt, in 2023; Korir's brother, Wesley, won Boston in 2012 on a hot day with a time that was 10 minutes slower than John ran on Monday.

"In Boston, I don't care that much about the time," John Korir said Tuesday. "But now I think from today I will be caring about the times when I come back."

Lokedi, who lowered the women's course record by more than 2 1/2 minutes last year, finished in 2:18:51 on Monday - the second-fastest time ever in the Boston women's race. Runner-up Loice Chemnung was 44 seconds back



Boston Marathon women's division winner Sharon Lokedi of Kenya, hoists the trophy at the finish line of the Boston Marathon in Boston. (AP)

- a performance that would have been a course record before Lokedi's 2:17:22 last year.

The top three men all finished faster than Mutai's 2:03:02.

Runners looking for fast times will likely still prefer the flatter courses in Chicago and Berlin. (Kelvin Kiptum ran 2:00:35 in Chicago in 2023 and Ruth Chepngetich set the women's mark there at 2:09:56 in '24.)

Still, the assault on the record books may encourage future Boston runners to go for it.

"You put it in your head, 'Oh, it's going to be hard, it's going to be hard,' and then you come in here and you have everything that you need: You get really good competitors, you have people that want to push, and people that want to race, and you get good conditions," Lokedi said. "And it just makes it for a really good day and even, you know, a fast one."

Korir, who dedicated last year's win to the Transcend Talent Academy in his native Kenya, said the school will again get 10% of his winnings, which this year include a \$50,000 bonus for the course record. Korir said he received videos of the students cheering him on.

"(It's) to help them to go to school, and study, and have a better future," he said. "And one day, one time to become a champion like me."

CAF says, three countries to host Africa Cup of Nations as planned

ALGIERS, April 22, (KUNA): The Confederation of African Football (CAF) announced that the Africa Cup of Nations (ACN) due in 2027 will be jointly hosted by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda as planned, ruling out any intention to postpone the tournament or hold it in another country.

The statement came in response to media reports saying that there is a possible delay to the event for

two years due to challenges related to infrastructure and preparations of the host countries to receive 24 teams.

In a statement, CAF President Dr Patrice Motsepe denied these reports, affirming that the event would start as scheduled.

The CAF earlier announced the approval of a new system regarding organizing the ACN every four years as of the 2028 edition.

Best of the Rest

Fishlock to retire at end of season: Jess Fishlock, who has played for the Seattle Reign since the first National Women's Soccer League season in 2013, will retire at the end of the season.

Fishlock, who signed a one-year deal to remain with the club, will be honored when Seattle hosts North Carolina on Oct. 2. The 39-year-old midfielder's final regular-season match is set for Nov. 1.

"It's hard to put into words what Seattle and this club mean to me," Fishlock, the Reign captain, said in a statement Tuesday. "This is where I've grown, where I've fought, where I've experienced some of the best moments of my career. We've built something that goes far beyond football, and I'm so proud to have been a part of it from day one. I'll never take for granted the people, the fans and the city that have supported me through it all, and I'm going to give everything I have in this final season."

Fishlock's 49 goals rank second on the club's career list and her 30 assists rank first. The Welsh international was the 2021 NWSL MVP and is a seven-time all-league selection.

"She's not only one of the best players in NWSL history, but one of the most influential figures our game has seen," Reign general manager Leslie Gillmore said.

Fishlock played 19 years for Wales before retiring from international play last October. She made 166 appearances and scored 48 goals, the most for Wales among women or men. (AP)

SPORTS

Lakers extend series lead as Rockets misfire again

Trail Blazers even series with Spurs; Wemby exits with concussion

LOS ANGELES, April 22, (AP): LeBron James had 28 points, eight rebounds and seven assists, and the short-handed Los Angeles Lakers outlasted the Houston Rockets for a 101-94 victory and a stunning 2-0 lead in their first-round playoff series.

