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STABILITY OPENS DOORS TO WEDDINGS AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS

Kuwait turns social scene back on

Trump orders shoot-to-kill on mine-laying boats in Hormuz

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (Agencies): Social gatherings, weddings and theatrical performances will be allowed to resume in Kuwait starting Friday, the Ministry of Interior announced on Thursday.

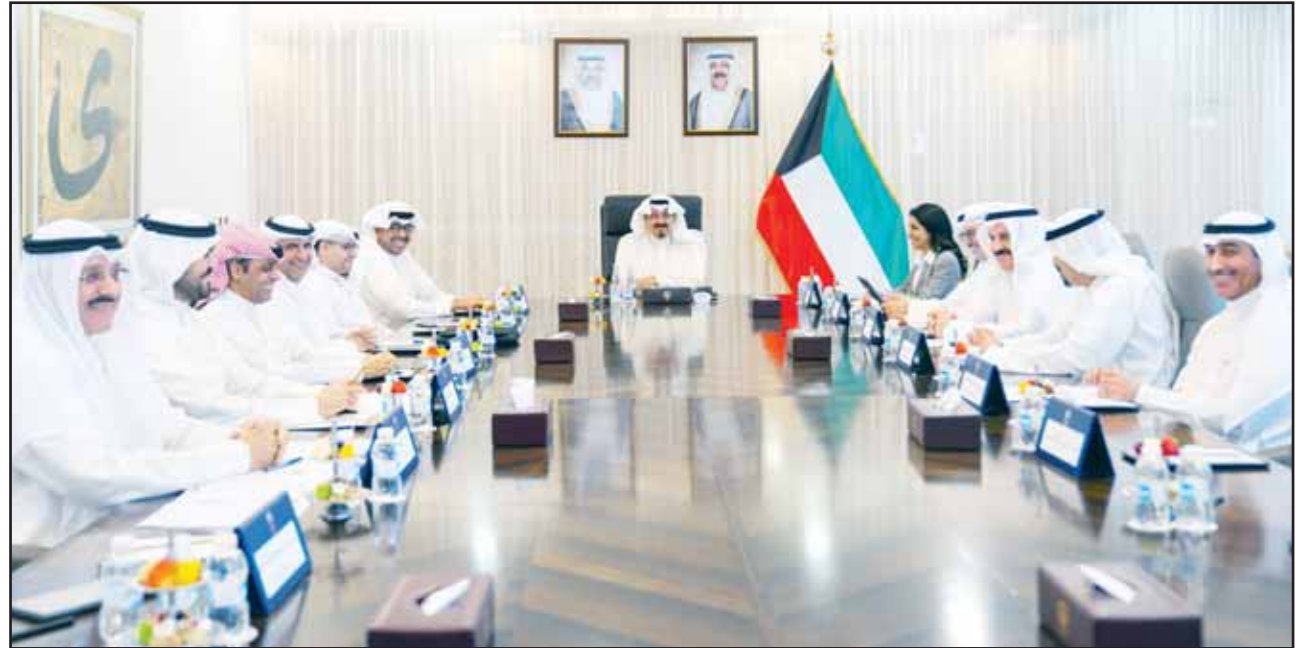
The ministry said the decision comes amid prevailing stability, aiming to strike a balance between the resumption of social activities and the maintenance of security.

In latest development, President Donald Trump said Thursday he has ordered the U.S. military to "shoot and kill" small Iranian boats that deploy mines to choke traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump's post on social media came shortly after the U.S. military seized another tanker associated with the smuggling of Iranian oil, ratcheting up a standoff with Tehran over the strait through which 20% of all crude oil and natural gas traded passes.

"I have ordered the United States Navy to shoot and kill any boat, small boats though they may be...that is putting mines in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz," Trump posted. "There is to be no hesitation. Additionally, our mine 'sweepers' are clearing the Strait right now."

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His Highness the Prime Minister Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs back-to-back meetings, steering Kuwait's dual agenda of government restructuring and fast-tracking major development projects. PM Diwan photos

Kuwait PM leads dual drive: Governance reset, faster development

State overhaul syncs with mega development rollout

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chaired a meeting to discuss and follow up on the restructuring of government agencies and public institutions in Kuwait.

According to a press release issued by the Diwan of the Prime Minister, the meeting represents a strategic step aimed at modernizing the public administration system, streamlining government entities, and enhancing their efficiency.

His Highness the Prime Minister issued directives to study the implementation details and review the relevant legislation and laws related to the restructuring of government agencies and public institutions, ensuring the desired outcomes of this project such as increased administrative effectiveness, improved

public services, and the achievement of comprehensive administrative reform.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Rafaei, Advisor at the Prime

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Rain, thunder and dust queue up for weekend

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): The Meteorological Department has forecast scattered light rain beginning Thursday, with conditions expected to intensify from Friday evening and continue intermittently until Sunday morning, accompanied by dusty winds. Daytime weather will be relatively hot, while nights over the weekend are expected to be moderate.

Acting Director of the department, Dhirar Al-Ali, told KUNA that weather maps and numerical models indicate the formation of cumulus clouds, bringing chances of light rain starting today. Rainfall may become heavier and thundery at times from Friday evening, continuing in intervals through Sunday morning, along with active winds that may raise dust, particularly in open areas.

On Friday, the weather is expected to remain hot and partly cloudy to cloudy during the day, turning moderate at night with chances of scattered rain.

Saturday's forecast indicates hot and cloudy to partly cloudy conditions, with chances of scattered rain that may be thundery at times. Nighttime will be moderate and cloudy, with continued chances of thunderstorms and possible fog formation in the evening.

Delivery sector under scrutiny

PAM sounds trafficking alarm

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has referred an incident related to a gathering of workers and suspected human trafficking to the Criminal Investigation Department.

In an official statement, PAM explained that it received a report of a gathering of workers in front of its main building. The emergency response team, responsible for handling reports and mass work stoppages, was immediately activated, and coordination was carried out with the relevant authorities to take the necessary measures.

The specialized team was deployed and statements were taken from the workers to determine the circumstances of the incident. The investigation results revealed several violations and indications of suspected criminal activity related to the exploitation of workers, in addition to signs of suspected human trafficking, particularly in the delivery sector.

PAM immediately took the necessary measures, including implementing precautionary steps and requirements to protect the workers' safety and well-being. The workers were subsequently housed in a workers' shelter.

In order to provide the necessary care and protection, the entire incident was referred to the General Department of Criminal Investigation for the required legal action. This falls within PAM's supervisory role to determine whether there are any suspicions of human trafficking or forced labor.

PAM affirmed its continued monitoring of the case and its commitment to taking all necessary measures, in coordination with the relevant authorities, to ensure the protection of workers' rights and the enforcement of applicable laws and regulations in the country.



Officials and ambassadors from GCC member states and Jordan join U.S. counterparts for a group photo in Washington following high-level talks on regional security and defense cooperation, with Ambassador Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah representing Kuwait at the meeting. KUNA photo

Sheikha Al-Zain leads Kuwait at Arab-US meeting in Washington

WASHINGTON, April 23, (KUNA): Ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council member states and Jordan, on one hand, and US officials, on the other, convened their second round of talks at the Department of War in Washington on Wednesday evening.

Kuwait Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Al-Zain Al-Sabah represented her country at the meeting chaired by Undersecretary of War for Policy Elbridge A. Colby, according to a statement from Kuwait Embassy.

The meeting focused on the latest developments of the situation in the

Middle East and the joint efforts to enhance cooperation, particularly in the defense area.

Both sides underscored the importance of the strategic partnership and the close cooperation to strengthen regional security and stability, the statement noted.

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Online classes still in force, says MoE

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Education confirmed that the educational process is currently continuing online until further notice, and no decision or change has been issued

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MoJ, PAMA at 50 pct capacity

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA) announced that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has approved its request to increase the number of employees working in person at PAMA headquarters to 50 percent, in line with public interest requirements and operational needs, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

The redistribution of employees will be determined by the relevant authorities.

PAMA clarified that the decision provides for the 50-percent attendance rate to be divided into two groups (A and B) on a rotating basis, with each group working one day followed by one day off, ensuring continuity of operations. The daily rotation mechanism will be set by the competent authorities.

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Other Voices

The Strait of Hormuz then and now

By Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

On April 20, 1980, Al Seyassah published a striking headline, "Closing the Strait of Hormuz Means World War III." The analysis reflected the logic of its time. Some dismissed the threat as little more than psychological warfare and argued that closing the strait was not technically feasible, and that no regional actor could truly do it. Others warned that if it ever happened, the world would lose 12 million barrels of crude a day and slide toward a global conflagration.

These were the assumptions of 1980. Closure was either impossible or instantly catastrophic.

By April 2026, both assumptions had been overtaken by events. What was once treated as a theoretical scenario had become a practical instrument of disruption.

Iran showed that it could impede traffic through one of the world's most sensitive energy chokepoints. Yet the second prediction also proved wrong. The disruption did not ignite a world war. Instead, the region entered a more complex reality. The Gulf itself did not fully burn, yet the Gulf and the wider world now live with sustained instability, economic pressure, and controlled escalation.

There is another continuity, and it may be the more uncomfortable one. In 1980, Al Seyassah noted that Washington had not sought coordination with the Gulf states over potential measures against Iran. Forty-six years later, that concern still holds. The United States continues to shape major policies whose costs are first borne by the Gulf, often without treating Gulf states as full partners in their design.

The most difficult comparison between 1980 and 2026 is not only that Iran proved capable of disrupting Hormuz. It is that the Gulf still pays for decisions it does not fully make.



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

Kuwait and Pakistan emphasize continued strategic engagement

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology and Acting Minister of Information and Cul-

ture Omar Al-Omar on Thursday discussed with Pakistani Ambassador to

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Ministry of Communications photo
Minister of Communications receives Pakistan Ambassador to Kuwait.

9 **KFH named 'Best Bank for Sustaining Communities in the Middle East' by Global Finance**



8 **Boubyan Bank reports net profits of KD 26.4 million for Q1, 2026**



Prayer Timings

Fajr	03:50	Asr	15:22
Sunrise	05:14	Maghrib	18:19
Zohr	11:46	Isha	19:41

Candidates for teaching positions must stick to work locations: minister

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei recently issued an administrative decree mandating that candidates for teaching positions must adhere to the work locations assigned to them by the Educational Affairs Sector, in accordance with the needs of schools, the required specializations and vacancies, according to press release. This measure aims to regulate the appointment process, maintain job stability in the educational field, ensure the efficient distribution of staff, and instill institutional discipline.



Al-Tabtabaei

The Ministry of Education affirmed that the decision is in line with its commitment to regulate transfer requests for the teaching staff in its schools in order to guarantee the stability of teachers at the beginning of each academic year and the continuity of the educational process without being affected by frequent transfers.

Candidates are also required to complete a formal undertaking form committing to the position for which they were nominated and to the assigned work location. This undertaking includes a declaration that they will not submit or consider transfer requests unless three years have passed since their appointment. This

measures aims to ensure professional stability and balance the distribution of teachers. The ministry stressed that these procedures are in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. 117/2025 regarding the procedures and regulations for the transfer of teaching and supervisory staff. It added that this decision is an organizational step aimed at raising the efficiency of human resource management and instilling professional discipline in schools.

MoCI detects 664 business violations in multiple raids

Ahmadi tops list of governorates: report

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) conducted 340 judicial seizure operations, resulting in the discovery of 664 violations in various governorates from Feb 28 to March 30, amidst the repercussions of the American-Iranian conflict and the tightening of market controls.

Official data issued by the Commercial Control and Consumer Protection Department and published on the official account of the ministry on the 'X' platform indicated that the most common violation was failure to use Arabic with 205 reports or 40 percent of the total violations, followed by failure to display prices with 128 reports (25 percent), absence of a clear notice explaining the exchange and return policy with 77 reports (15 percent), non-compliance with the decision to fix food prices with 57 reports (11 percent), and misleading advertisements containing inaccurate data or prices with 44

reports (nine percent). At the governorate level, Ahmadi Governorate recorded the highest number of violations with 202 -- 96 for not using Arabic, 36 for not displaying exchange and return policies, 34 for not displaying prices, 20 related to food prices, and 16 for invoicing information. Jahra Governorate is in second place with 148 violations -- 51 for failing to adhere to fixed food prices, 34 for not displaying prices, 30 for not using Arabic, 19 related to the sale of fruits and vegetables, and 14 for not issuing invoices. Farwaniya Governorate is third with 119 violations -- 44 for not using Arabic, 36 for not displaying prices, 16 related to product information, 12 for not issuing invoices, and 11 for misleading advertisements. The Capital Governorate is fourth with 97 violations -- 33 for failure to display exchange and return policies, 27 for failure to use Arabic, 14 for misleading advertisements, 13 related to commercial data, and 10 for failure to display prices. Hawally Governorate is fifth with 50 violations -- 19 for misleading advertisements, nine related to the prohibition of chewing tobacco, eight related to energy drinks, eight for failure to use Arabic in advertisements, and six related to water prices.

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate is in last place with 48 violations -- 14 for failure to display prices, 14 s for raising prices without approval, eight for failure to display exchange and return policies, six for using prohibited materials in household utensils, and six for failure to comply with price control regulations. Regarding the work of judicial officers, statistics showed that 340 oversight actions were recorded -- 296 reports, 26 violation notices, eight enforcement measures for opening establishments and 10 enforcement measures for closing establishments. The Capital Governorate recorded the highest number of actions with 80 followed by Jahra with 70, Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 61, Farwaniya with 49, Hawally with 43 and Ahmadi with 37. Following is a summary of the most common violations recorded within the abovementioned period:

- Failure to use Arabic: 40 percent
- Failure to display prices: 25 percent
- Absence of exchange and return policies: 15 percent
- Failure to comply with fixed prices: 11 percent
- Misleading advertisements: nine percent



Farwaniya Governorate photo
Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Farwaniya Cooperative Society Fawaz Saad Al-Murshad in his office.

Governor, co-op head seek to improve public services

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah met with Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Farwaniya Cooperative Society Fawaz Saad Al-Murshad in his office on Thursday. The meeting aimed to boost the capacity of the governorate to coordinate with other entities and work with cooperative societies in supporting national development efforts. Several topics of mutual interest were discussed at the meeting, along with mechanisms for improving ser-

vice provided to the residents of the governorate. This aims to raise the efficiency of cooperative work and cover the needs of citizens. The Governor affirmed his commitment to support initiatives that serve the community and improve the services in the governorate. On the other hand, Al-Murshad expressed his gratitude to the Governor for the warm welcome, and commended the efforts to support cooperative work and strengthen coordination with the relevant entities.



KUNA photo
Director of Civil Aviation Public Authority Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah receives the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi.

Kuwait, India discuss means to boost aviation sector ties

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): The Director of Civil Aviation Public Authority Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, discussed cooperation means on Thursday with Indian Ambassador to the country Paramita Tripathi.

In a statement to KUNA, the Authority said the meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation and exchange of expertise in this vital sector. It added that they also discussed prospects for strengthening cooperation to meet the aspirations of both sides.

MoH to restructure committee to oversee salons, health shops

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Ministry of Health Undersecretary Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi issued an administrative decision to reconstitute the committee tasked to oversee salons and health institutes, which took effect on April 1 and valid for one year, in order to intensify health oversight and guarantee compliance with professional standards.



Dr. Al-Mutairi

Article One of the decision stipulates the appointment of Public Health Department Director Dr. Mona Al-Khabbaz as chairperson of the committee, while the members include Faisal Al-Ansari who represents the Commercial Control Department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Suad Abel from the Health Licensing Department, a Kuwait Municipality representative, and officials from the Radiation Protection, Public Health, Legal Research, Drug Inspection, Infection Prevention and Environmental Health departments.

Article Two states the tasks of the committee as follows:

- Specify the technical standards and prerequisites for health institutes and salons,
- Deploy field teams to carry out inspections to make sure that professional and health regulations are followed,
- Propose penalties and legal measures for violating establishments,
- Develop effective mechanisms for reporting health and administrative violations,
- Monitor the use of radiation devices,
- Ensure compliance with safety procedures,
- Ensure the application of infection control standards and adherence to health and safety practices,
- Check the licenses of facilities and employees' health certificates to protect customers.

The decision mandates the committee to hold meetings periodically or as needed, at the invitation of its chairperson or deputy chairperson, and submit reports on its activities and recommendations to the assistant undersecretary for public health affairs. It authorizes the committee to form inspection teams to conduct monitoring and technical evaluation in accordance with the regulations.

Decision on 137 cases

Terror court issues its first verdicts in heavy security

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In its first public session to pronounce judgments, the State Security and Terrorism Crimes Court, presided over by Judge Nasser Al-Bader with Judges Omar Al-Mulaifi, Abdullah Al-Faleh and Salem Al-Zayed as members, issued its verdicts on 137 cases. The proceedings took place amidst heavy security presence and the attendance of several journalists, lawyers and the defendants' families. The court sentenced 17 defendants to three years in prison with hard labor, as well as the fugitive 'X' platform (formerly Twitter) user Mohammad Al-Ajmi to 10 years in prison in connection with two cases. It refrained from punishing 109 defendants, but required them to maintain good conduct and post bail ranging from KD1,000 to KD3,000. It acquitted nine defendants of inciting sectarian strife through social media, disseminating false news, and expressing sympathy for certain views. A number of public figures are among the defendants and 36 of whom are women, including a media personality. These rulings are the first outputs of the court handling State security and terrorism cases.

Minister revokes licenses of two dental care clinics

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Health Minister Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahhab Al-Awadhi issued decrees to cancel the licenses of two dental facilities, because they committed grave violation of professional regulations and endangered patients. One of the decrees stipulates the revocation of the license of a dental center as investigations confirmed it was being operated by an unauthorized third party through subletting. This is a violation of Ministerial Decree 36/2024 and the laws governing professional practice. The other decree concerns a specialized dental center found to have ceased operations and remained closed beyond the legally permissible timeframe without justification. The Ministry of Health categorized these acts as severe breaches of licensing obligations that compromised healthcare quality and occupational safety. These regulatory steps were supported by documented field inspections and findings of the technical and administrative committees in compliance with the legal procedures.

Strict eye on drugstores to curb increase in rates

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Competition Authority has intensified its efforts to monitor the pharmaceutical sector through its inspection teams in a bid to create a fair competitive environment and uncover practices that violate market rules. The authority confirmed on its official Facebook page that these measures are part of its plan to curb monopoly or anti-competitive practices, particularly in vital sectors affecting the lives of consumers like the pharmaceutical market. These efforts aim to scrutinize pricing mechanisms and eliminate practices that lead to unjustified price hikes or restrict free competition among pharmacies in order to protect the rights of consumers.

GTD announces road closures

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The General Traffic Department announced the full closure of the intersection near the Kuwait Society of Engineers headquarters with Street 800, in addition to the closure of the entrance and exit to Street 60 on Arabian Gulf Street, reports Al-Seyassah daily. It stated that U-turns will be constructed for traffic coming from Shuwaikh toward the Kuwait Towers parking area, as well as another U-turn for traffic coming from Salmiya. The department noted that the closure will take place in two phases:

- Phase 1: from 6:00pm on Thursday until 6:00am on Sunday, April 26
- Phase 2: from 6:00pm on Thursday, April 30 until 6:00am on Sunday, May 3.

MPW launches comprehensive road maintenance in Farwaniya

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) has launched comprehensive road maintenance in Farwaniya with the aim of improving the efficiency of the road network and addressing deficiencies using advanced technical methods, reports Al-Anba daily. The ministry has commenced comprehensive road maintenance projects as part of its infrastructure development plan, starting in Farwaniya Governorate. The initiative aims to enhance the efficiency of the road network and fundamentally address deficiencies using advanced technical methods. In this regard, Eng. Abdullah Al-Mutairi, supervisor of the road network maintenance contract in Farwaniya at the Ministry of Public Works, confirmed in a statement to Kuwait TV that work teams began their tasks immediately after the contract was signed, based on directives from the Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, which has contributed to accelerating the pace of work.