Marcus Smart had 25 points with five 3-pointers and seven assists for the Lakers, who have twice overcome the absences of Luka Dončić and Austin Reaves with a comprehensive team effort led by the 41-year-old James. Los Angeles did it in Game 2 despite the return of Kevin Durant, who scored just three of his 23 points in the second half against the Lakers' tenacious defense.

"We executed the game plan offensively and defensively, shored up some of our mistakes from Game 1, and just got into a dogfight," James said. "When we have two big guns out like we have, we've all got to pick up our play, and that's all it's about. We're all just trying to make contributions on offense and seize the opportunity."

Luke Kennard scored 23 points for Los Angeles, which nursed a small lead throughout the fourth quarter of

Game 2. Smart found James streaking down the lane for a theatrical two-handed dunk with 55 seconds left, and Kennard added two late free throws to ice it.

Alperen Sengun had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the fifth-seeded Rockets, who again struggled offensively, even with Durant making his Houston playoff debut. Jabari Smith Jr. scored 18 points and Amen Thompson had 16, but the Rockets made only 40.4% of their shots and managed just seven 3-pointers.

Three days after he missed the series opener with a right knee bruise, Durant took only 12 shots and had nine turnovers to begin his fourth career playoff matchup against James. The superstars previously met in the NBA Finals in 2012, 2017 and 2018.

Trail Blazers 106, Spurs 103

In San Antonio, Scoot Henderson scored 31 points and the Portland Trail Blazers took advantage after a scary injury to Spurs star Victor Wembanyama, rallying for a victory over San Antonio to even their Western Conference playoff series at one game apiece.

Wembanyama was diagnosed with a concussion after he tumbled face-first when he was fouled by Jrue Holiday and his jaw slammed into the floor. He did not return after the injury in the second quarter and entered the NBA's concussion protocol, which raises the possibility the versatile 7-foot-4 center could miss multiple games.

The second-seeded Spurs looked

like they could win without Wemby, building a 14-point lead early in the fourth quarter before their offense stagnated.

Portland held San Antonio without a field goal for the final 3:37 as the Blazers closed the game on an 11-2 run. Robert Williams III converted an alley-oop dunk with 12 seconds left for a 104-101 lead after Deni Avdija muscled through the paint and fed him the ball.

Holiday had 16 points and nine assists. Avdija scored 14 and Williams finished with 11.

Stephon Castle led the Spurs with 18 points and De'Aaron Fox added 17. Devin Vassell, who finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds, missed a 3-pointer with 2 seconds remaining.

Game 3 is Friday at Portland. After scoring 35 points in the Spurs' Game 1 win, Wembanyama had five points, four rebounds, one blocked shot and one assist in 12 minutes.

76ers 111, Celtics 97

In Boston, V.J. Edgecombe had 30 points and 10 rebounds while playing through pain after taking a hard fall on his back early in the game. Tyrese Maxey scored 29 points and the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Boston Celtics to tie their playoff series at one game apiece.

Edgecombe made six of the 76ers' 19 3-pointers. Maxey also had nine assists as Philadelphia bounced back after getting blown out 123-91 in Game 1. Edgecombe is the first rookie to record at least 30 points and 10 rebounds in a playoff game since Tim Duncan on



Portland Trail Blazers forward Kris Murray (24) tries to pass the ball as he falls past San Antonio Spurs guard Stephon Castle (5) during the first half in Game 2 of a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series in San Antonio. (AP)

May 5, 1998.

The series shifts to Philadelphia for Game 3 on Friday.

The Celtics cut a seven-point deficit at the start of the fourth quarter

to 91-89 before an 11-0 run put the 76ers back in front 102-89 with just over four minutes to play. The Celtics pulled their starters with a little more than a minute remaining.

Boston was only 13 of 47 from the 3-point line and shot 39.3% from the field overall, while committing 13 turnovers leading to 16 points by the 76ers.