He stated that comprehensive maintenance work has been completed in Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and the teams have now moved on to work on the main roads connecting these blocks, which will improve road efficiency and traffic flow. Al-Mutairi stressed that civil works have been completed in Blocks 6 and 8 of Ardiya, while road works continue in Ishbiliya, particularly in Blocks 1 and 2, where civil works have been finished in preparation for the final paving stages. He noted the completion of several vital streets, including Mohammad Bin Qasim Street, Jordan Street, and Salem Barak Al-Haifi Street, emphasizing that the projects are progressing according to the approved plan and to the highest standards. Al-Mutairi affirmed that the Minister of Public Works is paying close attention to the smallest details, focusing on applying the highest technical specifications and quality standards to ensure road sustainability and enhance operational efficiency.

Declare investments, charities told

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Charitable Societies and Foundations Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs sent an official letter to the chairpersons of the boards of directors of charitable societies, requesting data and documents related to the investments of these entities in order to enhance oversight, regulation and transparency. The ministry attached a table to the letter detailing the required data, urging the charities to complete it and attach proof of obtaining approvals and licenses from the relevant authorities. It warned that failure to respond within the specified time-frame will

result in legal and administrative measures as per the regulations and bylaws. The required data include name of the charity, investment type (club or nursery), investment commencement date, operational mechanism, and licenses issued by the Kuwait Municipality, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State Property Authority and Ministry of Social Affairs. The ministry is keen on monitoring the activities of charitable societies, and to ensure that their investments comply with the legal and regulatory frameworks in a bid to safeguard charitable funds and guarantee they are managed efficiently.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Economic coercion option ... hit where it hurts most !

"IN moments of regional tension, geography automatically becomes the center of focus, as it represents the theater of conflict," Kuwaiti writer **Saleh Abdulaziz Al-Janfawi** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"With every escalation related to the Strait of Hormuz, the traditional question resurfaces - how can this vital waterway be protected and the continued flow of energy through it be ensured?"

"However, merely posing this question, despite its importance, may lead to an incomplete understanding of the situation, as it reduces the confrontation to an area where Tehran holds an advantage.



Saleh Al-Janfawi

"By its very nature, the Strait of Hormuz grants Iran the ability to threaten and disrupt the interests of other nations, allowing it to use geography as a swift and effective tool of pressure.

"However, true deterrence is not necessarily achieved within this narrow framework. Rather, it begins when the confrontation expands into broader arenas where Iran does not exercise the same degree of control.

"Here, the rules of the game change, and the balance of power shifts from a reactive stance to proactively undermining Iranian threats at their source.

"Using the global economy as a deterrent tool represents a more profound and sustainable option than direct confrontation alone.

"Instead of treating Iran as a party capable of controlling the pace of the Strait of Hormuz, it can be repositioned as a high-risk economic actor, whose dealings become increasingly costly and whose financial and trade routes grow more complex.

"At this point, the threat is no longer merely a tool of pressure, but gradually turns into a burden that affects Tehran's ability to operate and sustain itself.

"This shift materializes when the movement of funds linked to Iran becomes subject to greater monitoring and restrictions, when shipping and insurance costs rise due to increased risks, and when confidence in the associated business environment declines.

"Partners will then hesitate to enter into economic relationships that could entail legal or regulatory repercussions. This approach becomes more effective as logistical alternatives develop that reduce the Strait of Hormuz's dominance over shipping traffic.

"As the network of international economic interests expands, any threat transcends the regional framework to encompass broader spheres of influence.

"In this case, the nature of the equation changes. Instead of the Strait of Hormuz being an effective tool for blackmail, it becomes a pressure point that backfires on those who attempt to exploit it. The effectiveness of a threat diminishes as its economic and political costs increase.

"However, this approach does not imply that the Gulf states are immune to its repercussions. Any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz directly affects the region's economies, particularly those countries that lack sufficient alternative routes.

"Therefore, the success of this approach depends not only on external pressure but also on strengthening internal preparedness. The more logistical options expand, economic coordination deepens, and crisis management becomes more efficient, the greater the capacity to absorb shocks and transform the threat into an opportunity for rebalancing.

"The issue is not merely about securing a waterway, but about redefining the very nature of the confrontation.

"If Iran relies on geography as a source of strength, the most effective response lies in neutralizing this advantage by shifting the battle to areas where the cost is highest.

"At that point, the roles are reversed, and the threat is transformed from a tool of pressure into a source of attrition, and from temporary influence into a persistent burden."

Also:

"Amid recent regional tensions, the Arabian Gulf emerged as a central arena in the struggle for influence among both regional and international powers. This competition extends beyond geography and security, encompassing one of the world's most vital strategic resources - oil," Kuwaiti writer **Lawyer Abdullah Falah Al-Hajri** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"For decades, this resource formed the foundation of the global economy and today, it serves as a tool of political pressure used to secure advantages or impose conditions in complex dynamics. Major powers depend heavily on Gulf oil supplies, granting producing nations considerable influence that extends far beyond their geographical borders.

"At the same time, global powers seek to secure energy flows and maintain market stability, keeping the region under constant scrutiny and, at times, prompting direct involvement in its affairs. In times of crisis, oil becomes an effective bargaining chip.

"Reducing or increasing production, or even signaling potential supply disruptions, can trigger sharp price fluctuations that ripple across the global economy. In recent years, this approach

has been evident in both political conflicts and economic alliances.

"The issue extends beyond producing countries to include vital maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial passage for global oil transport. Any disruption there heightens tensions and amplifies market sensitivity, highlighting the strategic role of geography in this war. Oil is no longer just an economic commodity, as it has become a central element of international politics.

"As challenges in the region continue to grow, an important question remains - will oil continue to be a tool of pressure and conflict, or can it evolve into a foundation for cooperation and stability?"

"Regulating digital commerce is no longer merely a legislative response to a rapidly evolving technological reality; it has become a true test of the legal system's ability to comprehend a new economy that does not recognize traditional boundaries," Professor of Private Law at the Faculty of Law in Kuwait University **Dr. Ahmad Al-Awshaz** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"Digital commerce is no longer just a means of contracting, but it has evolved into an economic structure whose effects extend to economic freedoms and the limits of public intervention.

"In this context, the decree regulating work in the digital commerce sector in Kuwait has established an advanced legal framework for this sector. However, a reading of this law shows that the real challenge lies not in the existence of regulation, but in its nature, its limits, and its underlying philosophy.

"The crucial question is - do we have a law, or rather a legal philosophy capable of accommodating this transformation?"

"Kuwaiti law has adopted a broad definition of digital commerce, encompassing various forms of electronic activity. This approach reflects legislative flexibility that aligns with the evolving nature of the field. However, if this expansion is not governed by precise parameters, it may become a source of legal ambiguity, particularly in distinguishing between actors within the digital environment.

"The law does not clearly differentiate between the digital merchant, the platform, and the service provider. This affects the legal characterization of contractual relationships and may lead to conflicting judicial interpretations in the future.

"The liability of digital platforms is central to the legal regulation of e-commerce. However, Kuwaiti law has not established an explicit framework for it, instead imposing general obligations without clearly defining the applicable standard of liability.

"This gap in platform liability is not a mere legal detail but it represents a deficiency in the legal certainty on which the digital economy is based.

"French law has adopted a clearer standard, based on the principle that platforms are not liable unless they are aware of illegal content and fail to act to remove it. This approach has been reinforced by French judicial rulings in prominent cases.

"On the other hand, the Saudi legal system tends to place direct responsibility on the merchant, while imposing strict disclosure obligations. This achieves a higher level of consumer protection, but also increases the regulatory burden on merchants.

"The influencer category represents one of the most significant shifts in the structure of the digital market.

Individuals have become influential marketing actors in consumer decision-making and economic intermediaries between merchants and consumers.

"However, the law does not directly address them.

"Notably, it does not provide an explicit definition of an influencer, nor does it establish an independent regulatory framework. Instead, it implicitly subjects their activities to the general rules governing advertising and e-commerce.

"This effectively results in the emergence of a parallel advertising economy within the formal economy, without an independent legal framework to regulate it.

"In comparison, the difference becomes apparent when considering the Saudi experience, which introduced the "Mawthooq" platform to regulate influencer activity.

"Advertising on social media is now linked to official registration, enhancing transparency and facilitating accountability.

"Kuwaiti law includes important consumer protection tools, such as electronic invoicing, advertising regulation, and data disclosure. These measures help strengthen trust in digital transactions.

"However, this protection remains general and does not reach the level of detail found in the Saudi system, particularly with regard to contractual guarantees.

"Kuwaiti law is clearly administrative in nature, granting broad regulatory and supervisory powers to the relevant authorities through licensing, executive regulations, and oversight mechanisms."

— Compiled by **Simi K. Kutty**

11 let-off in 'hi-tech' money-laundering case

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Criminal Court acquitted 11 defendants of charges of money laundering, forgery of bank documents, and misappropriation of funds using advanced information technology.

The Public Prosecution had charged the 11 individuals with joining an organized criminal gang operating outside Kuwait, exploiting their bank accounts to receive and transfer funds obtained through fraud, with the intent of concealing their source, as well as committing forgery in bank statements and electronic withdrawal transactions.

The victim stated that she was defrauded after receiving a phone call from an unknown



Al-Haddad

person who claimed he could recover money she had previously lost. The suspect instructed her to download an application that granted access to her banking information, resulting in the withdrawal of KD 18,800 from her bank account without her knowledge.

The court based its ruling on insufficient evidence and a lack of confidence in the investigations, in addition to the absence of conclusive proof that the defendants were aware of the illicit source of the funds or possessed criminal intent.

Lawyer **Israa Al-Haddad**, representing one of the defendants, stated that the elements of the crime were not established and that there was no evidence of her client's involvement in or knowledge of the incident.

She maintained that the mere transfer of funds through bank accounts is insufficient to convict an account holder without proving criminal intent.

How to use extinguisher ?

KFF and KOC plan joint efforts to tackle crises

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Under the patronage and in the presence of the Director General of the Kuwait Fire Force Major General **Talal Al-Roumi**, Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), in cooperation with Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), organized an advanced specialized lecture titled "Field Leadership in Oil Tank Incidents" recently, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The lecture was delivered by the Director of the Health, Safety, and Environment Group at KOC Eng. **Nasser Al-Bahiri**, along with several other KOC lecturers. The lecture included a review of advanced topics in oil tank incident management, including leadership methods at major incident sites, strategies for dealing with complex fires, and coordination mechanisms between field teams and supporting entities, which enhances operational performance efficiency and strengthens the joint work system to the highest levels.

The event was attended by leaders from the firefighting sector and heads of fire stations, as well as representatives from KFF, the Kuwaiti Army, the National Guard, Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC), Equate Petrochemical Company, and Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC). The initiative reflects the high level of integration and coordination among national entities.

This lecture is part of ongoing efforts to enhance field readiness and improve response efficiency to major incidents. Developing a field leadership system is a fundamental pillar in dealing with high-risk incidents. These specialized programs are part of strategic training plans aimed at preparing leaders capable of making highly efficient decisions in various critical situations.

Meanwhile, the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), represented by its Public Relations and Media Department, has issued an awareness brochure explaining the correct use of a fire extinguisher, as part of its ongoing efforts to promote a culture of safety and prevention within homes, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

The brochure includes a set of essential guidelines, most notably:

- Pull out the safety pin
- Point the hose nozzle at the base of the flames
- Squeeze the handle while moving the hose from right to left at the base of the fire until it is completely extinguished.

The department emphasized the importance of having a fire extinguisher in every home, noting that its presence represents the first line of defense against fires, contributes to protecting lives and property, and enhances the safety of family members.

Trio steals to finance their drug addiction

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The Criminal Security Sector, represented by the Taima Investigations Department, achieved a significant security breakthrough by solving several cases previously registered against unknown perpetrators.

Investigations led to the arrest of three suspects involved in stealing vehicle parts through fraudulent means while impersonating government officials.

A security source explained that the Taima Investigations Department received several reports about three individuals, dressed in traditional Saudi clothing, approaching workers in the scrapyard area and showing identification before stealing spare parts from luxury vehicles.

A security team was assigned to investigate and apprehend the perpetrators. It was discovered that the perpetrators committed these thefts to finance their drug use.

The suspects were subsequently referred to the relevant authorities to complete legal procedures.

KFF heroics foil suicide attempt by young man

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Firefighters from Kuwait Fire Force (KFF) performed a heroic act early morning Thursday, when they rescued a young man, in his 20s, who jumped from Sheikh Jaber Bridge in an apparent suicide attempt.

A security source told the newspaper that the Operations Unit at KFF received information about the incident, then the concerned authorities, including security personnel, medical emergency teams and firefighters, rushed to the scene.

Firefighters from Al-Joun Marine and Shuwaikh Marine fire brigades carried out the search and rescue operations. Within a short period and after intensive efforts, the teams located and rescued the young man. First aid was administered and he was handed over to the medical emergency personnel who took him to the hospital.

The source added that the authorities started an investigation to determine the circumstances that prompted the young man to try to end his own life.

Asian found dead: A 1995-born Asian expatriate was found dead in Al-Salmi desert along Al-Artal Road, in a case that authorities are treating as suspected foul play, reports **Al-Anba** daily.

According to security sources, a 1967-born citizen reported to the Ministry of Interior's Operations Room that he had received a call from one of his farm workers in the area, informing him of the death of another worker.

Following the report, officers from Al-Salmi Police Station were dispatched to the scene, where they discovered the body of the deceased lying on the ground. The victim showed visible signs of injury, including a swollen right eye, leg wounds, and bloodstains at the site.

An officer from the Public Prosecutor's Office went to the site and ordered that the case be registered as a suspected criminal incident, as well as Forensic Evidence teams and the medical examiner be assigned to determine the cause of death.

In addition, the Public Prosecutor directed detectives to be notified and tasked with conducting further inquiries into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Disputes over property rise

Heirs in inheritance squabble

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Disputes over inheritance within families have recently escalated, as some heirs insist on using inherited property to the exclusion of others. This situation opens the door to legal claims for what is known as usage compensation or usufruct, a right guaranteed by law to ensure that other heirs are not harmed.

Lawyer **Jassim Bandar** explained that if one heir uses or occupies inherited property without the consent of the others, the latter have the right to claim compensation for their share. This compensation is calculated from the date one heir begins using the property until the date of division or settlement. Courts typically refer such disputes to a specialized expert who assesses the rental value of the property based on its size and location, and then allocates the amount according to each heir's legal share.

He emphasized that justice requires those deprived of use to be compensated, even if the occupant of the property is a family member.

Lawyer **Bandar** emphasized that resorting to amicable solutions or consensual division is the best option to avoid escalating disputes, stressing that laws exist to protect rights but do not prevent the preservation of family ties.

Meanwhile, Lawyer **Mohammad Ahmad Al-Refai** pointed out that expert reports play a pivotal role in such cases, as the court relies on them to fairly determine the value of usufruct compensation.

He affirmed that the Kuwaiti judiciary consistently protects the rights of partners in jointly owned property and prevents its unjust appropriation, adding that some disputes escalate due to a lack of awareness among heirs, prompting one of them to resort to the courts to claim their financial rights.

In addition, another type of issue arises

concerning houses allocated by the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) that have not yet received title deeds, as their legal status differs from inherited properties.

Lawyer **Al-Rifai** explained that this type of house is not considered an inheritance in the legal sense and is therefore not subject to traditional inheritance rules. The competent authority redistributes shares according to PAHW requirements, and these are often granted to eligible family members who do not have a housing application.

He emphasized that inheritance disputes do not stop at the limits of legal texts but extend to the social and family dimension, where financial disputes may lead to a breakdown in relations between relatives.

Man acquitted in drugs case: The Criminal Court acquitted a citizen of trafficking and using narcotics and psychotropic substances, despite the confiscation of a large quantity of such substances.

Case files indicate that an officer in the Drug Control General Department obtained information from a confidential source that the defendant possessed narcotics for trafficking and personal use. The Public Prosecution issued a warrant and the informant was assigned to arrange an entrapment, reaching an agreement with the defendant to deliver the purchased substances in the chalet area. The exchange took place and the informant gave the agreed signal to the anti-narcotics officers, but the defendant sensed police presence, so he fled. This prompted the officers to raid the chalet and then the residence of the accused, where narcotic substances were seized.



Bandar



Al-Refai



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MoE honors award-winning Kuwaiti teacher Al-Khawaja

Al-Tabtabaei affirms support for outstanding teachers

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Minister of Education Eng. Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei honored English teacher Farah Jassim Mohammad Al-Khawaja from Kuwait International School for winning the 19th Khalifa Educational Award for 2026 in the field of general education at the Arab world level, under the Creative Teacher category.

This is in recognition of the excellence and educational contributions of Al-Khawaja to the development of the educational process.

Present at the ceremony were acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education Eng. Mohammad Al-Khaldi, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad, Director General for Educational Affairs Mohammad Al-Wazzan, Director General for Guidance, Research and Curricula Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Director General for Educational Support Services Maryam Al-Enezi, and Director for Public Relations and Educational Media Arwa Al-Ayyar.

Al-Tabtabaei praised this achievement, which reflects the level of competence in the Kuwaiti educational field. He emphasized that the accomplishment of Al-Khawaja serves as a model of a creative teacher capable of making a positive impact on her educational environment and keeping pace with the best modern educational practices.



Ministry of Education photo Education Minister Sayed Jalal Al-Tabtabaei fetes award-winning teacher Farah Al-Khawaja for notable contributions.

He expressed his pride in this achievement, which is an honorable representation of the State of Kuwait in regional and international educational forums. He stressed that such a success solidifies the position of Kuwait on the educational map and raises its name through its distinguished national talents, proving their ability to compete and attain leadership.

He pointed out that this is a manifestation of the unwavering support and attention given to the education sector, indicating his ministry remains committed to support outstanding educational staff and create an environment conducive for creativity and innovation in order to raise the quality of education and achieve excellence at the regional and international levels.

He stated that this victory embodies the efforts exerted in de-

veloping educational performance and reflects the commitment of the ministry to promote a culture of excellence and motivate teachers to participate in educational awards.

Meanwhile, Al-Khawaja expressed her immense happiness at being honored by the minister. She asserted that the award is the fruit of the tremendous efforts exerted by the school team and the dedication of teachers in advancing educational quality.

She said this recognition strengthens the culture of creativity and innovation in the educational process and serves as a motivation to continue exerting efforts to develop the curricula and train educational staff.

She commended Al-Tabtabaei for his support and encouragement of teachers to be creative and win international awards.

Honored for creative, student-centered teaching

Kuwait's Al-Khawaja wins Khalifa Education Award

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Kuwaiti teacher Farah Jassim Mohammed Al-Khawaja won the 2026 Khalifa Educational Award in the "Creative Teacher" category, organized by the Zayed Humanitarian Legacy Foundation in the United Arab Emirates.

This award crowns a career marked by dedication and innovation, and reflects the principle that the ultimate goal of education is to develop teaching methods and place the student at the center of attention.

In an interview with the daily, Farah Al-Khawaja discussed the most significant milestones in her educational journey, the challenges she faced, and her vision for the future of education in Kuwait.

She explained that winning this award represents the culmination of nearly two decades of tireless work and a deep belief in the teacher's role in making a difference.

The achievement not only reflects excellence in her classroom teaching experience, but also highlights a comprehensive educational model based on innovation, connecting with the child's world, and extending beyond the school walls to broader areas of community and volunteer impact.

Al-Khawaja recounted the details of her journey and the challenges she faced in dealing with varying student levels, as well as the pivotal moments that marked turning points in her career.

Below are the details of the interview held with the Kuwaiti teacher Farah Jassim Mohammed Al-Khawaja:

Question: What does winning the award mean to you, and how did you receive the news?

Answer: It represents immense pride for me, both personally and nationally, as I am representing Kuwait in a prestigious award at the Arab world level. Winning the award carries greater responsibility to continue giving back. I received the news with great joy and gratitude to God. I felt that years of hard work and dedication had culminated in this recognition.



Al-Seyassah photo Kuwaiti teacher Farah Al-Khawaja smiles in a classroom setting, reflecting her creative and student-friendly teaching approach.

Q: What distinguished your teaching experience to win the "Creative Teacher" category?

A: It is my constant focus on the student as the center of the educational process, and my pursuit of creative methods to deliver information, in addition to sharing my experience outside the school through volunteer and educational initiatives.

Q: What are your most prominent teaching methods? How do you utilize modern technologies?

A: I rely on learning through play, storytelling, and connecting lessons to the child's daily life, as this makes the student more engaged and better able to understand. I also use interactive videos, visual activities, and digital storytelling to transform the student from a passive recipient into an active participant.

Q: Does the success of education depend on the teacher's personality?