A new 'Rafa' rises in Spain

Venus eyes French Open after 10th straight loss

MADRID, April 22, (AP): Venus Williams has her sights on the French Open.

The 45-year-old former world No. 1 said after losing her 10th straight singles match that she is considering playing at Roland Garros next month.

"Yeah, I mean, to get my feet dirty, this was a great start," she said in her post-match news conference at the Madrid Open. "I'm not able to play Rome, I have other commitments, unfortunately, so I'm really super sad about that, actually. My husband is Italian, so we feel sad that we can't be there. So we would love to keep it going on the clay."

Williams, a seven-time Grand Slam champion, lost 6-2, 6-4 to 20-year-old Spaniard Kaitlin Quevedo.

Williams hadn't played in Madrid in five years. Her last tournament on clay had been at the 2021 French Open, when she lost her first match to Ekaterina Alexandrova.

"All these things take adjustments," Williams said. "I started my practice on clay a couple weeks after Miami. I haven't really played on clay in years. But I enjoy the clay, it's fun. I played against a very inspired opponent today."

Williams' last win on tour was against Peyton Stearns in the round of 16 of an WTA 500 event in Washington in July 2025. This year, she had already lost in Auckland, Hobart, the Australian Open, Austin, Indian Wells and Miami.

Quevedo earned her first WTA 1000 main-draw win, and just the second tour-level victory of her career. She became the youngest Spanish player to win a main-draw match at the Madrid Open.

"I was so surprised," Quevedo said. "I didn't know that was going to happen. I'm just really happy that I was able to play against such a legend on this amazing court for the first time. It was a privilege, and I'm just really happy to be here."

Carlos Alcaraz is only 22 years old but there's already talk about the next generation of talented Spanish tennis players.

And one of them has the same first name of all-time great Rafael Nadal - 19-year-old Rafael Jódar, who has been making headlines in Spain and across the tennis world thanks to a rapid rise through the rankings.

Jódar, who like Nadal also goes by the "Rafa" nickname, made it to the top 50 just ahead of his debut at the Madrid Open on Wednesday.

Another promising star is 20-year-old Martin Landaluce, who just recently broke into the top 100 in the men's rankings.

They will be among the crowd favorites in the Spanish capital after Alcaraz withdrew because of a wrist injury.

"The two of them will mutually help each other to keep improving and reach the top," Alcaraz told the ATP Tour. "They have a great future."

Jódar was outside the top 600 just a year ago. He entered the top 100 in March and is up to No. 42 in the world in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday.

"I try to handle the pressure as I have done since I was little," Jódar said. "I've always been a very calm person both on and off the court. I know there'll be moments when things don't go as well as they have in recent tournaments. In those moments, you prove whether you're mentally strong. Those



In this file photo, Rafael Jódar of Spain plays a forehand return to Rei Sakamoto of Japan during their first round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia. (AP)

moments will also make me stronger."

Jódar advanced to the semifinals in Barcelona after three straight-set wins. He lost in three sets to eventual champion Arthur Fils in the semifinals. The Spaniard won his first tour-level trophy in Morocco earlier this month.

"I knew I was doing things right," Jódar said. "These last few months have gone very quickly for me and I've played a lot of matches. I can't say I could have imagined it. But I'm very happy to have started the clay swing like this, having played so many matches gives me a lot of confidence for this Madrid tournament."

Jódar, a U.S. Open boys' singles champion, competed for the University of Virginia last year before deciding to turn pro.

The Madrid native will make his debut in the Madrid Open against 109th-ranked Jesper de Jong. Jódar said he used to come to the Madrid Open as a spectator when he was younger. He also joined Spain's 2024 Davis Cup team to help the team train.

"I've never set myself a goal," Jódar told the ATP. "I have to take it tournament by tournament, it's my first year on tour. I think I'm still a young player and I'm discovering a lot at these tournaments. I need to gain experience, compete against these kinds of players. I don't set targets for the future, just take it tournament by tournament and do my best."

Alcaraz, a seven-time Grand Slam champion, called Jódar "an outstanding player."

"I've been following him and I think he's broken into the tour really quickly," Alcaraz said.

Jódar and Landaluce both participated in the Next Gen ATP Finals, the tournament that features the world's top 20-and-under singles players of the ATP. Jódar beat Landaluce, but both failed to advance past the round robin.

Landaluce, a member of the Rafa Nadal Academy, arrived at the Madrid Open ranked No. 99 after having reached the quarterfinals in Miami for his best-ever finish in an ATP Masters 1000 event. He fell to Jiri Lehecka in the last eight.

'This award means a lot'

SGA wins Clutch Player of Year award in landslide, topping Murray, Edwards

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander's trophy haul keeps growing.

Gilgeous-Alexander, the Oklahoma City guard who is the reigning MVP and NBA Finals MVP, was the overwhelming and nearly unanimous pick as the Clutch Player of the Year for this season, the NBA announced.

It's the first of what could be several awards for Gilgeous-Alexander in the coming weeks. He's the heavy favorite to win a second straight MVP trophy - and because he's a finalist there, he's also a lock to make the All-NBA team for a fourth straight year.

"This award means a lot," Gilgeous-Alexander said on NBC Sports, which aired the award announcement. "To get this award, you have to help your team win games late and what I'm about more than anything is winning games."

Gilgeous-Alexander got 96 of a possible 100 first-place votes. Jamal Murray of Denver was second, one point ahead of Anthony Edwards of Minnesota.

Edwards didn't reach the 65-game eligibility standard for most league awards like MVP and the All-NBA team - and unsuccessfully appealed for a waiver that would have put him on those ballots - but his candidacy for the clutch award wasn't affected by that rule.

Instead, the finalists for the clutch award were decided by a survey of the league's coaches. That whittled the group down to 14 names, which were then placed onto the ballot that a panel of 100 reporters and broadcasters who cover the league filled out last week to decide the various awards.

Gilgeous-Alexander has been a contender for the clutch award since



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander runs back on defense after making a basket during the first half in Game 1 of a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series against the Phoenix Suns in Oklahoma City. (AP)

it was added to the league's slate of trophies; he was third last season, eighth in 2024 and seventh in 2023.

And now, it's his. "I'm proud I get to hoist it," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "It means I'm effective out there."

Gilgeous-Alexander becomes the fourth player to win the clutch award, which was added in tribute to Jerry West - the inspiration for the NBA's logo and the player long known as "Mr. Clutch" as a nod to his exploits when the outcome of games was on the line.

De'Aaron Fox (then of Sacramento, now of San Antonio) was the first clutch award recipient in 2023, followed by Golden State's Stephen Curry in 2024 and New York's Jalen Brunson last season. Brunson was a nominee again this year, finishing fifth.

Detroit's Cade Cunningham was fourth, followed by Brunson, Denver's Nikola Jokic, Philadelphia's Tyrese Maxey, the Los Angeles Lakers' Luka Dončić, Houston's Kevin Durant and the Los Angeles Clippers' Kawhi Leonard.

Gilgeous-Alexander, Brunson and Jokic are now the only players

to get votes in the clutch balloting in all four seasons of the award's existence.

Curry, Boston's Jayson Tatum and Dallas' Kyrie Irving saw their three-year streaks as clutch vote-getters end because of injuries; Curry missed about half the season, Tatum missed most of the season and Irving was sidelined for the entire season.

For a play to be considered clutch, by the NBA's definition, these are the criteria: The score differential has to be five points or less, and the game has to be in either the final five minutes of the fourth quarter or in overtime.

All three of the leading vote-getters had compelling statistical arguments for the award:

- Gilgeous-Alexander led the league with 175 points in clutch times, plus was ninth with 21 assists in those situations. The Thunder went 20-7 in the 27 clutch games in which he played, and outscored opponents by 93 points in those clutch situations with him on the floor.