A: Absolutely. A passionate teacher who loves their profession is more capable of influencing students and conveying knowledge in a way that leaves a lasting impact.

Q: What were the most significant challenges you faced, and how did you overcome them?

A: One of the biggest challenges was the varying levels of students, especially in the early stages of language learning. Therefore, I made sure to diversify methods and strategies within each lesson to suit everyone.

Q: How do you achieve a balance between adhering to the curriculum

and being creative?

A: I adhere to the required educational objectives, but I present them in a modern and interactive way that allows the student to enjoy learning while benefiting at the same time.

Q: What was the most impactful moment in your career?

A: It was when I met former students who had gone on to become teachers and told me that their experience with me was a reason for choosing this field.

Q: How will winning this award affect your career and future plans?

A: It gave me greater motivation to further develop myself and work on broader educational initiatives that reach a wider segment of students and achieve a lasting impact on the educational process.

Q: What are your future plans for developing education?

A: I strive to develop interactive educational content that combines enjoyment and benefit, encourages critical thinking and creativity in children, and keeps pace with the demands of the digital age.

Q: How can innovative teachers be supported and empowered?

A: By highlighting their successful experiences, providing continuous training, and giving them more space to innovate within the classroom.

Q: How do you assess the reality of education in Kuwait? What distinguishes the Kuwaiti teachers?

A: I believe that education in Kuwait is witnessing remarkable development, especially in light of the digital transformation, thanks to the presence of national talents capable of advancing the educational system. Kuwaiti teachers are distinguished by their passion for their mission, commitment to development, and honorable representation of their country.

Q: What is your message to teachers and students?

A: I tell teachers that passion and love for the profession are the foundation of success. I tell students that each one of them is capable of achieving accomplishments and building their future whenever they have the will and confidence in themselves.



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Winners of the Dr. Suad Al-Sabah Award for Creative Gazan Children stand together during a ceremony in Gaza City, celebrating the artistic and intellectual talents of nearly 400 local youth.

400 young talents recognized

Suad Al-Sabah Award ceremony honors Gaza's creative children

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: A ceremony was held in Gaza City to honor the winners of the Dr. Suad Al-Sabah Award for Creative Gazan Children.

According to a press release, nearly 400 talented children and their mothers participated in the event, which celebrated creativity in its various forms in the besieged city of Gaza. Kuwaiti flags were raised during the occasion.

Dr. Suad Al-Sabah explained that the children of Gaza are beacons of light in a long night, and the mothers who raised them are the pulse of this resilient Palestinian land. They are the true emblem and an enduring story. Despite the tragedies, they have instilled patience in the hearts of the young and nurtured love within them, becoming an example and a guiding light.

In a speech delivered on her behalf by the Director of the Suad Al-Sabah House for Culture and Creativity Ali Al-Masoudi, Dr. Suad Al-Sabah explained that the children of Gaza are role models, turning pain into meaning, creating hope from wounds, and painting beauty from ashes. They have written a great story with small letters, drawn what maps could not, and declared to the world "We are here... Through life, we prevail."

Dr. Suad Al-Sabah addressed the children of Gaza by saying, "Hold fast to your dreams, for they are a homeland that cannot be occupied. Guard your hearts, for they are the land that endures. I tell you, this hope will grow into glory, and you will grow so that tomorrow will be filled with beauty and joy."

In her speech, Dr. Alaa Al-Qatrawi, supervisor of the ceremony and the award, thanked Dr. Suad Al-Sabah for launching the Creative Gaza Child Award and sponsoring the awards ceremony. She said Dr. Al-Sabah was an integral part of the beauty of the day and that she brought joy to every child who attended.

Dr. Al-Qatrawi said, "We have endured very harsh conditions in the Gaza Strip, to the point where one almost forgets how to smile. But today, Dr. Suad Al-Sabah managed to bring smiles to the faces of both children and mothers."

The occupation killed 20,000 Palestinian children in its war on Gaza, but I am certain they are now with us, rejoicing in God's blessings, looking at us with joy and longing for a reunion that will never end."

Creativity despite the challenges

The Dr. Suad Al-Sabah Award ceremony for Creative Gazan Children was held in Gaza City, with the participation of approximately 400 talented children and their mothers. The event celebrated creativity in various fields, including singing, Quran



A young award winner proudly holds her certificate and gifts at the Dr. Suad Al-Sabah Award ceremony in Gaza.

recitation, drawing, poetry, public speaking, theater, memorization, handicrafts, and volunteer initiatives.

The ceremony, held at the Gloria Hall on the Gaza beach, was attended by a distinguished audience and featured a range of performances by the children, both individually and in pairs. These performances showcased their talents and their ability to express themselves despite difficult circumstances, in an atmosphere adorned with the flags of Kuwait and Palestine. The ceremony concluded with the honoring of the winners and the distribution of certificates, in an atmosphere of joy and appreciation, reinforcing the importance of creativity as a human value that transcends challenges.

Kuwait's Gift

In November 2025, Dr. Suad Al-Sabah announced the launch of a new award titled the "Gaza Child Award," open to all forms of creativity in which Palestinian children in Gaza excel, including literature, art, eloquence, Quranic recitation, drawing, and other creative fields. The award was designated for children aged six to fourteen.

In her announcement, Dr. Suad Al-Sabah explained that the "Gaza Child Award" is Kuwait's gift to Palestine, a gift to the child who faced war for two years with the fortitude of an adult, the child who still dreams of a safe and dignified life, the child who opens windows of hope, who presses the camera button to capture images of peace despite the war, searching for the beauty that resides within their soul.

End-of-service benefits surge

Budget increases by over KD50.487 million

By **Mohammad Ghanem**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: The budget report for the 2026/2027 fiscal year revealed that the total approved expenditures for the end-of-service benefits of national and expatriate personnel reached KD270.281 million.

This is a remarkable increase of KD50.487 million compared to the KD219.794 million allocated in the previous fiscal year, reinforcing

efforts to maintain institutional stability and fulfill long-term financial commitments.

The newspaper obtained a copy of the report, indicating that the cumulative approved budget for benefits allocated to Kuwaiti citizens increased to KD235.365 million.

The end-of-service benefits for non-Kuwaiti employees amounted to KD34.916 million, reflecting a coordinated approach to managing human resource entitlements as per the regulations.

The approved expenditures under the 'Excellent Services' item rose to KD196.649 million, an increase of KD5.135 million from the KD191.514 million in the previous fiscal year.

This aims to ensure institutional excellence and professionalism.

The final accounts report explained that end-of-service benefits are compensations provided directly by government entities using their own independent resources, without relying on external insurance schemes or pension funds.

These measures include the recorded financial obligations that government units are required to settle upon the termination of an employee's service.

The report also stated that benefits for expatriates refer to the documented end-of-service gratuity paid by the State in line with contractual terms and applicable technical standards.

Psychiatrist warns of rising anxiety

Online learning poses new student challenges: expert

By **Marwa Al-Bahawi**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Consultant psychiatrist Dr. Nawaf Al-Qudairi confirmed that with the shift towards online learning, new challenges have emerged regarding students' ability to maintain focus, manage their time, and cope with anxiety and stress, especially during exam periods.

In an interview on Kuwait TV, he explained that the online learning experience is not entirely new, as society had already experienced it during the COVID-19 pandemic, giving some teachers experience in dealing with this educational style.

The teacher's role in virtual education has become more complex, especially when dealing with younger age groups, such as elementary school students, due to their limited attention spans compared to older students.

Students being at home are exposed to many distractions that are not present in the

school environment, requiring teachers to exert extra effort to capture students' attention by diversifying teaching methods and dividing lessons into short, engaging segments.

The difference between in-person and online learning is not limited to content delivery, but also includes direct human interaction such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

These elements play a crucial role in building understanding and strengthening the student-teacher relationship.

Older students have a greater capacity for comprehension, but they may also experience varying levels of stress, particularly in the absence of the traditional school environment.

Dr. Al-Qudairi emphasized that prolonged reliance on electronic interaction may diminish students' social skills, as real-life, direct interaction contributes to developing life experiences that cannot be fully replaced through virtual communication, such as building relationships, collaborating, and understanding social attitudes.

He stressed the importance of the role of parents at this stage, considering them an essential part of the educational process in providing support by creating a suitable learning environment at home.

Dr. Al-Qudairi pointed out that organizing the student's time at home has become a shared responsibility between the family and the student.

He stressed that online education may be a temporary solution, but it cannot completely replace in-person education, given the integrated environment it provides to support students' academic, psychological, and social growth.



Dr. Al-Qudairi

Al-Sarawi submits credentials as Kuwait Ambassador to Sri Lanka

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Kuwait's Ambassador Saleh Mubarak Al-Sarawi has submitted his credentials, as the country's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, to the president of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Anura Kumara Disanayake.

This came during a ceremony held at the headquarters of Sri Lanka's presidential secretariat in Colombo, the Kuwait Embassy in Sri Lanka said in a statement received by KUNA on Wednesday.

The ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Sri Lankan president, wishing him everlasting good health and Sri Lanka further progress and prosperity, it added.

Al-Sarawi affirmed Kuwait's keenness on developing bilateral relations to serve the two friendly countries' interests, it added.



Kuwait's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Saleh Al-Sarawi, presents his credentials to the President of the Republic. MoFA photo

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait turns

"I am hereby ordering that activity to continue, but at a tripled up level!" Trump added.

He also said the military is intensifying mine clearing operations in the critical waterway.

The move comes a day after Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guards attacked three cargo ships in the strait, capturing two of them.

The Defense Department released video footage earlier on Thursday of U.S. forces on the deck of the Guinea-flagged oil tanker Majestic X, which was seized in the Indian Ocean.

"We will continue global maritime enforcement to disrupt illicit networks and interdict vessels providing material support to Iran, wherever they operate," a Pentagon statement said.

Ship-tracking data showed the Majestic X in the Indian Ocean between Sri Lanka and Indonesia, roughly the same location as the oil tanker Tifani, earlier seized by American forces. It had been bound for Zhoushan, China.

The vessel previously had been named Phnix and had been sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2024 for smuggling Iranian crude oil in contravention of U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

There was no immediate response from Iran on the news of the seizure.

State overhaul

Minister's Diwan Dr. Khaled Ali Al-Fadhel, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Head of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and Cabinet Secretary General Saleh Suleiman Al-Mulla.

Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister also chaired the 49th meeting of the ministerial committee overseeing major national development projects.

The committee reviewed the executive status of key national development projects, foremost among them the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project, the electricity power system, renewable energy development, a low-carbon green system for waste recycling, housing development, and environmental infrastructure for wastewater treatment plants.

It also covered afforestation and environmental initiatives, railway links between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, railway connectivity with GCC countries, and the latest developments in the new

passenger terminal project at Kuwait International Airport.

His Highness the Prime Minister directed committee members to continue their efforts in enhancing all services and facilities to the highest standards of quality and international technical specifications. This comes within the framework of the strategic mega development projects being implemented by the state, which form a cornerstone of comprehensive development.

He stressed the importance of adhering to set timelines and ensuring optimal execution in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, aimed at opening new economic horizons and maximizing the benefits of integrated infrastructure.

He emphasized the importance of meeting timelines and ensuring optimal execution in line with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, aimed at expanding economic opportunities and maximizing integrated infrastructure benefits.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Mohammed Al-Mishaan, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abdulatif Hamed Al-Meshari, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Subaih Abdulaziz Al-Mukhaizeem, Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Abdulaziz Nasser Al-Marzouq, Minister of Finance Dr. Yaqoub Al-Sayed Yousef Al-Refaei, Advisor at the Prime Minister's Diwan Dr. Khaled Ali Al-Fadhel, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr. Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Acting Chief of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikh Khaled Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, Head of the Fatwa and Legislation Department Counselor Salah Atiq Al-Majed, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs and committee rapporteur Ambassador Sameeh Johar Hayat.

Online classes

in this regard to date.

According to a press release issued by the ministry, this decision comes as part of the ministry's commitment to the safety of students, teachers, and administrative staff, and to ensuring the continuity of academic achievement under the current circumstances.

It clarified that all approved educational plans are

being implemented through online learning, with classes continuing via approved electronic platforms. Educational performance is being monitored to ensure the stability of the educational process.

The ministry urged everyone to verify information and rely only on official sources, stressing that any new decisions will be announced through its official channels.

MoJ, PAMA

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Justice (MoJ) announced Wednesday an increase in employee attendance to 50 per cent in some departments, as of next Sunday, in line with public interest and work needs.

In a statement on Wednesday, the Ministry said that the Civil Service Commission agreed to raise the ratio of workforce in some Ministry units from 30 per cent to 50 per cent.

The decision stipulates that the percentage of employees in these units does not exceed 50 per cent. Staff will be divided into two groups. Each group works one day and has the next day off. Supervisors will decide on this rotation to keep work running well.

On March 1, the Civil Service Commission issued a general decision to all government bodies that only 30 per cent of staff is allowed at work, starting the next day, until further notice. This was because of the current situation facing the region.

Kuwait and

Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

In a statement for KUNA, the Ministry of Communications said that during the meeting both sides discussed bilateral relation between the two friendly countries and ways of strengthening them in various fields which reflect the depth of common ties that serve mutual interest between them.

The statement added that the meeting addressed a number of topics of common interest and ways to enhance cooperation and coordination in relevant fields, contributing to supporting joint efforts and the exchange of expertise between the two countries.

It added that both sides emphasized the importance of continued dialogue and coordination to serve common interests and enhance prospects for future cooperation within the framework of existing bilateral relations between Kuwait and Pakistan.

Ambassador reaffirms firm support

Egypt underscores Kuwait's security as a strategic necessity amid strains

By **Fares Ghaleb**

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohamed Aboul El Wafa said the total and steadfast support of Egypt for the State of Kuwait during this difficult time is a strategic necessity, not just a fleeting or reactive gesture.

In a press conference at his residence on Thursday, Aboul El Wafa pointed out that this commitment is rooted in the recognition of the shared Arab future and the belief that the safety of Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations is inextricably linked to the security of Egypt and the stability of the region.

He stated that Egypt remains a staunch supporter and ally of the State of Kuwait and other GCC countries, reflecting the deep-rooted and unbreakable fraternal and historical ties between them. He emphasized that Kuwait is a fundamental pillar of the Arab security and stability system, and an indispensable strategic partner in dealing with the current regional challenges.

He underscored the need for all regional actors to follow international legal standards and the tenets of good neighborliness, calling for an end to escalatory behavior and respect for the sovereign right of nations to maintain their stability under the United Nations Charter.

He expressed his deep admiration for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, specifically his judicious guidance during the unjustified Iranian attacks on the country. He pointed out that this approach, characterized by maximum restraint, reflected His Highness' full awareness of the catastrophic economic and security risks that an expanded regional conflict entails.

He also recognized the effective management by State institutions under the oversight of His Highness in handling the exceptional regional circumstances.

He lauded the tireless efforts of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah in managing the repercussions of the crisis. He highlighted their active supervision of executive protocols to maintain domestic stability and ensure the continuous supply of vital goods and services.

He also reaffirmed that the Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations serve as a firmly established model for Arab-Arab relations, based on a solid historical foundation and lasting social and human ties. He asserted that these ties, along with the political and diplomatic relations that predated the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1961, have evolved into a strategic partnership at various levels.

He touched on the cultural and educational exchanges, which strengthen the bonds between the two nations, adding a robust human and cultural dimension to these relations. He said these relations have withstood numerous tests over the decades, consistently proving their strength, depth and resilience.

He lauded the Kuwait Armed Forces, Kuwait National Guard, Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Fire Force, medical personnel, emergency and ambu-



Photo by Rezk Tawfiq Mohamed Aboul El Wafa, Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait

lance teams, and all those working in various sectors in Kuwait who worked diligently, sincerely, professionally and courageously round the clock on the front lines.

He expressed his deep appreciation for the commendable efforts exerted by the Kuwaiti government in ensuring market stability and the availability of all types of food supplies and basic commodities during the crisis, stressing that the smooth flow of supply and the availability of basic needs for citizens and residents, despite the exceptional circumstances and difficult conditions, reflects a high level of efficiency in crisis management.

He went on to say that the visit of Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Badr Abdelatty to Kuwait on April 8 was the first by a high-ranking foreign official since the start of the Iranian attacks. He clarified that the visit had been in the works for a long time, as it was originally scheduled earlier, but the closure of Kuwait International Airport prevented its finalization.

He added that the meeting between the two foreign affairs ministers was an opportune moment to discuss efforts aimed at de-escalating tension and ending the war, as well as the latest developments in the American-Iranian negotiations.

He disclosed that Abdelatty briefed his Kuwaiti counterpart on the results of his recent visit to Washington and the quadrilateral meeting held in Antalya on April 18, which included the foreign affairs ministers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkiye, during which Egypt reiterated the importance of considering the security concerns of the Gulf states in any future regional arrangements. He affirmed that these moves are significant, given their symbolic nature and timing.

He pointed out that Kuwaiti foreign affairs minister's visit to Egypt marks his first trip outside the framework of the GCC since assuming his post.

It is also the first visit by a high-ranking Gulf official to Cairo at this time, clearly reflecting the depth of mutual trust and the conviction of both leaderships that Egyptian-Kuwaiti coordination is vital in managing regional crises.

In conclusion, the Egyptian Ambassador emphasized that these high-level visits and meetings are considered a clear political message from the highest authorities in both countries, affirming that Egyptian-Kuwaiti relations are impervious to any attempts to undermine them.

وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
State of Kuwait | دولة الكويت



RECALL INFORMATION

IINFINITI QX50
MODEL 2018-2020

INFINITI QX55
MODEL 2022



RECALL REASON

On affected vehicles, there is potential for the main crank bearing to get damaged, which may result in noise and vibrations from the engine. If the vehicle continues to be driven in this condition, there is a risk of bearing seizure and engine stall.

REMEDY

Please contact Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co. to update the Program.

CONTACT

Please contact Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co. Starting from 19 April.

Or book an appointment through calling the customer service at 1804888.

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42,43,44,45,46,47 and48)of no.(27/2015) issuing the executive by laws no.(39/2014)on Consumer Protection

INTERNATIONAL

Bid to reopen Homeland Security Dept

US Senate passes budget plan for ICE and Border Patrol

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP): US The Senate took the first steps in a new effort to reopen the Department of Homeland Security early Thursday, voting to adopt a budget plan that would fund ICE and Border Patrol over Democratic objections and sending it to the House.

The entire department has been shut down since mid-February as Democrats have demanded policy changes in the wake of fatal shootings of two protesters by federal agents. Republicans are now trying to fund the two immigration enforcement agencies through the 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.

"We have a multistep process ahead of us, but at the end Republicans will have helped ensure that America's borders are secure and prevented Democrats from defunding these important agencies," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D.

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 a long, open-ended series of amendment votes at the beginning and the end of the process.

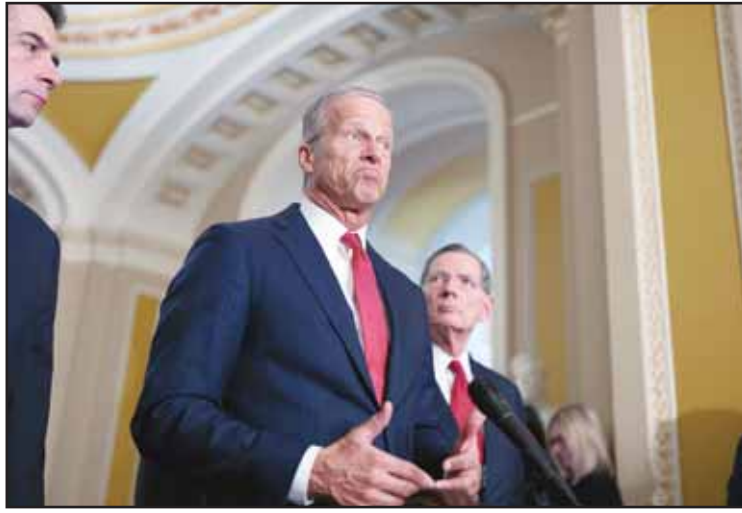
The Senate held the first series of votes through the night, starting Wednesday evening and into early Thursday morning, with Democrats proposing amendments to lower health care expenses and other costs in an effort to contrast with Republicans' focus on Trump's campaign of immigration enforcement.

"Instead of pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into ICE and Border Patrol, Republicans should be working with Democrats to lower out-of-pocket costs," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The Senate adopted the final resolution 50-48, just past 3:30 a.m.

Once the House approves the framework and the Senate Parliamentarian approves it, the two chambers can then move to pass the measure.

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



US Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-SD, flanked by Sen Tom Cotton, R-Ark, (left), and Sen John Barrasso, R-Wyo, speaks to reporters following a closed-door party meeting, at the Capitol in Washington on April 21. (AP)

toward funding ICE and Border Patrol, as well.

The \$70 billion budget resolution would fund the two agencies for three years, through the rest of Trump's term. Thune and other GOP leaders

say they hope to keep the bill narrowly focused on ICE and Border Patrol and get it to Trump's desk in the coming weeks, along with the rest of Homeland Security Department funding that has already passed the Senate.

California's woes at center of debate among leading candidates for gov

LOS ANGELES, April 23, (AP): A televised debate among six leading candidates for California governor Wednesday underscored sharp partisan divides on issues from homelessness to taxes, while the Democrats sought to distinguish themselves from each other in a chaotic race with no clear leader.

It's the first time in a generation that California has a wide-open contest for the heavily Democratic state's highest office, with more than 50 names on the ballot. Mail ballots are scheduled to go to voters early next month in advance of the June 2 primary election.

There were few instances of candidates talking over or interrupting each other, indicating they were eager to make a positive impression with voters who might be seeing them for the first time.

The debate brought together the two leading Republicans, conservative commentator Steve Hilton and Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco, and four Democrats including former U.S. Rep. Katie Porter,

billionaire Tom Steyer, San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan and former Biden administration Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra.

Over 90 minutes, candidates fielded questions on housing and wildfire insurance, social media and gas taxes,



Tom Steyer and Katie Porter, candidates in California's gubernatorial race, shake hands during a debate on April 22 in San Francisco. (AP)

while bickering over professional experience, individual wealth and the direction of the nation's most populous state. Democrats made clear they would fight President Donald Trump in a state known as the home of the so-called Trump resistance, while Republicans said ruling Democrats are to blame for the state's woes.



Rescuers at the site where two trains have collided between Hillerød and Kagerup, north of Copenhagen on April 23. (AP)

2 trains collide in Denmark, leaving 5 critically injured

Two trains collided in Denmark early Thursday, leaving five people critically injured in what police called a major incident.

The collision occurred around 6:30 a.m. near Hillerød, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Copenhagen. Roughly a dozen other people have minor injuries, accord-

ing to the Greater Copenhagen Fire Department.

There were 38 people aboard the two trains, according to a spokesperson for the North Zealand police.

Officials originally said four people were critically injured but revised that figure hours after the crash. It was not immediately clear

whether the train's drivers were among the victims.

Investigators are looking into what caused the collision, which occurred near a level crossing. Photos from the scene show the front ends of the trains smashed, though both remained upright on the tracks. (AP)

Voting begins in India's West Bengal state after national voter list purge

KOLKATA, India, April 23, (AP): Voting in one of India's most closely watched state elections began Thursday after a national voter roll revision removed millions of names and raised concerns over disenfranchisement in West Bengal, one of the few large states not governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party.

The election has national implications. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking gains in a state long dominated by a regional opposition party, while a victory for West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee would bolster her position as a leading opposition figure.

A second phase of polling is scheduled for next week. Voting also was taking place Thursday in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The voting was part of a wider round of state elections testing the BJP's reach in opposition strongholds. The results of the latest elections and the earlier polls in Kerala and Assam states and the federally administered territory of Puducherry were expected May 4.

The election is taking place after a sweeping revision of electoral rolls



People wait to cast their vote at a polling station during the Tamil Nadu state assembly elections in Chennai, India on April 23. (AP)

by the Election Commission of India aimed at removing duplicate, deceased and ineligible voters. Officials say about 9 million names - roughly 12% of the electorate - were deleted, including 6.3 million listed as deceased or ab-

sent and 2.7 million marked "doubtful" and pending verification.

Some affected voters said they had voted in previous elections and hold valid identification but were removed without clear explanation.

Brazil's Lula hits treadmill to ease voter concerns about age

Colombia's prez to visit Venezuela for key talks with Rodríguez

CARACAS, Venezuela, April 23, (AP): Colombian President Gustavo Petro is visiting Venezuela on Friday for key talks on border security and trade with the country's acting president, Delcy Rodríguez. The meeting, their first, comes months after the US military seized former Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife from their home in January.

Colombia is lobbying to become a buyer of Venezuelan gas and last month sought an exemption from US sanctions to invest in Venezuelan electricity projects and natural gas ventures, which could include the reopening of a gas pipeline between the neighboring South American countries.

Petro's administration also reached agreements with Venezuela's state-owned oil company PDVSA to replace the pipeline in the Colombian section.

Petro and Rodríguez are also expected to discuss the presence of illegal armed groups and drug trafficking along their shared border.

Durán, a researcher at the Venezuela Observatory at the Universidad del Rosario. "Colombia, by virtue of its geographical nature, would become the client that could quickly bring revenue into Venezuela under U.S. supervision," he added.

The topic was part of the conversation during the nearly two-hour meeting between Petro and US President Donald Trump at the White House in February. Both said the talks were friendly - a dramatic about-face from weeks earlier, when Trump accused Petro of pumping cocaine into the US and threatened his country with military action.

According to Petro, they discussed how to revitalize the Venezuelan economy with Colombia's assistance, as well as the role of the U.S., which the Colombian leader said should "lift sanctions" on Venezuela.

Also:

SAO PAULO: Fewer podiums and interviews. More lunges and squats.

Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is pumping up his reelection bid at age 80 by looking jacked in workouts that his critics say are more



Colombia's President Gustavo Petro speaks during a news conference at the Colombian embassy in Washington on Feb. 3. (AP)

popular than the man himself.

While Brazilians are divided over whether he should run for his fourth nonconsecutive term, there is a rare consensus regarding his commitment to run on a treadmill every day.

Ex-Philippine president Duterte to face trial on crimes against humanity charges

THE HAGUE, Netherlands, April 23, (AP): Judges at the International Criminal Court on Thursday confirmed crimes against humanity charges against former Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte for deadly anti-drugs crackdowns he allegedly oversaw while in office.

A three-judge panel found unanimously there were "substantial grounds" to believe the ex-leader was responsible for dozens of murders, first as mayor of the southern Philippine city of Davao and later when he was president.

Duterte, who served as president from 2016 to 2022, was arrested in the Philippines last year and flown to the Hague, where the global court is located. He denies the charges against him.

In their 50-page decision, judges found that the evidence shows that Duterte, 81, "developed, disseminated and implemented" a policy "to 'neutralize' alleged criminals."

According to prosecutors, police and hit squad members carried out dozens of murders at Duterte's behest starting



Former president of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte speaks inside the Southern Stadium during a thanksgiving gathering organized by Hong Kong-based Filipino workers for the former populist president in Hong Kong on March 9, 2025. (AP)

in 2011, motivated by the promise of money or to avoid becoming targets themselves.

"For some, killing reached the level

of a perverse form of competition," deputy prosecutor Mame Mandiaye Niang told the court in pretrial hearings in February.

Islamic militants kill 11, burn homes in Nigeria, say officials

MAIDUGURI, Borno, April 23, (AP): Islamic militants attacked a remote village in northeastern Nigeria overnight, killing 11 people and leaving two critically injured, local officials said Wednesday. It was the latest violence in Africa's most populous country that has long been battling a complex security crisis.

The attack took place late on Tuesday in Pubagu, a community in a remote area on the fringes of Sambisa forest in Borno state, the epicenter of Nigeria's long fight against an Islamic insurgency. Villagers said they buried the victims on Wednesday and attributed the attack to the extremist Boko Haram group.

The local council chairman, Mwada Saidu Uba, told The Associated Press that the village had previously been considered a safe haven.

"Pubagu is one of the locations in our council area that had never suffered such an attack until yesterday," he said after the funerals. The two injured were receiving treatment at a nearby hospital, he added.

Usman Rumirgo, a local ward official, said the assailants set several houses ablaze before leaving the area.

Vulnerable rural communities regularly come under fire from Islamic extremists and bandits who take advantage of Nigeria's vast rural areas and security gaps.

Among the most prominent Islamic militant groups active in Nigeria are Boko Haram and its breakaway faction, affiliated with the Islamic State group and is known as Islamic State West Africa Province, or ISWAP. There is also the IS-linked Lakurawa, as well as other "bandit" groups that specialize in kidnapping for ransom and illegal mining.

Meanwhile, six people accused of plotting to overthrow Nigerian President Bola Tinubu were arraigned in court on Wednesday on charges of treason and terrorism.



Tinubu

With year-on-year growth of 1.0%

NBK reports net profit of KD 135.5 million in 1Q 2026

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has announced its financial results for the three months ended 31 March 2026. The Bank reported a net profit of KD 135.5 million (USD 441.3 million), compared to KD 134.1 million (USD 436.8 million) for the first quarter of 2025.

Total assets as of the end of March 2026 rose by 10.7% year-on-year, reaching KD 46.1 billion (USD 150.2 billion), while Group loans and advances grew by 10.9%, compared to the corresponding period of 2025 to reach KD 27.3 billion (USD 88.9 billion).

Meanwhile, customer deposits increased by 10.0% year-on-year to reach KD 25.9 billion (USD 84.3 billion), while shareholders' equity rose by 6.0% year-on-year, reaching KD 4.3 billion (USD 13.9 billion) as of the end of March 2026.

Delivering with Efficiency and Discipline

Commenting on the Bank's financial results, Mr. Hamad Al-Bahar, NBK Group Chairman, stated that the Bank's financial performance in 1Q2026 underscores the strength and resilience of its business model, sustaining stable performance with consistency and discipline amid heightened regional and global uncertainty.

Al-Bahar noted that NBK Group navigated these conditions with efficiency, anchored in a prudent strategic approach, diversified operations and strong operational flexibility, supported by a solid capital base, high asset quality, comfortable liquidity levels, and a robust governance and risk management framework. This enabled the Group to manage the rapidly evolving geopolitical developments with discipline and foresight; effectively mitigating their impact on overall performance.

"In light of the exceptional global and regional developments, we at NBK reaffirm our unwavering commitment to our national responsibility, as well as our continued dedication to supporting the State's strategic direction and future aspirations. We remain firmly committed to contributing to the effective execution of development plans and advancing sustainable development, in a manner that strengthens the resilience of the national economy and serves the interests of the nation and its citizens. We pray for the continued safety, security, and stability of Kuwait," Al-Bahar said.

He emphasized NBK's commitment to its role as a key partner in supporting the stability of the national economy and serving the community with consistency and reliability under all circumstances. He highlighted that the Bank continues to operate in close coordination with the Central Bank of Kuwait, in collaboration with other Kuwaiti banks, to reinforce confidence in the banking sector, ensure the uninterrupted continuity of banking services and to extend support across all economic sectors.

Furthermore, Al-Bahar highlighted that the strength of Kuwait's banking sector, underpinned by robust capitalization, ample liquidity, and a well-established regulatory framework, constitutes a fundamental pillar reinforcing the economy's resilience and its capacity to navigate prevailing challenges with confidence.

Operational Resilience

Meanwhile, Mr. Isam J. Al-Sager, Vice Chairman and Group CEO of NBK, highlighted that the Group's financial performance in 1Q2026 reflects the underlying strength and consistency of its operating model, supported by a well-diversified business mix, a balanced geographic footprint, and disciplined long-term strategic investments, underpinned by a prudent and forward-looking risk management framework.

He emphasized that the diversification of NBK Group's business portfolio and its broad geographic footprint have materially strengthened its resilience, effectively mitigating the impact of recent geopolitical tensions on performance.

Furthermore, Al-Sager highlighted that the Bank's operations continued with a high degree of efficiency and stability, without disruption, despite challenges in certain regional markets. "During 1Q2026, NBK continued to deliver the full spectrum of banking services to both retail and corporate customers, within Kuwait and across its international network, in a secure and uninterrupted manner. This was facilitated through its domestic branch network, as well as the International Business Group (IBG)"

He added that all banking systems and customer service platforms remain fully operational and efficient, with no impact on business continuity or the quality of service delivery.

Al-Sager also emphasized that digital channels, including the NBK Mobile Banking App and NBK Online Banking platforms, continue to operate with full efficiency, alongside the Bank's ATM network deployed across multiple locations and operating on a 24/7 basis. He further emphasized that all critical and support functions continue to perform seamlessly, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery, particularly across trade finance and corporate banking activities.

He also underscored that the safety of employees and customers remains a paramount priority, with all necessary measures and precautionary protocols firmly in place to maintain a secure and stable working environment, while upholding the highest standards of operational readiness and business continuity across all markets.



Hamad Al-Bahar



Isam J. Al-Sager



NBK Headquarters

Al-Bahar:

- NBK's performance underscores the strength and resilience of its business model amid heightened regional and global uncertainty
- Our strong operational efficiency and disciplined execution enabled us to navigate a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape with confidence
- The Bank continues to reinforce its position as a trusted partner in supporting national economic stability and delivering sustained value to the community across all conditions

Al-Sager:

- Our diversified business model and broad geographic presence mitigated the impact of recent geopolitical tensions on performance
- NBK continues to operate with efficiency and resilience across domestic and international markets without disruption
- We have proactively implemented all necessary measures to ensure a safe working environment, placing the safety of our employees and customers at the forefront of our priorities
- Kuwait's strong financial buffers enhance its capacity to navigate current challenges with confidence
- Robust financial assets, ongoing reforms, and sustained infrastructure investments continue to underpin the stability of Kuwait's economy
- Recent measures introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait further strengthen the banking sector's capacity to support all economic sectors

Core Business Segments

Al-Sager stated that NBK Group's core business segments delivered a resilient and well-balanced performance during 1Q2026, reflecting the depth and quality of its earnings base. This translated into a 6.6% year-on-year increase in net operating income, reaching KD331.2 million (USD 1.1 billion) during the period.

He noted that NBK continued to expand its customer base through the disciplined rollout of innovative digital products and services, complemented by a consistently differentiated customer experience. Moreover, he added that the Bank's sustained investments in technology and innovation are strategically positioned to reinforce its leadership in digital banking, enabling scalable growth, enhancing operational efficiency and driving long-term value creation for both customers and shareholders.

In parallel, Al-Sager highlighted that NBK Group's international operations, alongside its Islamic banking arm, Boubyan Bank, played a pivotal role in supporting the growth of net operating income and net profit during 1Q2026, reflecting the strength of the Group's strategic vision and the effectiveness of its diversified business model.

Al-Sager further emphasized that NBK Wealth continues to reinforce its standing as the largest wealth management entity in Kuwait and among the region's leading players, reflecting the strength of its platform and the consistency of its performance. He added that this momentum has been recognized through a series

of prestigious international awards, including "Best Private Banking Services for the Next Generation in the World 2026" and "Best Private Bank in Kuwait 2026" from Global Finance magazine, as well as the "Best Regional Investment-Focus in the Middle East 2026" award from MandateWire.

Sustainability and Organizational Excellence

Al-Sager reaffirmed NBK's continued commitment to advancing its sustainability agenda through the expansion of green financing initiatives and the development of products and services aligned with leading global practices, while supporting the State's direction toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

As part of its efforts to further enhance the workplace environment, he highlighted the launch of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council during 1Q2026, reflecting the Bank's commitment to fostering a fair and inclusive workplace that leverages diversity as a source of strength and innovation.

Business Environment

Commenting on the business environment in Kuwait, Al-Sager said: "The business environment demonstrated early signs of improvement at the start of the year, supported by credit expansion, heightened real estate activity, and a surge in project awards. However, recent geopolitical tensions in the region have weighed on the broader outlook, rendering economic prospects more susceptible to elevated uncertainty".

Al-Sager added that, despite prevailing uncertainty, Kuwait continues to benefit from strong financial buffers that reinforce its capacity to navigate current challenges. He emphasized that the strength of the country's financial assets, alongside sustained momentum in economic reforms and infrastructure investments in the period ahead, constitute key pillars underpinning the stability of Kuwait's economy.

He further noted that NBK will continue to reinforce its operational resilience, deepen the diversification of its income streams, and uphold its disciplined and prudent approach, ensuring the sustained creation of value for shareholders and customers across evolving economic conditions.

Al-Sager concluded by commending the recent regulatory and precautionary measures introduced by the Central Bank of Kuwait, underscoring their critical role in further strengthening the stability and resilience of the domestic banking sector and enhancing its capacity to sustain support for the broader economy under prevailing conditions.

Key financial indicators for the financial in 1Q 2026

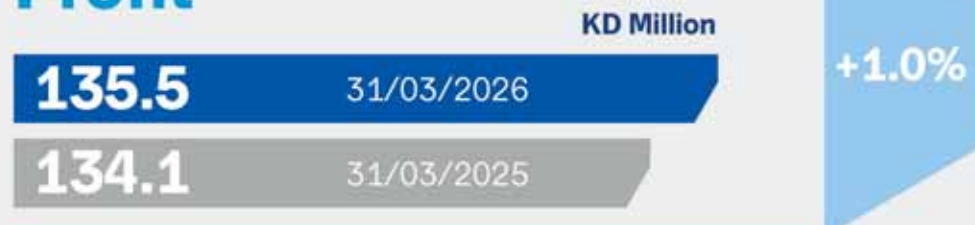
- Net operating income stood at KD 331.2 million (USD 1.1 billion), up 6.6% year-on-year
- Total assets grew by 10.7% year-on-year, at KD 46.1 billion (USD 150.2 billion)
- Total loans and advances increased by 10.9% year-on-year to KD 27.3 billion (USD 88.9 billion)
- Customer deposits grew by 10.0% year-on-year to KD 25.9 billion (USD 84.3 billion)
- Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 4.3 billion (USD 13.9 billion), registering an annual growth of 6.0%.
- Strong asset quality metrics, with NPL/gross loans ratio at 1.35% and an NPL coverage ratio of 241%
- Robust Capital Adequacy Ratio of 16.4%, comfortably exceeding regulatory requirements.

Financial Highlights

1st Quarter 2026



Net Profit



Net Operating Income



Earnings Per Share



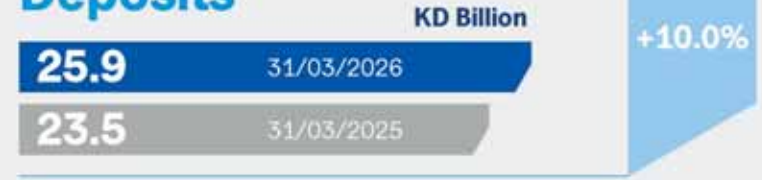
Total Assets



Customer Loans & Advances



Customer Deposits



Shareholders' Equity



With an earnings per share of 4.95 fils

Boubyan Bank reports net profits of KD 26.4 million for Q1, 2026

Total assets grew by 7% to KD 10.4 billion

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Boubyan Bank announced its financial results for Q1 of this year, as the bank recorded net profits of KD 26.4 million, with an earnings per share of 4.95 Fils.

The bank's assets grew to KD 10.4 billion at a growth rate of 7% compared with last year, while the bank's financing portfolio grew by 8% to KD 7.8 billion, whereas the bank's market share of local financing increased to 12.3%.

Commenting on the financial results, Mr. Abdulaziz Abdullah Dakheel Al-Shaya, Boubyan Bank's Chairman, stated: "Boubyan Bank has recorded good results during Q1 of this year despite geopolitical developments across the region, which have had a direct impact on various economic sectors, including the banking sector."

He added: "The Kuwaiti banking sector has demonstrated its resilience and ability to effectively deal with evolving conditions, supported by robust financial foundations and a cutting-edge regulatory framework, which contributed to maintaining the stability of the financial system and helped it continue playing a vital role."

Al-Shaya elaborated: "Boubyan continues to implement its strategy, which is based on balanced growth through effective management of risks and diversifying sources of income, in a manner that reinforces its ability to maintain a stable performance and a solid financial position, while continuing to support the national economy and aspiring for greater stability over the upcoming period, thus reflecting positively on various sectors."

He emphasized: "Boubyan is a pioneer in the domestic banking sector, with its keenness on offering a sustainable added value to shareholders, customers, and the communities where it is active, in addition to developing banking solutions and services that cater for the needs of customers and keep up with their evolving needs."