- Edwards shot 56.5% from the field in clutch moments, the best of any of the league's 19 players that had at least 85 clutch-time points this season.

- Murray was second in clutch points with 166 plus led the league with 30 clutch-time assists.

The clutch award was the second to be handed out this season. San Antonio's Victor Wembanyama was the unanimous winner of Defensive Player of the Year, which was announced Monday.

"It's just very meaningful to me," Wembanyama said about being the first unanimous winner of the DPOY trophy. "It means that's there no place for debate. It means that everybody agrees upon something."

More World Cup seats to go on sale after FIFA adds costlier ticket categories

WASHINGTON, April 22, (AP): FIFA is putting more World Cup tickets on sale after angering some fans by adding new, more expensive categories.

Soccer's governing body announced it will make more tickets available at 11 a.m. EDT Wednesday for all 104 games in Categories 1, 2 and 3 plus the new "front category" pricing it added this month.

The new category sparked online complaints from fans who said they thought the better seats in the categories they had bought tickets for were withheld and they were assigned less favorable locations.

FIFA in December put tickets on sale at prices ranging from \$140 for Category 3 in the first round to \$8,680 for the final, then raised prices to

as much as \$10,990 when sales reopened on April 1.

FIFA did not respond to an April 9 request for comment about the new ticket categories it added.

Also Tuesday, The Athletic reported that tickets sales are lagging for the U.S. opener against Paraguay on June 12 at Inglewood, California. It said a document distributed to local organizers dated April 10 said 40,934 tickets had been purchased for the U.S.-Paraguay game and 50,661 for the Iran-New Zealand contest on April 15. FIFA projects SoFi's World Cup capacity at about 69,650, noting it may change.

FIFA's December sale priced U.S.-Paraguay tickets at \$1,120, \$1,940 and \$2,735, and Iran-New Zealand seats at \$140, \$380 and \$450.

Best of the Rest

Forest loses Hudson for rest of season: Nottingham Forest winger Callum Hudson-Odoi will miss the remainder of the season after having surgery on his right quadriceps muscle.

The relegation-threatened Premier League club said the 25-year-old Englishman "is expected to return to full training during the preseason." Hudson-Odoi, who has scored six goals in total this season, was injured in Forest's Europa League quarterfinal game against Porto last Thursday.

Forest is five points clear of the relegation zone with five games left in the Premier League season. The team faces Aston Villa in the Europa League semifinals.

Hudson-Odoi said on social media that his surgery was successful and that he will "be back stronger and better than before." The former Chelsea player has made three appearances for England. He's also been a target of Ghana, which has reportedly tried to persuade him to switch al-

legiance. (AP)

France to host World Cup in 2031: Victor Wembanyama will have a chance to play a home World Cup in 2031.

France was awarded the hosting rights to the 2031 men's tournament by basketball's governing body FIBA on Wednesday, with Japan getting the 2030 Women's World Cup.

Japan and France are both elite organizers of global scale events, having hosted the two most recent summer Olympic Games, in 2020 and 2024 respectively, FIBA said.

Wembanyama was one of the main attractions of the Paris Olympics as the San Antonio Spurs star led France to a silver medal, scoring 26 points in the final against the United States.

The French cities of Lyon, Lille and Paris will organize the Aug. 29-Sept. 14 men's tournament, with the final phase to be played in the capital.

FIBA said the 2030 women's tournament will be held Nov. 26-Dec. 8 in the Japanese capital of Tokyo.

Japan's women also won silver at the Tokyo

Olympics in 2020.

Japan hosted the 2006 men's world championship and was a co-host in 2023. France will organize the tournament for the first time.

The next women's World Cup will be held in September in Berlin while the 2027 men's World Cup will be hosted by Qatar. (AP)

Shanaka banned from PSL for 1 year: Sri Lanka allrounder Dasun Shanaka was banned for one year from the Pakistan Super League after breaking his agreement to join the Indian Premier League.