Resilience and Readiness amid Changes

On his part, Mr. Adel Al-Majed, Boubyan Bank's Vice-Chairman & Group Chief Executive Officer, stated: "The financial results achieved by Boubyan Bank in Q1 of this year demonstrate the bank's resilience and adaptability to various conditions, bolstered by a clear strategy that focuses on diversifying products and services, in addition to maintaining a high liquidity level."

He went on to add: "The business mix and diverse investments, coupled with efficient risk management, have contributed to boosting the bank's operational resilience across all of its sectors, thus enabling it to sustain its stable performance during this phase."

Al-Majed highlighted the pivotal role played by the Central Bank of Kuwait in light of the ongoing situation, as well as its incentive measures to reinforce the resilience of the banking sector and to support the stability of financial systems, in a manner that reflected the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory framework in dealing with different conditions, which reflected positively on the banking environment and reinforced trust in the sector.

Al-Majed added: "Regarding Boubyan, the bank continued to offer innovative solutions and services that keep up with the developments in the market, in addition to upgrading its digital services and reinforcing innovation, in a manner that ensures the continuity of high-quality and efficient services, catering for the evolving needs of customers, and expanding its customer base towards sustained growth."

Duty at All Times

In view of the ongoing developments, Boubyan has been keen on continuing its community role through actionable initiatives that reflect its commitment to supporting the community and state institutions.

Within this context, Boubyan Team of Volunteers participated in the blood-donation campaign in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank with the participation of a number of the bank's employees in a step that embodies the spirit of CSR.

Building on that, the bank launched initiatives to support frontliners, including making a special offer in collaboration with JustClean to offer them uniform cleaning and preparation service, in addition to providing free healthy meals through self-service machines at a number of key institutions in collaboration with Vendit. Additionally, the bank continued its efforts to spread awareness through digital channels by spreading digital awareness messages and emphasizing the importance of verifying the sources of information, in addition to other awareness initiatives that aimed at reinforcing family stability.

Digital Investment

Boubyan emphasized that its investments in digital services were key in ensuring the continuity of its operational services during the period, as the bank



Abdulaziz Al-Shaya



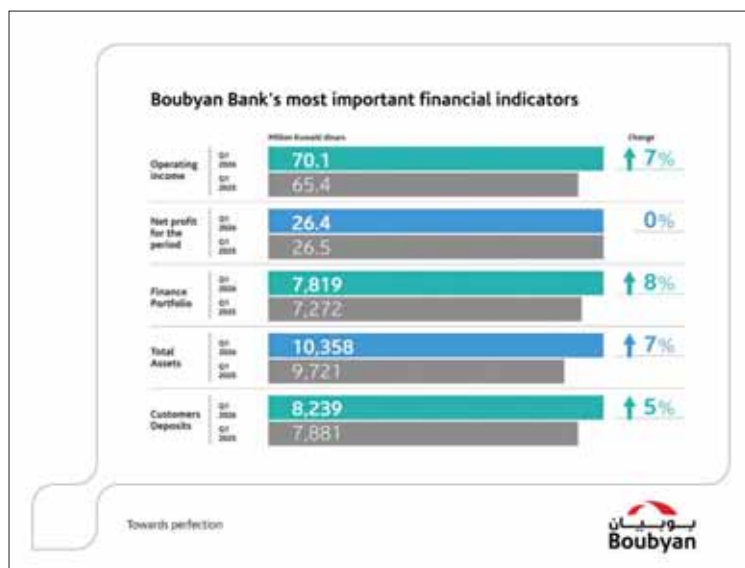
Adel Al-Majed

Abdulaziz Al-Shaya:

- The Kuwaiti Banking Sector Demonstrated Resilience amid Global Uncertainties
- Boubyan Is Keen on Adding Sustainable Value to Shareholders and Customers

Adel Al-Majed:

- Balanced Performance, Boosted by Our Solid Financial Position and Prudent Risk Management Despite Geopolitical Challenges
- Key Business Sectors Maintained High Operational Flexibility That Contributed to Stable Performance Throughout Q1



continued offering banking services efficiently and seamlessly through different channels, boosted by its state-of-the-art technological infrastructure and its integrated digital ecosystems, which supported the resilience of operations and their adaptability under different conditions.

These investments reflect the approach followed by the bank in adopting advanced digital solutions that enhance the quality of offered services, as they provide an integrated banking experience that allows customers to execute their transactions easily and swiftly around the clock, including Msa3ed, the digital assistant, highlighting the bank's ability to maintain efficiency of performance and the continuity of offering services at the same level, while reinforcing the bank's

status in the area of digital banking transformation.

Business Continuity Support

As part of its strategic direction, Boubyan launched the "Empower by Boubyan" initiative that aimed at supporting tech companies that progressed past the concept stage and now seek effective growth and expansion in the local and regional markets.

This initiative embodies a transformation in the bank's role towards adopting the strategic partner operational model by supporting companies across their various growth stages, starting from the development of solutions, operation, and up to expansion and strengthening growth opportunities.

In parallel with the launch of the initiative, the bank announced the formation of an advisory council comprised of top executives and entrepreneurs, in what would provide a strategic supervision and guidance to support the readiness of companies and support their decisions based on advanced market expertise.

The initiative offers a complete model of support through multiple paths including partnerships, guidance, and connecting companies with opportunities, in addition to supporting growth and investment, in a manner that reflects the bank's vision with regard to contributing to building an advanced digital economy and supporting the financial innovation ecosystem.

In collaboration with the partners of the advisory council, Boubyan presented an actionable content through a set of tips emanating from hands-on expertise, aiming at providing entrepreneurs with practical insights that help them manage their business effectively and reinforce their ability to continue, and to deal with and overcome challenges.

Highlights

1st Highlight

Boubyan strengthened its presence in the domestic and regional economic landscape through its presence on Forbes List for the Middle East's 100 Most Valuable Companies 2026, ranked based on market value, assets, and profitability. The bank ranked third domestically among Kuwaiti banks, and 52nd regionally on the same list, thus climbing 9 spots compared with last year's ranking.

2nd Highlight

During Q1 - 2026, Boubyan was recognized with two awards, namely the "Best for Client Service - Kuwait" and the "Best for Digital Solutions - Kuwait" for private banking for this year from Euromoney, in recognition of the bank's excellence and pioneering status in the private banking domain.

3rd Highlight

Boubyan offered a new exceptional experience for its elite customers through Boubyan Concierge App, the first App of its kind in Kuwait to offer prestigious concierge services, which keeps up with customers' lifestyle and their growing expectations towards more convenience and luxury.

Boubyan Concierge is a complete App designed to complement customers' lifestyle, offering smooth and high-quality solutions to manage their various daily needs through one digital platform combining privacy with usability in a high-level digital experience.

4th Highlight

The bank launched "Boubyan Business Award", the first initiative of its kind across the Kuwaiti banking sector, aiming at empowering and supporting SMEs and highlighting entrepreneurial models, which succeeded in making a significant impact in the market and the society.

5th Highlight

Boubyan Bank's Contributions in Numbers throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan

- More than 330 million steps walked as part of Boubyan Steps Campaign.
- More than 1,600 participants in the 11th "Recite with Boubyan" Competition, and announcing 30 winners among the memorizers of the Glorious Qur'an.
- Distribution of more than 6,000 food baskets to needy families as part of the "Neamaty" Initiative.
- The Boubyan E-League competition that continued for several months was concluded with more than 2,000 participating gamers.
- More than 552 thousand participants in the "One Minute Challenge" throughout the Holy Month, with more than 390 thousand correct answers.

Kuwait eyes return of \$58.7 bln capital

Why billions are leaving Kuwait & what could bring them back?

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: In light of the government's efforts to amend some economic laws and regulations related to the private sector and to attract Kuwaiti expatriate and foreign investments in order to strengthen the country's economic infrastructure, the daily posed the question - When will expatriate Kuwaiti capital return home?

This question comes amid an outflow of approximately 58.7 billion dollars in direct local investments from the Kuwaiti market to global markets between 2020 and 2024, according to the Al-Shall report.

In this regard, economic expert Nasser Al-Mutairi stressed the importance of bringing national capital back, taking advantage of the current period, which has seen multiple economic reforms and high growth rates.

He explained that four key incentives could play a major role in this regard. First, the need to amend economic legislation to keep pace with current developments.

Second, further reducing local monopolies in the trade and industrial sectors. Third, greater flexibility and simplifying procedures for obtaining commercial licenses, with a single entity handling transactions. Procedural complexity and lengthy paperwork have been among the main reasons behind capital outflows. Fourth, the need for greater flexibility in allocating industrial

land to serious investors, as there are vast areas that have not yet been utilized.

Al-Mutairi stressed the importance of establishing modern industrial zones with integrated infrastructure, dedicated exclusively to industrial use. He emphasized that areas designated for industry should not be converted into exhibition spaces, markets, or shopping malls.

Meanwhile, economic expert and anti-money laundering lawyer Ali Al-Attar believes it is necessary to amend laws related to the local private sector to attract Kuwaiti capital invested in global markets, particularly as oil revenues in this year's budget are expected to decline due to the halt in oil exports since the beginning of the war.

He explained that restoring production to full capacity will take about four months, according to statements by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), in addition to roughly two months resulting from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Oil revenues are expected to decline for a period of six months due to the war, the effects of which continue despite the truce.

Lawyer Al-Attar urged Kuwaiti expatriate investors to act with a sense of national responsibility and direct their investments toward the local market to support and strengthen the national economy, emphasizing that Kuwait's economic environment is currently attractive to foreign investment.

Furthermore, economic expert

Salem Al-Hamoud stressed that Kuwaiti capital held abroad should return and be invested locally to help diversify sources of income and reduce the national economy's reliance on a single revenue stream.

He highlighted that the recent war crisis may lead to an unexpected and significant deficit in the current fiscal year's budget due to the halt in oil exports.

Al-Hamoud emphasized the importance of localizing Kuwaiti capital by offering more investment opportunities, particularly in the manufacturing sector, large-sized and medium-sized industries, and import and export businesses., adding that achieving this requires providing meaningful incentives to the private sector.

In addition, a study conducted by the Gulf Organization for Consulting identified several administrative problems facing the private sector, as follows:

- Overlapping jurisdictions among several government entities, which complicate procedures and prolong the bureaucratic process.
- Limited availability of land and the underdevelopment of industrial cities, despite their importance as a foundation for industrial success in any country.
- Intense competition facing Kuwaiti products in the absence of sufficient support, particularly given the openness of the local market to large volumes of imports.

Trading tops KD 92 million

Bursa Kuwait ends mixed as main market leads gains

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): Bursa Kuwait ended Thursday's session on a mixed note, with the general index edging up by 7.09 points, or 0.08 percent, to close at 8,879 points. Trading activity saw 417.4 million shares change hands across 26,314 transactions, with a total value of KWD 92.4 million (approximately USD 282.7 million).

The Main Market Index outperformed, rising by 75.30 points, or 0.91 percent, to reach 8,387.39 points. This came on the back of 277.7 million shares traded through 15,058 transactions valued at KWD 37.9 million (around USD 115.9 million). In contrast, the Premier Market Index slipped by 7.05 points, or 0.07 percent, closing at 9,444.34 points, with 139.7 million

shares traded via 11,256 transactions worth KWD 54.4 million (approximately USD 166.4 million). Meanwhile, the Main 50 Index posted a solid gain of 81.09 points, or 0.89 percent, to settle at 9,221.64 points. Trading volume reached 237.7 million shares across 11,712 transactions, totaling KWD 31.5 million (about USD 96.3 million).

Food costs lift inflation slightly

Kuwait inflation rises 2.06% in March amid supply disruptions

By Najeh Bilal
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Inflation in Kuwait saw a year-on-year increase of 2.06 percent in March 2026, rising by approximately 0.43 percent, driven by a significant increase in food and beverage costs due to the ongoing conflict in the region throughout the month and the disruption of supply chains following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which led to higher shipping costs.

The slight acceleration in Kuwait's inflation rate compared to other global economies indicates that Kuwait has successfully navigated the challenges posed by its overall economic policies, most notably food subsidies and energy price support, in addition to the recent decision by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to subsidize shipping costs.

The rest of the world's economies continue to grapple with intense fiscal and monetary policy efforts to curb rising inflation rates resulting from the aforementioned conflict.

Economic reports indicate that the annual inflation rate in the United States reached 3.3 percent in March, its highest level since May 2024.

However, inflation rates in most countries worldwide were driven by record-high oil and fuel prices, while food prices and shipping costs were particularly significant contributors to

the rise in inflation in Kuwait. Energy costs in the United States rose by more than 12.5 percent in March, with gasoline increasing by 18.9 percent and fuel oil by 44.2 percent.

Like other economies, the Eurozone is also grappling with rising fuel prices. The Eurozone's inflation rate rose by 2.6 percent year-on-year in March, compared to 1.9 percent in February.

In Kuwait, the rise in inflation in March, albeit slight, was driven by a 5.71 percent increase in food and beverage prices compared to March 2025, despite the substantial subsidies Kuwait provides to its citizens.

Fuel subsidies have kept transportation costs down in Kuwait, unlike in other economies worldwide.

A significant measure in Kuwait's efforts to manage inflation was a decision by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai at the beginning of the month to subsidize additional costs, ensuring the uninterrupted supply of basic commodities and stabilizing their prices in the local market, according to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

As per the decision, the ministry will cover the additional costs incurred by importing companies to ensure the continued supply of essential goods to Kuwait under exceptional circumstances. These circumstances are defined as disruptions or outages

to maritime or land supply routes that require the use of alternative routes or transport methods.

This decision applies only to essential goods, namely rice, flour, lentils, vegetable oils, sugar, frozen whole chickens, tomato paste, infant formula for children under two years old, powdered milk, and canned goods such as beans, chickpeas, tuna, corn, peas, kidney beans, and bottled water.

In this regard, economic expert and financial analyst Salem Al-Kandari attributed the slight increase in inflation in Kuwait during March to the strength of the Kuwaiti economy, despite the halt in Kuwaiti oil exports.

He explained that the Kuwaiti government successfully navigated this difficult test, maintaining stable domestic market prices and confronting inflationary pressures with firmness and resolve. The stability of gasoline, diesel, and all petroleum product prices in the local market was among the key factors contributing to inflation stability in Kuwait during the war crisis, in addition to the continued strength of the Kuwaiti dinar during times of crisis.

Al-Kandari affirmed that government support for essential goods and basic food items, especially during wartime, contributed to stabilizing inflation despite the slight increase in some imported goods.

Brent tops \$101, WTI near \$93

Kuwaiti oil jumps to \$100.33 per barrel in sharp daily gain

KUWAIT CITY, April 23, (KUNA): The price of Kuwaiti oil went up USD 6.69 to reach 100.33 per barrel (pb) in Wednesday's trading, compared

with USD 93.64 pb the previous day, according to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Thursday.

In global markets, Brent

crude rose by USD 3.48 to reach USD 101.91 pb, while US West Texas Intermediate crude increased by USD 3.29 to stand at USD 92.96 pb.

Recognition highlights KFH's regional sustainability leadership

KFH named 'Best Bank for Sustaining Communities in the Middle East' by Global Finance

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has been named "Best Bank for Sustaining Communities in the Middle East" by Global Finance magazine, as part of its Sixth Annual Sustainable Finance Awards, recognizing outstanding leadership in sustainable finance worldwide.

The Global Finance Sustainable Finance Awards Ceremony 2026 was held in London to honor institutions demonstrating excellence in financing initiatives that mitigate climate change, promote social inclusion, and contribute to building a more sustainable and resilient future.

Winners were selected across multiple categories, including sustainability financing, community support, transparency and reporting, infrastructure development, and emerging-market sustainability funding, spanning 56 countries, territories, and districts.

Commitment to Sustainable Communities

Commenting on the achievement, KFH Head of Group Compliance and Governance, Meshal Alshayee, said: "We are deeply honored to receive Global Finance's award for Best Bank for Sustaining Communities in the Middle East. This recognition underscores our unwavering commitment to sustainability as a core pillar of KFH's strategy and operations. We firmly believe that financial leadership carries a responsibility to nurture resilient, inclusive, and environmentally conscious communities. Through sustainable financing initiatives, impactful social development programs, and investments that support long-term prosperity, this award further inspires us to strengthen our role as a leading force in sustainable development and community empowerment."

Integration of ESG Principles

Alshayee indicated that 2025 marked a milestone year for KFH's sustainability journey, achieved through the integration of sustainability into the Group's overall strategy and the adoption of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles. These efforts align with Kuwait Vision 2035 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), reinforcing



Meshal Alshayee

Alshayee:

■ Sustainability is a core pillar of KFH's strategy and operations



KFH's commitment to responsible and future-focused banking.

Sustainability and Carbon Footprint Reporting

He added: "In 2025, KFH issued its fifth annual Sustainability Report, highlighting its progress and initiatives across environmental, social, and governance pillars. The Bank also released its third Carbon Footprint Report, providing a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact of its operations. These reports support KFH's commitment to transparency, emissions monitoring, and continuous environmental performance improvement."

World-Class Rankings and Prestigious Awards

Alshayee pointed out that building on its sustainability achievements, KFH

earned the MSCI ESG "A" Rating, reflecting strong ESG practices and sustainable finance performance. The Bank was included in the FTSE4Good Index Series, further reinforcing its standing among leading global sustainable financial institutions.

Global Finance Perspective

From his side, Joseph Giarraputo, Founder and Editorial Director of Global Finance, stated: "Sustainable finance continues to expand in key markets around the world, driven by strong issuance of green, social, and sustainability bonds, with the sustainable debt market now measured in the trillions of dollars. However, persistent challenges remain, including regulatory fragmentation, data and disclosure gaps, concerns about greenwashing, and the need for more credible impact measurement. Global Finance's Sustainable Finance Awards celebrate financial institutions that demonstrate creative, innovative, and effective leadership across a wide range of initiatives."

Criteria and Selection Process

Regional winners were selected by Global Finance editors based on award submissions, independent research, governance policies, strategic objectives, and measurable achievements in environmental and social sustainability financing. The awards evaluated initiatives and performance from January 2025 through December 2025.

About Global Finance

Founded in 1987, Global Finance has a circulation of approximately 50,000 readers across 185 countries, territories, and districts. Its audience includes senior corporate and financial decision-makers at multinational companies and financial institutions. The magazine's website, GFMag.com, offers in-depth analysis and commentary drawn from nearly four decades of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance is headquartered in New York, with offices around the world.



Warba Bank hosts employee blood drive in collaboration with Central Blood Bank.

Strong staff turnout at blood donation drive

Warba Bank hosts blood donation campaign

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Warba Bank organized a blood donation campaign for its employees in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank. The initiative aims to promote corporate social responsibility and volunteerism within the workplace while supporting the national healthcare system.

The campaign, held at the bank's headquarters in Jabriya, drew strong participation from employees across various departments. A specialized medical team from the Central Blood Bank supervised the process, ensuring all safety and quality standards were met.

Supporting the National Healthcare System:

Maali Abdullah Al-Rasheed, Chief Human Resources and General Services Officer at Warba Bank, said the campaign is part of the bank's strategy to integrate social responsibility as a core component of its institutional culture.



Maali Al-Rasheed

She added that the initiative encourages employees to contribute to humanitarian causes, noting that the high turnout reflects a strong awareness among staff regarding their social responsibilities. "The collaboration reflects strong cooperation between the banking and health sectors, highlighting the importance of coordinated national efforts," Al-Rasheed said.

Ongoing Community Initiatives:

The bank said such initiatives aim to support the national blood supply, which is vital for emergency cases and surgical procedures. The campaign aligns with a series of programs launched by Warba Bank throughout the year, covering health, humanitarian, and educational sectors.

These programs aim to achieve a long-term positive impact on society, reinforcing the bank's role as a proactive partner in national development and community cohesion.

About Warba Bank:

Warba Bank is a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait with a strong focus on Sharia-compliant digital banking. With one of the largest shareholder bases in the country, the bank delivers innovative financial products and services, reinforcing its position as a digital-focused institution.

Other Voices

Private Credit: A Core Pillar of Investment Strategy

By Hassan F. Beidas

IN a world where financial dynamics are shifting rapidly and traditional financing is becoming more constrained, private credit has emerged as a smart and flexible option – one that is increasingly capturing the attention of investors seeking differentiated opportunities. Relying solely on publicly traded fixed-income instruments is no longer sufficient to achieve desired returns, especially as tighter bank lending conditions continue to reshape the landscape. This has opened the door to more dynamic and innovative financing solutions.