Shanaka was picked by defending champions the Lahore Qalandars at the PSL auction for \$27,000. But he went to the IPL's Rajasthan Royals as a replacement for England's Sam Curran for \$214,000. Shanaka, who returned to IPL after three years, has yet to play in the ongoing IPL.

Shanaka withdrew from the PSL unilaterally and the Pakistan Cricket Board said it "constituted a clear breach of both the player's registration terms and the tripartite agreement." (AP)

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Coventry City players celebrate sealing the league title following the EFL Championship soccer match between Coventry City and Portsmouth in Coventry, England. Coventry won 5-1. (AP)

Sports

Delegation marks proud moment at the opening ceremony

Flag-bearers shine as aquathlon opens Kuwait campaign at Asian Beach Games



Left: Glimpse of the Kuwaiti athletes' preparations for the Beach Games. Right: Hessa Al-Failakawi and Nasser Bourjeeb carry the national flag during the opening ceremony of the Asian Beach Games in China.

SANYA, China, April 22: The sixth edition of the Asian Beach Games officially got underway in Sanya, Hainan Province, China, with athletes from 45 countries across Asia taking part.

Kuwait's delegation marked a proud moment at the opening ceremony after teqball star Hessa Al-Failakawi and climber Nasser Bourjeeb were chosen to carry the national flag. The selection highlights the growing status of modern and emerging sports in Kuwait.

Both athletes expressed pride in the honour, saying raising Kuwait's flag on the international stage provides a strong boost for the team as they aim for competitive performances and top finishes.

Kuwait's competition schedule begins with Abdulaziz Al-Huwaidi and Mohammed Bu Khalaf taking part in the aquathlon event – a demanding race combining swimming and running – set for 3:00 a.m. The discipline is considered one of the toughest beach events

due to its physical intensity and the need to adapt to weather and sea conditions.

Meanwhile, young sailors Abdulaziz Al-Mansour and Zakaria Bu Hamed will begin their campaign in the Optimist class at 8:00 a.m. The junior sailing category is expected to feature strong competition from Asia's emerging talents and serves as a key development platform before athletes progress to higher levels.

Resilient Kuwait Club reaches Challenge League final

Cambodia's Svay Rieng looms

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

BISHKEK, April 22: Kuwait Club secured a place in the final of the AFC Challenge League after overturning a one-goal deficit to defeat Kyrgyz side Muras United 2-1 in their semifinal clash at Dolon Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek.

The Kuwaiti side will face Cambodia's Svay Rieng in the final on May 9, with the host venue yet to be confirmed.

Head coach Nebojsa Jovovic retained the same lineup that featured in the quarterfinal victory over Oman's Al-Shabab. Khaled Al-Rashidi started in goal, while the defense included Mohammed Furaih, Arsene Zola, Mehdi Barrahma, and Ali Hussein. The midfield trio of Ahmad Al-Dhafiri, Amr Abdel Fattah, and Reda Hani supported Mohammed Marhoon, with Mohammed Daham and Yassine Khenissi leading the attack.

The opening stages were cautious, with both teams showing defensive discipline. Kuwait controlled possession but struggled

to create clear chances, while Muras looked to strike on the counter.

Kuwait Club threatened early through Barrahma, whose header went narrowly wide, before Amr missed a key opportunity inside the box. Muras gradually grew into the game and broke the deadlock in the 36th minute through captain Amir Zapparov, who curled a superb free kick into the top corner.

Kuwait Club responded strongly, increasing the tempo and pushing forward in search of an equalizer. Their efforts paid off just before halftime when Marhoon finished a well-worked move following a precise assist from Amr.

The visitors carried their momentum into the second half and completed the turnaround shortly after the restart. Barrahma rose to meet a corner from Amr and headed home to give Kuwait a 2-1 lead.

Muras pressed for a response, but Kuwait's solid defensive organization and the alertness of Al-Rashidi kept the hosts at bay. Kuwait continued to pose a threat on the counter, with Amr striking the post after an impressive individual effort.

Kuwait Club managed the closing stages with composure, sealing a deserved victory and booking its place in the final.



Kuwait Club and Muras United players fighting for the ball.

Vinicius, Mbappé power Real back on track

MADRID, April 22, (AP): Kylian Mbappé and Vinicius Júnior each scored as Real Madrid ended a four-game winless streak by defeating Alaves 2-1.

It was Madrid's first game since it was eliminated by Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League. Madrid lost 2-1 at home and 4-3 in Germany in the second leg. The team's last two Spanish league matches had been a 1-1 home draw against Girona and a 2-1 loss at Mallorca.

"We have six games left," Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa said. "The goal is to win all of them, regardless of what happens. Every game counts."

It was slow start for Madrid on Tuesday and the crowd at the Bernabeu looked anxious as Alaves had a few scoring chances early. Part of the fans jeered as the team struggled. There were some boos after the final whistle as well after Alaves scored late.

Mbappé broke the deadlock in the 30th minute with a shot that deflected on an Alaves defender and fooled goalkeeper Antonio Sivera. Mbappé, the league's leading scorer with 24 goals, hadn't found the net in

a league game since February.

Vinicius added to Madrid's lead with a long-range strike in the 50th. The Brazil forward hadn't scored in his last six games between club and country. He was among the players jeered by some of the fans before



Alaves' Nahuel Tenaglia tries to block Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior during a La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Alaves in Madrid, Spain. (AP)

and during the match. After scoring, he raised his hands in a gesture apparently apologizing to the fans, and there was some applause from the stands to the player.

"Vinicius puts in a tremendous effort, carrying the team on his shoulders," Arbeloa said. "We can't deny his attitude. He never hides. He feels a deep connection to the club, and I'm happy when the fans reward him with applause."

Eduardo Camavinga, who earned his 150th win with Madrid, also was targeted by the Madrid fans before and during the game.

Alaves, sitting one point above the relegation zone, pulled one closer with a goal by Toni Martínez in second-half stoppage time.

Alaves has won only one of its last nine league matches. The lone triumph came at Celta Vigo in March.

Madrid and Brazil defender Éder Militão had to be replaced just before halftime with an injury that Madrid said did not appear to be serious.

Spain goalkeeper Unai Simón saved a penalty kick and made a few other key stops to help ninth-place Athletic Bilbao hold on for a 1-0 win against midtable Osasuna at home. Mallorca drew 1-1 with visiting Valencia. Fifth-place Real Betis won 3-2 at 11th-place Girona, with Rodrigo Riquelme scoring an 80th-minute winner.

Machida beats Shabab Al-Ahli to reach Champions League final

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, April 22, (AP): Japan's Machida Zelvia advanced to the final of the Asian Champions League Elite by beating Shabab Al-Ahli of the United Arab Emirates 1-0.

Yuki Soma's first-half goal secured a meeting with defending champion Al-Ahli Saudi on Saturday in Jeddah.

Soma struck in the 12th minute, pouncing on a weak back pass from defender Bogdan Planic to shoot past goalkeeper Hamad Al-Meqbaali.

Kauan Santos nearly equalized 10 minutes before halftime when he hit the crossbar with a powerful effort from outside the area.

In the 92nd minute, Guilherme Bala appeared to have forced extra time with a long-range strike, but the goal was disallowed after a lengthy VAR review because play restarted before Machida completed a substitution.

Machida is aiming to emulate the Western Sydney Wanderers' performance in 2014 of winning the continental club title on debut.

Al-Ahli Saudi beat Vissel Kobe 2-1 to reach its second straight final. The Jeddah-based club beat Kawasaki Frontale of Japan 2-0 in the 2025 final in May of last year in front of 60,000 home fans at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium.

All knockout-stage matches this month have been played in Jeddah after Western Zone 2026 playoffs were postponed in March because of the war in the Middle East.