At its core, private credit refers to lending that takes place outside the traditional banking system, where debt instruments are neither issued nor traded in public markets. This form of financing is often directed toward mid-size companies or privately held companies – a segment that represents more than 90% of businesses in most economies. Despite being the backbone of economic activity, these companies frequently face challenges in accessing conventional funding. This is where investment firms, such as asset managers and private debt funds, step in to bridge the gap by offering tailored financing solutions designed to meet specific needs.

What makes private credit particularly compelling is not just its flexibility, but also its ability to enhance portfolio returns. At a time when investors are striving to balance risk and reward, this asset class offers the potential for higher income compared to traditional instruments. That makes it especially attractive in an environment where yields in public markets remain relatively low.



Hassan F. Beidas

Another strength lies in the structure of many private credit investments, which often feature floating interest rates that adjust with market movements. This not only supports competitive returns but also provides a natural hedge against inflation – helping investors preserve the real value of their capital over time.

In recent years, there has been a clear shift among portfolio managers toward financing fundamentally strong companies that face limited access to capital markets. This gap presents a genuine investment opportunity, allowing for the deployment of significant capital at attractive returns over multi-year horizons. At the same time, investors are increasingly exploring the secondary market for private credit, where debt can sometimes be acquired at discounted valuations – further enhancing return potential.

The relative safety of private credit is another factor that cannot be overlooked. Loans are often secured by strong underlying assets and they are considered senior secure loans, offering an added layer of protection for lenders and helping to mitigate downside risks.

Despite broader financial market challenges, private credit has demonstrated notable resilience during periods of volatility. This is largely due to its dynamic characteristics, including floating-rate mechanisms and pricing tied to benchmark rates, as well as its low correlation with traditional equity and bond markets. These attributes make it not only a return-enhancing tool, but also an effective means of portfolio diversification – and a reliable buffer against inflation and market fluctuations.

In conclusion, private credit is no longer just an alternative – it has become an essential component of a well-balanced investment strategy, one that blends the pursuit of returns with disciplined risk management.

S&P 500 hits record high

War, inflation, high gas – So why is Wall Street booming?

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP): It seems so illogical. How can the U.S. stock market be setting records when gasoline prices are still expensive, U.S. households are feeling less confident about the economy and the war with Iran is still going?

But for Wall Street, everything eventually comes back to a different, basic question: How much money are companies making? And at the moment, they're earning so much that investors are willing to pay higher prices than ever for a piece of ownership of U.S. companies.

It's been a jarring ride for investors, many of whom may have felt the urge to dump their stock investments last month when the S&P 500 fell nearly 10% below its prior record. But as it has every time so far in its history, the index at the heart of many 401(k) accounts rewarded investors who remained patient by not only recovering all its losses but also forging to new heights. On Wednesday, the index closed at a record 7,137.90.

Here's a look at what's been behind the market's surprising strength:

Stock prices flitter up and down every second for myriad reasons, many of which no one can explain. But at its heart, and over the long term, a stock's price depends on two things: how much money a company is making and how much an investor is willing to pay for each \$1 of that.

The latter part of that formula tends to swing up and down with interest rates and how much greed investors are feeling versus fear.

When fear prevailed in the early days of the war, stock prices dove. The worry was that a long-term surge for oil prices because of the war could send a debilitating wave of inflation crashing into the global economy.

Interest rates also rose, further undercutting stock prices, as investors worried the threat of high inflation would prevent the Federal Reserve and other central banks worldwide from cutting the short-term interest rates they control. While lower interest rates can give the economy a boost, they can also worsen inflation.

Since late March, expectations have built that the United States and Iran will avoid a worst-case scenario for the global economy. It would be in both countries' economic interests to do so, and for Iran's leadership, an end to the war would also likely mean survival.

The ceasefire that the two sides agreed to earlier this month is still holding, though it's tenuous.

The market's shift away from abstract fear has also shown itself in oil prices.



Specialist Meric Greenbaum works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Wednesday, April 22, 2026. (AP)

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, went from roughly \$70 before the war to \$119 when worries reached their heights. It has since pulled back and was bouncing around \$100 on Wednesday.

Much of the focus has been on the Strait of Hormuz, which oil tankers use to exit the Persian Gulf. If Iran keeps the strait closed, and if the U.S. Navy continues to blockade Iranian ships, everyone will get hurt. Customers worldwide will not get oil, and Iran will not get revenue from selling its own crude.

"By denying Iran its oil-related revenue, traders may be thinking that the economic war may be more effective in getting concessions from Iran's regime than was the kinetic war only, and that this will end the war sooner, rather than later," according to Thierry Wizman, a strategist at Macquarie Group.

Traders on Wall Street are also betting again on a chance that the Fed could resume its cuts to interest rates later this year. They see a much lower probability than they did before the war, according to data from CME Group. But they're no longer worried about the possibility of hikes to rates.

As fear has eased, investors have been able to turn their focus more to the first part of the equation making up stock prices: profits. And those have been coming in strong.

A little more than 15% of S&P 500 companies have already reported how much profit they made during the first three months of 2026, and the vast majority have topped analysts' expectations. That includes everyone from Citigroup to J.B. Hunt Transport Services to UnitedHealth Group.

If the rest of the companies in the index just match analysts' estimates, earnings for S&P 500 companies will end up being roughly 14% higher than a year earlier, according to FactSet.

Those results include a month of wartime, and while companies say they're still wary about potential risks because of the fighting, they're not showing many signs of it hurting their earnings.

Bank of America's chief executive officer, Brian Moynihan, said last week that "we saw healthy client activity, including solid consumer spending and stable asset quality, indicating a resilient American economy."

That's even though many U.S. households are feeling nervous about more expensive gasoline and higher prices broadly due to tariffs, as shown in recent surveys.

Analysts have actually raised their expectations for upcoming profits for S&P 500 companies since the war began. They're forecasting growth for S&P 500 profits to accelerate to 20% in the second quarter, and companies aren't giving them many reasons to reconsider.

Delta Air Lines said earlier this month that it's seeing strong demand from people flying both for business and for vacations. PepsiCo last week stuck by its forecast for profit over 2026, which it initially gave before the Iran war began, and CEO Ramon Laguarta said he's encouraged by how resilient its international business has been. GE Vernova on Wednesday said demand is soaring for power from AI data centers, and it raised its revenue forecast for the year.

Of course, the U.S. stock market can easily return to falling. Wall Street's mood could swing quickly back to fear if U.S.-Iran talks break down and the oil market looks to be facing shortages.

And if oil prices stay high for long enough, it would erode some of those profits for companies. Not only would it raise costs for businesses, it would also weaken the spending power for U.S. households and other customers.

Lufthansa cuts 20,000 flights

Airlines slash routes as jet fuel prices soar

LAS VEGAS, April 23, (AP): The German company that owns Lufthansa Airlines and other European carriers said Tuesday that it would cut 20,000 short-haul flights through October as the Iran war drives up oil prices and deepens worries that some countries may run low on jet fuel.

The Lufthansa Group said the cancellation of less profitable routes, focused largely on its hub airports in the German cities of Frankfurt and Munich, would save the equivalent of approximately 40,000 metric tons of jet fuel.

The company last week shut down one of its regional subsidiaries, CityLine, to cut costs. It said a "planned consolidation" within its European network also would involve Lufthansa Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, SWISS and ITA Airways, and hubs in Brussels, Rome, Vienna and Zurich.

The price of jet fuel has more than doubled in some markets since late February, when the war began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran. Airlines are particularly vulnerable to fuel price shocks because jet fuel typically accounts for one of their largest operating expenses.

For travelers, that is already translating into fewer flight options on some routes and higher fees and fares heading into the peak summer season, with many airlines raising checked bag fees or adding fuel surcharges.

Fighting around the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway off Iran's coast where a fifth of the world's oil typically passes, has disrupted fuel prices and supplies around the world.

The head of the International Energy Agency estimated on April 16 that Europe had about 6 weeks' worth of jet fuel remaining and said airlines would start to cut routes from their schedules without more. The European Union's top energy official is also warning that the energy crisis sparked by the

war could impact prices for months "or maybe even years" to come.

"This is not a short-term, small increase in prices," EU Energy Commissioner Dan Jørgensen said Wednesday.

Jørgensen said the war is costing Europe around 500 million euros (\$600 million) each day.

"Even in a best-case scenario," he said, "it's still bad."

Jørgensen also told reporters that EU governments "are very worried" about possible jet fuel shortages. He says the European Commission is doing what it can to help but that Europe is mostly in defensive mode.

Lufthansa, meanwhile, said it has secured enough jet fuel "for the coming weeks" and was "pursuing a range of measures" to keep its fuel supply stable for the summer, "including the physical procurement of jet fuel."

All but one of the world's 20 largest airlines have canceled scheduled May flights spanning every major region, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium. Besides Lufthansa, the carriers include Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, American Airlines, Air Canada, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Air China, British Airways and Air France-KLM, Cirium said.

Last week, Switzerland-based carrier Edelweiss Air announced it is dropping service to Denver and Seattle this summer and reducing flights to Las Vegas through the early autumn.

Air New Zealand is consolidating about 4% of its schedule in May and June.

"Like airlines globally, we're experiencing jet fuel prices that are more than double what they would usually be," the carrier said.

The global price of jet fuel increased from about \$99 per barrel at the end of February to as high as \$209 a barrel at the beginning of April.

Business Plus



Massive solar arrays and wind farms fuel China economic shift

Xi leads push for renewable energy expansion



Flower farmers harvest fresh cut peonies at a peony cultivation base in Yijing Town, Fengfeng Mining District, Handan, north China's Hebei Province, April 20, 2026. Monday marks Guyu, or Grain Rain, the sixth of the 24 traditional Chinese solar terms, signifying the onset of the rainy season, a favorable time for planting and the growth of crops. (Xinhua)

BEIJING, April 23, (Xinhua): Across the deserts in northwest China, where the sun blazes and the winds never relent, those forces that people once had to endure are now powering a new source of wealth.

"We used to hide from them," said Qi Pengxiao, now in his 80s. He arrived in the Qaidam Basin in Qinghai Province as an oil worker in 1957, when the resources beneath the ground were the only treasures that mattered. "Now they've become our precious assets: new energy."

Today, under that same sun, row upon row of solar panels stretch across the desert like a blue ocean, while towering turbines turn in a slow, steady rhythm in the wind. The barren land has emerged as a new energy heartland of renewables.

Driving this shift is a revolution spanning over a decade championed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who aims to build a new energy system that is clean, low-carbon, secure and efficient to power the world's second-largest economy.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, has long given priority to energy security,

an issue he considered overarching and strategic to the nation's economic and social development.

"Whoever commands energy may well command the development potential and the vital source of wealth creation," Xi told a meeting on fiscal and economic affairs back in 2014.

In the face of changes in energy demand and supply, as well as new developments in the international energy landscape, China must ensure national energy security through a revolution in energy production and consumption, he said.

Central to his thinking is a question of balance. How to advance the transition from fossil fuels to new energy without undermining the energy security on which China's development depends, while steadily improving self-sufficiency and long-term supply resilience? The country's climate goals -- to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 -- only sharpen the stakes.

The solution is taking shape in the vast fields of solar panels, an expanding power grid, and a growing fleet of electric vehicles. China now relies on an increasingly diverse energy mix. While crude oil output remains steady at around 200 million tonnes a year,

its wind and solar energy installations for the first time surpassed those of thermal power in 2025.

This restructuring has not come at the expense of energy security. Despite growing demand in recent years, over 90 percent of China's increase in energy consumption has been met domestically, and one-third of its electricity consumption is powered by green energy.

During an inspection trip last month to Xiong'an New Area, a much-anticipated "city of the future" in north China's Hebei Province, Xi said China's efforts to develop wind and solar power had proven "forward-looking in hindsight."

At the same time, he noted, coal-fired power remains the bedrock of the nation's energy system, providing a crucial foundation to ensure energy security.

Such a coordinated approach has led to significant gains in energy efficiency. From 2013 to 2023, China fueled 6.1 percent average annual economic growth with just 3.3 percent energy consumption increase, making it one of the world's fastest-improving nations in energy intensity.

China is also strengthening its energy infrastructure. Today, it takes only

an instant -- about five milliseconds, to be exact -- for electricity generated in the northwestern Qinghai Province to travel over 1,500 kilometers and reach the power-intensive central China via ultra-high-voltage lines. A single second's pulse of electricity is enough to support a household in Henan Province -- one of the country's most populous regions and an economic powerhouse -- for an entire year.

In Henan alone, the ultra-high-voltage corridor is estimated to help slash the region's annual coal consumption by over 15 million tonnes, cutting carbon dioxide emissions by more than 25 million tonnes.

The sweeping transformation is underpinned by a wave of technological breakthroughs that Xi has called for, not only to advance the energy transition but also to foster new engines of economic growth.

"We should develop energy technology and its related industries into a new growth driver to boost industrial upgrading, facilitating the development of new quality productive forces," he has told senior CPC officials.

China has emerged as a global frontrunner in new energy technology and equipment manufacturing. From

2021 to 2025, the nation held over 40 percent of the world's new energy patents, while its photovoltaic conversion efficiency and offshore wind turbine unit capacity repeatedly set new world records.

Just a day earlier, on April 21, Chinese clean-tech giant Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Ltd. (CATL) unveiled its third-generation Shenxing fast-charging battery, capable of charging from 10 percent to 98 percent in six minutes and 27 seconds, narrowing the gap between electric vehicle charging and conventional refueling.

In the recently adopted outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) for national economic and social development, China has set a bold target of doubling its non-fossil fuel supply by 2035.

Emerging technologies such as green hydrogen, concentrated solar power and geothermal energy have also been folded into the blueprint, alongside next-generation energy storage solutions.

Over the next five years, China's power grid investment is expected to exceed 5 trillion yuan (about 728.5 billion U.S. dollars), while efforts will continue to upgrade coal-fired power units for energy conservation and carbon reduction, and to promote technologies such as carbon capture, utilization and storage.

China's push to build a new energy system carries significance well beyond its borders, as the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence data centers strains power grids worldwide and adds fresh pressure alongside growing climate concerns.

According to a February report from the International Energy Agency, global electricity demand is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 3.6 percent over the 2026-2030 period.

China's technological and manufacturing edge is helping bridge this gap. The country has ranked first globally in new energy vehicle production and sales for 11 consecutive years, and it produces 80 percent of the world's solar cells and 70 percent of both wind turbines and lithium batteries.

According to Xi, China's new energy industry has made real progress in open competition and represents advanced production capacity, which not only increases global supply and alleviates the pressure of global inflation but also contributes significantly to global climate response and green transition.

"Low-carbon energy development concerns the future of humanity," he has said, pledging that China stands ready to work with the international community to boost energy cooperation, safeguard energy security, address climate change, and protect the ecological environment to promote sustainable development and benefit people around the world.

Virial wealth tips, real-world financial risks

'Finfluencers' fuel new age of money advice

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

By Maximilian Brichta
University of Virginia

Once seen as often dry and sometimes intimidating, personal finance advice is a far cry from what it was in your grandparents' day.

It's not just the array of new online tools, from banking apps to exotic new investing options, such as cryptocurrency. Social media has created a platform for "finfluencers" -- non-professional personal finance influencers who have become an increasingly common source of advice for young people, whether it's accurate or not.

While most Americans over 64 say they turn to professional financial planners for guidance, a 2025 Gallup poll found that 42% of 18- to 29-year-olds seek financial advice on social media. That's almost double the share among those ages 30 to 49. Many finfluencers have no formal financial credentials. Instead, their credibility is largely built on their social media followings, engagement metrics and relatability.

There's also another generational shift afoot: Personal finance is increasingly bound up with political and social issues. Young adults are attempting to navigate a precarious economy -- and the finfluencers who try to court them often launch critiques at the

institutions and policies that they say created these conditions.

This advice ranges from risky trading-centric approaches to holistic financial practices. But a common thread is their positioning against traditional financial advice.

As a scholar who studies how the digital economy is affecting young adults' well-being, I argue that Americans who still get their financial advice from more conventional sources -- as well as the professional adviser class -- need to understand there's been a sea change in how young people understand money. And the legions of online followers need a better grasp of the risks involved.

"Hey, I'm Rachel and I'm not paying my federal income taxes this year," begins a TikTok video of an attorney who claims she's skipping out on her US\$8,800 tax bill for political reasons.

Rachel Cohen's videos have racked up millions of views so far this year. Her video series details her reasons for refusal, specifically citing her disagreement with federal immigration policy and the "military-industrial complex." On April 15, 2026, Cohen updated her viewers -- some of whom had threatened to report her to the IRS -- that she filed her return. But instead of paying the amount due, she's parking the money in a high-yield savings account. Her sign-off: "Stay tuned and find out if I get arrested!"

Cohen's not alone in her public protest. Millions of viewers have watched "tax resistance" or "tax strike" videos

on TikTok that offer advice on how to not pay taxes and walk viewers through the potential consequences they might face.

Although my research suggests most of the tax-protest content on TikTok comes from left-leaning users, it draws influencers across the political spectrum. Examples include dissenters citing anti-war sentiments or disapproval of the government's handling of the Epstein files.

Other personalities are encouraging their followers to treat their finances as a broader political statement. In some cases, these videos issue a call to action.

Vivian Tu, better known by her followers as "Your Rich BFF," explains why the price of raspberries has gone up, citing a variety of foreign and domestic policy decisions: the war in Iran, tariffs and a shortage of migrant farmworkers. "If this video made you mad," she says, "share it with a friend and contact a legislator."

Tori Dunlap, author of "Financial Feminist," tells her 2.2 million followers on Instagram: "If you're freaking out about the world right now, GET RICH. That is your best form of protest is to get financially stable."

However, Dunlap isn't peddling get-rich-quick schemes. Much of her advice is run-of-the-mill personal finance tips -- such as improving your credit score, paying down debt or automating savings contributions.

Political personal finance content has also extended beyond protests into things such as tracking the financial

integrity of members of Congress or avoiding investments that could fund things such as private prisons.

These examples underscore how people's financial lives are bound up with their values. And finfluencers appeal to their most politically charged beliefs to shape their financial decisions -- even if they aren't the best choices for their bank accounts.

One example is conflicts of interest. What many followers may not be fully aware of is that most finfluencers are incentivized to make highly performative content to monetize their accounts. This funding can come through either sponsored content -- often from credit card and fintech companies -- or through their own materials and "masterclasses."

Moreover, full transparency is not a given. Although TikTok and Instagram have "paid promotion" designations for sponsored content, it's not always so easy to identify potential conflicts of interest. Crypto promoters, for example, routinely fail to disclose their sponsorships -- and it's common for them to boost coins they have a vested interest in.

As Americans' distrust in financial institutions and regulators grows, many are willing to follow advice that falls into gray areas of oversight. When personal finance tips resonate with a viewers' values, everyday financial decision-making can become colored with politics and nonconformist sentiments.

Not everyone turns to finfluencers. Many take advice from anonymous strangers on forums such as Reddit.

The r/personal finance subreddit alone has 2.8 million weekly visitors who post, respond and read questions posed and answered by everyday people. This is only one of 189 finance-related subreddits my colleagues and I compiled in our recent report.

Unlike finfluencers, Reddit users typically trade tips and opinion in plain text and occasional memes. Users of these forums are rarely monetized. It's also demand-driven advice -- people who post on these forums get to ask questions that directly address their personal financial issues. Credibility is earned through community "up votes" and endorsements. Rather than one opinion, they can get a variety.

But similar to finfluencers, there's an anti-institutional sentiment that privileges peer-to-peer learning over credentialed expertise. For example, users on the Bitcoin subreddit harshly criticize the contemporary financial system and advocate for digital currency over conventional forms of money.

Others take aim at the excesses of consumer culture, as seen on the forums for anti-consumption and frugal and simple living.

In this environment, financial education is rarely neutral -- it's deeply intertwined with people's personal and political lives. As finfluencer Ellyce Fulmore puts it: "The barriers you face, your personal experience, the systems that do or don't work for you ... personal, personal, personal, personal!" (AP)

Whoever commands energy may well command the development potential and the vital source of wealth creation

This advice ranges from risky trading-centric approaches to holistic financial practices

editor's choice



Style world's biggest night to spotlight 'Fashion is Art'

Beyoncé, Bezos & bustiers: Inside the 2026 Met Gala

NEW YORK, April 23, (AP) - Fashionistas knew this already: "Fashion is Art." But how will Met Gala guests interpret that dress code at this year's extravaganza?

Last year's theme, "Tailored For You," led to a lot of great suits; this year's promises to produce some truly flamboyant attire as guests mount the famous carpeted steps on May 4.

As always, the dress code is inspired by the spring exhibit at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Costume Art" will pair some 200 art objects with 200 garments to highlight the connection between fashion and art through the centuries.

Here are some key things to know as fashion's biggest night approaches:

As always, the first Monday in May. It's a fundraiser for the Costume Institute, the only self-funding department at the Met - and it's a huge one. Last year the evening brought in a record sum of more than \$31 million.

None other than Beyoncé, a familiar gala guest, is a co-chair, joined by Nicole Kidman, tennis champ Venus Williams and the one who runs it all, Vogue's Anna Wintour.

There's also a "host committee" chaired by designer Anthony Vaccarello and filmmaker Zoë Kravitz, and featuring names from Sabrina Carpenter and Teyana Taylor to Lena Dunham and Misty Copeland.

"The exhibition and benefit are made possible by Jeff Bezos and Lauren Sánchez Bezos," said a Met

press release in February.

We tried, but the museum won't say how much the Amazon founder and his wife, as lead sponsors and honorary chairs, are contributing.

Protest against their participation has come from an activist group called Everyone Hates Elon, which posted an Instagram video of members hacking subway display cases to post anti-billionaire messages.

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who took office on an affordability platform, told the local news outlet Hell Gate he will not attend. Among past New York mayors who've attended is Eric Adams, who wore a tuxedo with the words "End Gun Violence" on the back in 2022.

Yes, new digs. "Costume Art" will inaugurate the Conde M. Nast Galleries, created from what was formerly the museum's retail store and occupying nearly 12,000 square feet (1,115 square meters) off the museum's Great Hall.

Aside from giving fashion a grander display space, this means gala guests now can stroll easily between the show and the dinner at the Temple of Dendur.

In a more lasting way, it will prevent snaking lines elsewhere in the museum once the show opens to the public May 10.

Despite the prominence of classic body shapes through art history, curator Andrew Bolton has made sure there's an element of body positivity in his exhibit, with sections on body types long ignored in art: the corpulent body, for example, and the dis-

abled body. And he's added 25 new mannequins that reflect these body types. Nine real-life people - including disability activist Sinéad Burke and musician Yseult - allowed their bodies to be digitally scanned for the mannequins, which will also bear mirror-like polished steel surfaces so viewers can see themselves.

The Met Gala started in 1948 as a Manhattan society midnight supper - held at various places like the Waldorf Astoria and the Rainbow Room.

It took many years before it turned into a global event and one of the starriest nights of the year.

No. You must be rich, famous or powerful enough to be invited.

Individual tickets are \$100,000, and a table of 10 starts at \$350,000. There will be approximately 400 guests in all.

After the carpet, guests enter the museum, check in (and get stickers placed over their phone cameras!) and walk past an enormous flower arrangement in the museum's lobby. Often there is an orchestra playing.

After hitting the receiving line, everyone heads either to cocktails, or to the exhibit. Then to dinner. By the main course, most tardy guests have managed to arrive, but not all. Some even wait 'til dessert.

Then again, occasionally, you'll see a guest or two leave before dinner even starts. They must have a REALLY great after-party to attend.



Zendaya Coleman attends The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala in New York on May 6, 2024. (AP)

Film



Simone Ashley attends the 'A Night With Runway: The Devil Wears Prada 2' photo call in London. (AP)



Anne Hathaway arrives for the 'A Night With Runway: The Devil Wears Prada 2' photo call in London on April 22. (AP)



Emily Blunt poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' on Wednesday, April 22, in London. (AP)



Donatella Versace poses at the 'A Night With Runway: The Devil Wears Prada 2' photo call. (AP)



Meryl Streep poses for cameras at the London photo call for 'A Night With Runway: The Devil Wears Prada 2' on April 22. (AP)



Alex Scott, (left), and Jess Glynne pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'The Devil Wears Prada 2.' (AP)



Chiara Ferragni arrives for the 'A Night With Runway: The Devil Wears Prada 2' photo call in London. (AP)

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Lawyers for singer D4vd are pushing to have prosecutors quickly and publicly present the evidence they have against him in the killing of Celeste Rivas Hernandez, a 14-year-old girl from Lake Elsinore, California.

The 21-year-old whose legal name is David Burke returns to a Los Angeles court for a hearing Thursday, just three days after he was charged and pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder, and seven months after the girl's dismembered body was found in his Tesla in the Hollywood Hills.

In a rare move, he is exercising his right in California to have a judge decide within 10 court days of his arraignment whether there is enough evidence to proceed to trial.

Nearly all defendants waive this right, slow-pedal this part of the process and wait months to reach this stage.

"We believe the actual evidence will show David Burke did not murder Celeste Rivas Hernandez," lead defense attorney Blair Berk told a judge Monday. (AP)

Milan takes a supporting role in 'Prada' sequel

'Devil Wears Prada 2' spotlights Italy's fashion hub

MILAN, April 23, (AP) - Prada may have a title role in "The Devil Wears Prada 2," which premieres in Italy's fashion capital on Thursday, but fashion at large gets a spotlight and Milan a supporting role.

The film evokes Prada without being about the storied fashion house that has become synonymous with Milan. In homage, Meryl Streep and Anna Wintour both wear Prada on a current Vogue cover celebrating the film about a demanding fashion editor.

But when part of the movie was shot in Milan during fashion week last September, a Dolce & Gabbana runway show, not Prada, was the backdrop for a scene featuring Streep and Stanley Tucci.

"When you think of Prada, when you think of the Prada brand, you also think of Milan. This is obviously good for the fashion system," said Tommaso Sacchi, Milan's counselor for culture. "It's a film that is good for the city."



Visitors enjoy an installation of the new movie 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' at La Rinascente shopping center, in Milan, Italy, Monday, April 20. (AP)

That enthusiasm is spilling over to a pop-up at Milan's main department store, where aficionados of the film and fashionistas have flocked to take selfies at a replica of fictitious fashion editor Miranda Priestly's desk and against the backdrop of a faux Runway magazine mock-up cover.

VIPs attending the film's Italian premiere on Thursday, ahead of its global release next week, will attend a cocktail in the space.

The Rinascente CEO, Mariella Elia, said the response to the pop-up - which is announced by giant statues of the iconic red

pumps outside the store - shows that people have "a desire for lightness."

"It's not just about buying, it's really about reviving what fashion represents ... a desire to have a stylish flair once again, a desire for joy, too - perhaps in contrast with the current economic and international moment that humanity is experiencing," Elia said.

On a recent day, the space filled with people browsing limited edition T-shirts with famous phrases from the first film like, "Is there some reason my coffee isn't here?"

Valentina Cattivelli, a professor, said she wasn't trying to channel Priestly as she sat behind the replica of her desk. It included an inbox full of other lines from the original film, including Priestly's dismissive, "That's all."

"No, I'm not so cruel in my daily life, but I appreciate her professional style and also her fashion and the taste for fashion. But not her sarcasm or cruelty,

no," Cattivelli said.

The Prada brand was founded a few steps away, in the stately Vittorio Emanuele II Gallery, by Miuccia Prada's grandfather. The shopping arcade today is anchored by two Prada flagship stores.

Miuccia Prada transformed the brand into a fashion juggernaut, turning the infamous ugly chic aesthetic into must-have or must-emulate looks and accessories that bring intellectual heft to runway fashion - a theme of the original movie, which offered a peek beyond fashion-world frivolity.

"There is a close relationship between the 'Devil Wears Prada' franchise and Prada, because by evoking Prada from the very title, it evokes a fashion that makes you dream, a fashion that makes you feel elegant, a fashion that makes you feel good, a fashion that gives you an allure," said Annarita Briganti, a fashion journalist who wrote a book about Prada for Rizzoli's Made in Italy editions.



From left: Matt Floca, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' new executive director and chief operating officer, shows damage in the parking garage; Opera House (center) is seen and an eight foot tall bronze bust of President John F. Kennedy is seen in the Grand Foyer of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Wednesday, April 22, in Washington. (AP)

Cultural landmark tour reveals scope of damage

Inside Kennedy Center as it prepares for a 2-year renovation

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP): To President Donald Trump, the Kennedy Center is a "tired, broken, and dilapidated" building in urgent need of repair. To artists like Jane Fonda and Billy Porter, it's a protest site symbolizing the administration's effort to reshape the nation's cultural institutions.

For the Kennedy Center's new leadership, it's a gargantuan structure corroded by water damage so severe that steel in some places is tissue-thin.

Away from the political controversy that has consumed the iconic performing arts venue for the better part of Trump's second term, Matt Floca, the Kennedy Center's new executive director and chief operating officer, guided a group of journalists through the building on Wednesday. They viewed the outdoor terrace overlooking the Potomac River, along with parking decks, loading docks, an electrical vault and the Opera House stage.

A theme emerged at virtually every stop: The water damage was real, apparent in some places through discoloration and pooling. Some pieces of equipment, including several 800-ton chillers that help cool the building, are decades old and in need of replacement.

And the building is so massive - sprawling across more than 1.5 million square feet - that repairs will require time to finish.

Two years of time, in fact.

Trump plans to shutter the building for a massive renovation slated to begin in July, supported by nearly \$257 million provided by Congress to fund repairs. The institution is expected to turn to private donors to help support refurbishing some of the building's more exclusive areas, such as lounges.

The Kennedy Center is hardly the first fixture of the Washington skyline to undergo lengthy renovations. The Smithsonian Castle, one of the most recognizable buildings along the National Mall, has been closed for renovations since 2023. The Washington Monument was shrouded in scaffolding from 1998 to 2001 and covered again at points in 2013 and 2014 to repair earthquake damage.

None of those changes, however, were guided so closely by a sitting president.

Trump, who is also trying to build a ballroom on the grounds of the former East Wing of the White House and is pushing for the construction of a triumphal arch near Arlington Cemetery, is deeply involved in the Kennedy Center plans. That's in line with the far more hands-on approach he's taken to the institution during his second term, ousting its previous leadership and replacing it with a handpicked board that named him chairman.

His name is now bolted to the building's facade along

with that of John F. Kennedy, the slain president that the venue memorializes.

"It's a public building, and I completely acknowledge that, but the president is really great at this, and I think his input is invaluable," Floca said. "He's in the details, and it's amazing. I really respect the input he's given."

As Trump tightened his grip on the building, artists abandoned the institution in droves, prompting concern that the closure is more of an effort to cover for plunging sales. The Kennedy Center hasn't released sales figures.

Floca considered doing the repairs individually but insisted it was his recommendation to Trump to close the building and move forward with the renovation all at once.

"When the President asked: 'How do you make these projects the best? How do you make them really excellent and deliver them efficiently?' my recommendation was you close the building and you do everything over a definite period of time, two years," he said.

He acknowledged that once the building is closed, staffing will be "pretty bare bones."

"We're working on all of those plans now and exactly what those numbers will be after July," he said. "And we will staff up before reopening."

Still, the tour offered the institution something of a reset opportunity after more than a year of tumult, demonstrating the

need for repairs while easing some fears. A bipartisan group of lawmakers and their staff, along with representatives for Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser and some corporate and individual donors, have received a similar walk-through.

There will be scaffolding around the building but the construction won't be so dramatic that someone could see through the building. That's notable considering Trump has suggested the steel supporting the structure could be "fully exposed."

It's not entirely clear how much change will be apparent to the general public once the Kennedy Center reopens. Much of the structural repair, which will unfold during the renovation's first year, will happen in the building's private core.

The venue's more public elements, including the red-on-red decor of the Opera House, are expected to be maintained, though with some updating. There aren't plans at the moment to change the presidential boxes.

Quotes attributed to Kennedy will stay on the building's walls and the famous bust of the former president that sits outside the Opera House will be there again when the building reopens.

"I can't think of any JFK changes," Floca said. It's unclear, however, whether there will be additional tributes to Trump, who will be in the final months of his presidency when the public can return to the building.

Film

'LUMINA AM 91N' highlights light, strength and identity

Angela Mrad puts humanity at heart of her films

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Angela Mrad doesn't just make films - she crafts emotional landscapes where humanity takes center stage. For the Lebanese filmmaker, cinema is not defined by aesthetics alone, but by the feelings it leaves behind and the change it inspires.

"I want my films to be remembered not just for how they looked," she says, "but for what they made people feel - and what they inspired them to become."

Rooted deeply in her homeland, Mrad carries Lebanon into every frame she creates. "Lebanon is not just where I'm from - it's a feeling," she reflects. "It is resilience, beauty, pain, and hope all at once." This duality shapes her storytelling, grounding her work in a belief that even amid chaos, humanity must remain at the heart of creation.

Her films consistently explore themes of peace and shared humanity - an intentional choice in a world often marked by division. For Mrad, storytelling holds immense power. "Cinema can divide, but it can also heal," she explains. While films may reflect differing beliefs and provoke varied reactions, they also possess a rare ability to connect people through shared emotion. "Beyond our differences, we are all searching for dignity, love, and peace," she says - a philosophy that defines her body of work.

This vision comes to life in her film LUMINA AM 91N, a project she describes as more than cinema - it is a message. The film delves into light within darkness, inner strength, and the profound idea that even silence can speak. At its core lies a powerful reminder: "We are human first, not machines. No system or technology can erase that. We must protect it, feel it, and never lose it."

Mrad's work has gained international recognition, but for her, the true significance



Lebanese filmmaker Angela Mrad

lies beyond accolades. "It means the message is traveling," she says. "When a story born in Lebanon resonates across borders, it proves that art has no limits."

Ultimately, her vision extends beyond the

screen. She seeks to leave behind a legacy rooted in truth, strength, and humanity - films remembered not only for their visual beauty, but for their emotional impact and the lives they touch.

US rules fiction shortlist

Evans and Choi among 6 Women's Prize finalists

LONDON, April 23, (AP): Four debut novelists are among six books on a US-dominated list of finalists for the 2026 Women's Prize for Fiction, which is open to female English-language writers from any country.

American authors take four of the six places on the shortlist for the 30,000 pounds (\$40,000) prize, announced Wednesday by a judging panel led by former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

Among them are bestselling writer Lily King's campus-set romance "Heart the Lover" and Susan Choi's twisty family saga "Flashlight," a finalist for last year's Booker Prize.

First novels making the list include US writer Virginia Evans' "The Correspondent," a novel told in letters with an older woman as protagonist that became a slow-burn hit after its release in 2025; and Addie E. Citchens' "Dominion," a story of power and patriarchy centered on a Black church in Mississippi.

Rounding out the list are two debut novels by British writers: Marcia Hutchinson's "The Mercy Step," a girl's coming-of-age story set in northern England, and Rozie Kelly's tale of love and grief, "Kingfisher."

Gillard, who was Australia's leader between 2010 and 2013, said the books are all page-turners with intriguing characters that explore "power - where it lies, where it doesn't lie. How you find the ability to chart your own life course, what it means to potentially have others that are pushing you in different directions as you try and chart that life course."

The number of debut novelists doesn't mean the authors lack experience. Hutchinson is a former lawyer in her 60s, while Evans wrote seven unpublished novels before finding international success with "The Correspondent."

"I think the way the publishing in-



Author Susan Choi poses with her book 'Flashlight' as she arrives for the Booker Prize 2025 ceremony at Old Billingsgate in London, Monday, Nov. 10, 2025. (AP)

dustry is working now, there are quite a number of authors coming to the fore for whom being a fiction author is well and truly a second act in a life that has brought other careers," said Gillard.

"I'm delighted to see that," Gillard told The Associated Press - though she is not in a rush to join them. While former leaders including Bill Clinton in the U.S. and Nicola Sturgeon in Scotland have written or co-written political thrillers, Gillard says she is not working on a novel.

"Never say never, but I'm not sure about that," said Gillard, who has written a memoir and nonfiction books about women and leadership. "But I'm a fiction lover, a fiction reader, and it's been just fantastic to have this experience" as a Women's Prize judge.

Next, the five judges will meet to choose a winner. Previous winners of the fiction prize, founded in 1996, include Zadie Smith, Tayari Jones and Barbara Kingsolver. A sister prize for nonfiction was founded in 2024.

Winners of both prizes will be announced June 11 at a ceremony in London.

'First time' robot achieves human expert-level play in physical world

Milestone for machines: Robot stuns human pros at table tennis

TOKYO, Japan, April 23, (AP): A paddle-wielding robot is so adept at playing table tennis that it is posing a tough challenge to elite human players and sometimes defeating them, according to a new study that shows how advances in artificial intelligence are making robots more agile.

Japanese electronics giant Sony built the robotic arm it calls Ace and pitted it against professional athletes. Ace proved a worthy adversary, though one with some non-human attributes: nine camera eyes positioned around the court and an uncanny ability to follow the ball's logo to measure its spin.

The robot learned how to play the sport using the AI method known as reinforcement learning.

"There's no way to program a robot by hand to play table tennis. You have to learn how to play from experience," said Sony AI researcher Peter Dürr, co-author of the study published Wednesday in the science journal Nature.

To conduct the experiments, Sony built an Olympic-sized table tennis court at its headquarters in Tokyo to give professional and other highly skilled athletes a "level playing field" with the robot, Dürr said in an inter-

view with The Associated Press. Some of the athletes said they were surprised by Ace's prowess.

Sony says it is the "first time a robot has achieved human, expert-level play in a commonly played competitive sport in the physical world - a long-standing milestone for AI and robotics research."

The custom-built robot has eight joints that direct its movements, or degrees of freedom, enabling it to position the racket, execute shots and swiftly respond to its opponent's rallies.

"Speed is really one of the fundamental issues in robotics today, especially in scenarios or environments that are not fixed," said Michael Spranger, president of Sony AI, in an interview.

"We see a lot of robots that are in factories that are very, very fast," Spranger said. "But they're doing the same trajectory over and over again. With this technology, we show that it's actually possible to train robots to be very adaptive and competitive and fast in uncertain environments that constantly change."

Spranger said such technology could play a role in manufacturing and other

industries. It's also not hard to imagine how such high-speed and highly perceptive hardware could be used in war.

A humanoid robot ran faster than the human world record in a half-marathon race for robots in Beijing on Sunday, but getting a machine to interact and compete at split-second speeds with skilled human athletes is in some ways a more difficult challenge.

Spranger said it was important for researchers to not give the robot too unfair of an advantage and make its speed, arm's reach and performance comparable to a skilled athlete who trains at least 20 hours a week. It plays by official table tennis rules on a typically sized court.

"It's very easy to build a superhuman table tennis robot," Spranger said. "You build a machine that sucks in the ball and shoots it out much faster than a human can return it. But that's not the goal here. The goal is to have some level of comparability, some level of fairness to the human, and win really at the level of AI and the level of decision-making and tactics and, to some extent, skill." That means, he said, that "the robot cannot just win by hitting the ball faster than any human



A table tennis robot built by Sony maneuvers to hit the ball back to its human opponent, Akito Saeki, during a match in Tokyo, Dec. 2025. (AP)

ever could, but it has to win by actually playing the game."

AI researchers have long used board games like chess as benchmarks for a computer's capabilities. They later moved into more open-ended video game worlds. But moving AI from

simulated environments to the physical world has long been the gold standard for robot makers.

The past year has marked a kind of ChatGPT moment for robotics," Spranger said, with new, AI-driven approaches to teach robots about their

real-world environments and task them with physically demanding activities, like backflips.

Sony is hardly the first to tackle robots in table tennis. John Billingsley helped pioneer such contests in 1983 in a paper titled "Robot Ping-Pong." More recently, Google's AI research division DeepMind has also tackled the sport. And while impressive, Billingsley said Sony's all-seeing computer vision and motion detection capabilities make it hard for a two-eyed human to stand a chance.

"I would not want to belittle the achievement, but they have gone at the task mob-handed, and used sledgehammer techniques," Billingsley, a retired mechatronics professor at the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, said in an email to the AP.

He added, however, that it adds to the lesson that "true progress comes out of contests, whether they involve hitting a ball or setting foot on Mars." Japanese professional players Minami Ando and Kakeru Sone were among those who competed against Sony's robot. Two umpires from the Japanese Table Tennis Association judged the games.

Rotavirus cases in children are rising

Effective vaccine cuts rotavirus hospitalizations by 80%

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



By Annette Regan

University of California, Los Angeles

Rotavirus is a highly contagious virus that spreads easily and can make babies and young children very sick. This year, doctors have been seeing more cases earlier in the season than usual.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that almost 8 in 100 people tested for rotavirus have the virus. This is only a little higher than last year at this time, when about 7 in 100 tests were positive. However, doctors are concerned because rotavirus cases started rising earlier than usual - in January - which means more children are get-

ting sick over a longer period of time.

Often referred to as a stomach flu or stomach bug, rotavirus infection can cause extreme diarrhea, leading to severe dehydration and hospitalization. Just like measles and whooping cough, infectious diseases that are also on the rise, rotavirus can be prevented with a safe and highly effective vaccine. But vaccination rates in the US have fallen since 2018.

The Conversation asked epidemiologist Annette Regan to explain why this virus is on the rise and what families can do to protect themselves from the illness.

Rotavirus, first identified in 1973, affects the gastrointestinal system - that is, the stomach and the intestines.

Rotavirus spreads from person to person, often when germs from poop get on hands or surfaces and then into the mouth. But a person can also become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their mouth, or by drinking or eating contaminated food or water.

Rotavirus causes sudden diarrhea, vomiting and fever that can

cause rapid dehydration, which can lead to death if left untreated. There is no medicine to cure the virus. Doctors can only help by giving fluids and watching closely for dehydration. Babies who lose too much fluid may need care in the hospital.

Rotavirus most often affects infants and young children. Without vaccination, nearly all children have a rotavirus infection by age 5.

The virus causes most instances of hospitalization due to severe diarrhea and is the leading cause of death due to diarrhea in children under 5. Older children and adults typically experience more mild infections, but the virus can cause severe illness in people with weakened immune systems and those over 65.

Safe and effective vaccines against rotavirus have been available in the U.S. since 2006.

US regulators approved an early rotavirus vaccine, but it was taken off the market the next year after doctors learned that, in very rare cases, it could cause a serious bowel problem. The rotavirus vaccines used today are different. Studies

in more than 70,000 babies show that these vaccines are safe and work well.

Before vaccines were introduced, rotavirus accounted for more than 400,000 medical visits, including 200,000 emergency room visits, 70,000 hospitalizations and 20-60 deaths in the US each year.

Annually, vaccination prevents an estimated 40,000-50,000 hospitalizations of infants in America. Since 2006, hospitalizations due to rotavirus have dropped by 80% and emergency room visits by 57%. Rotavirus is a springtime illness in America. Cases usually increase over the winter and reach their highest point around April or May, then drop off as the weather gets warmer in the summer.

Since January 2026, doctors have been seeing more rotavirus in babies and young children than usual. According to CDC data, about 3% of rotavirus tests in January were positive, when normally only about 1% of tests are positive. That rate is now peaking at nearly 8% of tests. (AP)

4 billion people face severe water scarcity: UN

'World is in water bankruptcy'

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

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By Kaveh Madani

United Nations University; Yale University

The world is now using so much fresh water amid the consequences of climate change that it has entered an era of water bankruptcy, with many regions no longer able to bounce back from frequent water shortages.

About 4 billion people - nearly half the global population - live with severe water scarcity for at least one month a year, without access to sufficient water to meet all of their needs. Many more people are seeing the consequences of water deficit: dry reservoirs, sinking cities, crop failures, water rationing and more frequent wildfires and dust storms in drying regions.

Water bankruptcy signs are everywhere, from Tehran, where droughts and unsustainable water use have depleted reservoirs the Iranian capital relies on, adding fuel to political tensions, to the US, where water demand has outstripped the supply in the Colorado River, a crucial source of drinking water and irrigation for seven states.

Water bankruptcy is not just a metaphor for water deficit. It is a chronic condition that develops when a place uses more water than nature can reliably replace, and when the damage to the natural assets that store and filter that water, such as aquifers and wetlands, becomes hard to reverse.

A new study I led with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health concludes that the world has now gone beyond temporary water crises. Many natural water systems are no longer able to return to their historical conditions. These systems are in a state of failure - water bankruptcy.

In financial bankruptcy, the first warning signs often feel manageable: late payments, borrowed money and selling things you hoped to keep. Then the spiral tightens.

Water bankruptcy has similar stages. At first, we pull a little more groundwater during dry years. We use bigger pumps and deeper wells. We transfer water from one basin to another. We drain wetlands and straighten rivers to make space for farms and cities.

Then the hidden costs show up. Lakes shrink year after year. Wells need to go deeper. Rivers that once flowed year-round turn seasonal. Salty water creeps into aquifers near the coast. The ground itself starts to sink.

That last one, subsidence, often surprises people. But it's a signature of water bankruptcy. When groundwater is overpumped, the underground structure, which holds water almost like a sponge, can collapse. In Mexico City, land is sinking by about 10 inches (25 centimeters) per year. Once the pores become compacted, they can't simply



A person walks across a dry stock pond March 31, 2026, in Walden, Colo. (AP)

be refilled.

The Global Water Bankruptcy report, published on Jan. 20, 2026, documents how widespread this is becoming. Groundwater extraction has contributed to significant land subsidence over more than 2.3 million square miles (6 million square kilometers), including urban areas where close to 2 billion people live. Jakarta, Bangkok and Ho Chi Minh City are among the well-known examples in Asia.

Agriculture is the world's biggest water user, responsible for about 70% of the global freshwater withdrawals. When a region goes water bankrupt, farming becomes more difficult and more expensive. Farmers lose jobs, tensions rise and national security can be threatened.

About 3 billion people and more than half of global food production are concentrated in areas where water storage is already declining or unstable. More than 650,000 square miles (1.7 million square kilometers) of irrigated cropland are under high or very high water stress. That threatens the stability of food supplies around the world.

Droughts are also increasing in duration, frequency and intensity as global temperatures rise. Over 1.8 billion people - nearly 1 in 4 humans - dealt with drought conditions at various times from 2022 to 2023.

These numbers translate into real problems: higher food prices, hydroelectricity shortages, health risks, unemployment, migration pressures, unrest and conflicts.

Every year, nature gives each region a water income, depositing rain and snow. Think of this like a checking account. This is how much water we receive each year to spend and share with nature.

When demand rises, we might borrow from our savings account. We take out more groundwater than will be replaced. We steal the share of water needed by nature and drain wetlands in the process. That can work for a while, just as debt can finance a wasteful lifestyle for a while.

Those long-term water sources are

now disappearing. The world has lost more than 1.5 million square miles (4.1 million square kilometers) of natural wetlands over five decades. Wetlands don't just hold water. They also clean it, buffer floods and support plants and wildlife.

Water quality is also declining. Pollution, saltwater intrusion and soil salinization can result in water that is too dirty and too salty to use, contributing to water bankruptcy.

Climate change is exacerbating the situation by reducing precipitation in many areas of the world. Warming increases the water demand of crops and the need for electricity to pump more water. It also melts glaciers that store fresh water.

Despite these problems, nations continue to increase water withdrawals to support the expansion of cities, farmland, industries and now data centers.

Not all water basins and nations are water bankrupt, but basins are interconnected through trade, migration, climate and other key elements of nature. Water bankruptcy in one area will put more pressure on others and can increase local and international tensions.

Financial bankruptcy ends by transforming spending. Water bankruptcy needs the same approach:

- Stop the bleeding: The first step is admitting the balance sheet is broken. That means setting water use limits that reflect how much water is actually available, rather than just drilling deeper and shifting the burden to the future.
- Protect natural capital - not just the water: Protecting wetlands, restoring rivers, rebuilding soil health and managing groundwater recharge are not just nice-to-haves. They are essential to maintaining healthy water supplies, as is a stable climate.
- Use less, but do it fairly: Managing water demand has become unavoidable in many places, but water bankruptcy plans that cut supplies to the poor while protecting the powerful will fail. Serious approaches include social protections, support for farmers to transition to less water-intensive crops and systems, and investment in water efficiency. (AP)



This image, provided by NASA, shows the interstellar comet 3I/Atlas captured by the Hubble Space Telescope on Nov. 30, 2025, about 178 million miles (286 million kilometers) from Earth. (AP)

3I/Atlas may be up to 11 billion years old

Experts trace comet's home in Milky Way

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., April 23, (AP): The comet that rambled past us from another star last year likely originated in a cold, isolated corner of the galaxy that had yet to gel into its own solar system, astronomers reported Thursday.

Comet 3I/Atlas is only the third interstellar visitor to be confirmed and quite possibly the oldest. Scientists estimate it could be up to 11 billion years old, more than twice as old as the sun.

A team led by the University of Michigan used the ALMA observatory in Chile's Atacama Desert to examine the comet last fall. The errant but harmless iceball was discovered last summer, giving NASA and the European Space Agency plenty of time to aim multiple space telescopes at it zoomed

past Mars in October and made its closest approach to Earth in December. It's now well past Jupiter on its way out of our solar system for good, still visible only to the professionals.

In the study, scientists said they detected extremely high amounts of deuterium, or heavy hydrogen, in the comet's water. That suggests that the comet originated in a place considerably colder - before the star of this solar system even formed - than our own cosmic neighborhood, said the University of Michigan's Teresa Paneque-Carreno.

While our sun may have been surrounded by other newborn stars as it was forming, she noted, this comet's home star could have been more of a loner, leading to less heating and colder conditions.

The findings were published in Nature Astronomy.

The comet's precise place of origin is still unknown. Observations by the Hubble Space Telescope put the size of its nucleus somewhere between a quarter-mile and 3.5 miles (440 meters and 5.6 kilometers). It's hurtling away at 137,000 mph (220,000 kph).

Linking all these "puzzle pieces together may give an idea to how the planet-forming conditions were at these early times," Paneque-Carreno said in an email.

The first known interstellar object to stray into our celestial backyard - Oumuamua - was discovered by a telescope in Hawaii in 2017. Comet 2I/Borisov followed in 2019, named for the Crimean amateur astronomer who first spotted it.

Medicine prices surge and stocks fall

Rural Sudan residents struggle to get medicines as Iran war disrupts supplies

QOZ NAFISA, Sudan, April 23, (AP): It's always been challenging for Abbas Awad to find medicines in his village outside Sudan's capital. But since the war in Iran, it's become harder. Prices have spiked and many pharmacies in the area are out of stock.

The latest war in the Middle East has far-reaching effects, including on countries ravaged by conflicts of their own.

After three years of war in Sudan, a public health clinic in Qoz Nafisa village in Khartoum state is struggling to support thousands of people like the 61-year-old Awad.

He said he has been spacing out his medicine for glaucoma, worried he won't be able to find more or afford it when he does. Money was already an issue because of the war at home, he said.

"Now we have the problem of the war in the Middle East. It's just made things worse," he said.

Aid groups say the Iran war has cut off vital shipping routes, upending their ability to get food and medicine to millions of people around the world in need. The standoff between the United States and Iran has essentially shut down the Strait of Hormuz, and other routes from strategic hubs such as Dubai also have been impacted.

Transport costs have spiked with higher fuel and insurance rates, further straining the ability to deliver supplies. The United Nations says there's been up to a 20% cost increase on shipments, along with delays, as goods are



A staffer checks the pharmacy shelves at a public health clinic in Qoz Nafisa village, Khartoum state, Sudan, Wednesday, April 22. (AP)

rerouted.

The International Rescue Committee, which supports the clinic where Awad gets some of his medicines, said about \$130,000 worth of pharmaceuticals intended for Sudan was stranded in Dubai for weeks and only now is making its way there.

The IRC says medicines and supplies such as antibiotics, painkillers and stethoscopes that were supposed to be flown from the United Arab Emirates to Port Sudan were instead transported by road to neighboring Oman and then flown out.

U.S. President Donald Trump this week extended the fragile ceasefire with Iran, but aid groups worry little will change.

"There's still a real lag in the system. Shipments remain blocked

or delayed, and that's deeply worrying," said Madiha Raza, associate director for global public affairs and communications for IRC.

Sudan has widely been described as facing the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and Raza said any delay in delivering food, medicine and fuel has devastating consequences.

For the roughly 5,000 people who rely on the public health clinic that the IRC supports in Qoz Nafisa, some now must search at other clinics and spend their own money, which they often don't have.

During a visit by AP journalists on Wednesday, clinic staff said that since the war with Iran began at the end of February they've been struggling to meet demand.

A member of the military media accompanied The Associated Press during the visit for safety reasons. The AP retains full editorial control of its content.

Dr. Amira Sidig, the center's medical director, said the last shipment from the IRC was in December. Ones expected in February and April have not arrived.

Sudan's health ministry tries to fill the gap, but it only accounts for half of what's needed, Sidig said.

"It's never enough because they also have a shortage, and we're again out of stock quickly," she said.

For several days this month, the clinic had no malaria treatment to give the 50% of patients who come in with the disease, Sidig said.

Smoke-free gen

UK to end youth cigarette sales

LONDON, April 23, (AP): Opponents of smoking got a breath of fresh air as Parliament passed a bill that will put cigarettes out of reach for future generations.

"The end of smoking, and the devastating harm it causes, is no longer uncertain - it's inevitable," Hazel Cheeseman, chief executive of Action on Smoking and Health, said after a decades-long campaign in favor of legislation approved Tuesday. Children born after Dec. 31, 2008, will be banned from ever buying cigarettes under the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

The legislation that needs approval by King Charles III - a formality - before taking effect will also allow the government to regulate tobacco, vaping and nicotine products, including flavors and packaging.

It is currently illegal to sell cigarettes, tobacco products or vapes to people younger than 18. But most youths today will continue to face a ban their entire life as the minimum age to buy cigarettes rises each year.

The passage gives the U.K. one of the toughest antismoking measures in the world. The law is similar to one New Zealand lawmakers passed in 2022, but that was repealed by a subsequent government.

New window into universe

Experts build largest-ever cosmological simulation

BEIJING, April 23, (Xinhua): A Chinese-led international team has released the largest-ever cosmological simulation, named "HyperMillennium," offering scientists a powerful digital tool to explore cosmic evolution. This simulation covers a vast cube with a side size of 12 billion light-years and uses 4.2 trillion virtual dark matter particles. By applying a technique called N-body numerical simulation, the team accurately recreated how large-scale structures in the universe evolved over 10 billion years. In simple terms, they built a virtual universe inside a supercomputer, starting from just after the Big Bang and following the pull of gravity step by step.

This virtual cosmos allows researchers to "rewind time" and study how galaxies and other cosmic features formed. By adding physical models of galaxy formation, the simulation produces a detailed catalog of galaxy positions, brightness and other key traits. This provides theoretical support for research into dark matter and dark energy, and also offers strong support for new-generation galaxy survey programs, such as the China Space Station Telescope and the European Space Agency's Euclid mission.

"The simulation was completed with high force resolution and time accuracy and also made a breakthrough in

computational scale. It allows scientists to study extremely rare, massive cosmic structures in fine detail while maintaining strong statistical power," said Wang Qiao, a researcher at National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NAOC).

Such large-scale simulations demand enormous computing resources, and the research team used self-developed software called PhotoNs, designed specifically for China's domestic supercomputers. After more than 10 years of work on algorithms and optimization, the team achieved efficient calculations using over 10,000 accelerator cards. The project consumed more than 100 million CPU core-hours and 10 million accelerator-card hours, and produced approximately 13 petabytes of raw and processed data.

Mike Boylan-Kolchin, a professor of the University of Texas at Austin, called the simulation a computational marvel that will help unlock secrets of dark energy and the early universe. He also noted that its unprecedented size and resolution make it a touchstone for research communities for years to come.

Volker Springel, the director of the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Germany, said the simulation redefines the limits of numerical cosmology.

SPORTS

Kane leads Bayern's treble charge into German Cup final

Eta could influence Champions League battle

LEVERKUSEN, Germany, April 23, (AP): Harry Kane and Luis Díaz fired Bayern Munich into the German Cup final with a 2-0 win at Bayer Leverkusen.

Kane's first-half strike - his 52nd goal of the season across all competitions for his club - and a goal from Díaz in stoppage time were enough for Bayern to advance to a final against Stuttgart or Freiburg in Berlin's Olympiastadion on May 23.

It will be Bayern's first appearance in the final since beating Leverkusen 4-2 to seal a domestic double in 2000.

"I've missed Berlin," Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer said after a semifinal in which he had nothing to do until he produced a brilliant flying save to deny Nathan Tella an equalizer with his fingertips.

The win keeps Bayern, which clinched the Bundesliga title on Saturday, on course for a treble of trophies. It faces title holder Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals of the Champions League with the first leg on Tuesday in Paris.

Kane scored in the 22nd minute after a quickly taken throw on the right. Jamal Musiala took the ball forward, crossed it and Díaz left it for the better-positioned Kane to scoop it in under the crossbar.

The visitors dominated the first half, keeping Leverkusen goalkeeper Mark Flekken busy with 10 shots at goal while the hosts had none.

Díaz put the result beyond doubt on a break, though he was initially flagged offside when Leon Goretzka slid the ball over. Díaz disagreed, wagging his figure at the flag-bearer, and a VAR check confirmed Bayern could begin the celebrations.

Pioneering coach Marie-Louise Eta has a chance to influence the battle for Champions League spots in the Bundesliga as her Union Berlin team takes on third-place Leipzig on Friday.

After Bayern Munich wrapped up the title last week, the focus shifts to a host of teams behind in a vibrant and often surprising fight for the top four places.

Runner-up Borussia Dortmund can seal a Champions League spot this weekend, while it could be a nervous few weeks for teams like Stuttgart, Hoffenheim, Bayer Leverkusen.

That's especially true because Germany could yet land an extra Champions League spot for the fifth-place team by overhauling Spain on UEFA's "European performance spot" ranking. That would depend on strong showings by Bayern in the Champions League and Freiburg in the Europa League.

Eta stayed upbeat after a 2-1 loss to Wolfsburg in her historic first game as head coach, and there were positives. Union created plenty of chances but just didn't convert them. Leipzig will be a tougher challenge Friday. Ole Werner's team is on a four-game winning run and looking to return to the Champions League after missing out this season.

The Rhine derby between Leverkusen and Cologne is always a standout



Leverkusen's Robert Andrich and Bayern's Harry Kane go for a header during the German Soccer Cup semifinal match between Bayer Leverkusen and Bayern Munich in Leverkusen, Germany. (AP)

game. This time it could play a big role in determining whether Leverkusen gets a Champions League spot, and potentially whether Kasper Hjulmand gets another season as Leverkusen coach.

A win for Dortmund against Freiburg on Sunday will make sure of a Champions League spot for next season, regardless of whether there are four or five places for German teams.

Harry Kane's charge for the single-season Bundesliga scoring record may be over, with Vincent Kompany increasingly minded to rest him for Champions League and German Cup runs, Nicolas Jackson has stepped up with goals in Bayern's last two Bundesliga games.

Hoffenheim forward Fisnik Asllani is having a breakout season with

nine goals and eight assists in the Bundesliga. More goal contributions against Hamburger SV on Saturday could strengthen his team's Champions League push.

Young striker Dzenan Pejcinovic has found form when it matters to revive Wolfsburg, scoring in its last two games as the relegation-threatened team prepares to face Borussia Moenchengladbach on Saturday. It makes a chance for scoring at the wrong time. His first goals of the season were a hat trick in a losing cause, then the consolation goal in an 8-1 loss.

Bayern and Germany forward Serge Gnabry ruled himself out of the rest of the season, World Cup included, in a social media post Wednesday after a muscle tear in training.

Super Giants crumble early

Jadeja's all-round show leads Rajasthan to second spot with 40-run win over Lucknow

LUCKNOW, India, April 23, (AP): Ravindra Jadeja's brilliant all-round performance handed Lucknow Super Giants a fourth straight loss in the Indian Premier League and lifted Rajasthan Royals to second in the standings.

The left-handed Jadeja top-scored with an unbeaten 43 off 29 balls on a tricky wicket as he led Rajasthan to 159-6 after Lucknow skipper Rishabh Pant had won the toss and elected to field.

"The wicket was not easy to bat on because the ball was seaming and swinging," Jadeja said after being adjudged player of the match. "In T20 cricket, you never know. In the last over you can cash in and we did... the ball was gripping so when bowling slow, I got some hold and that helped."

Three of the top four Lucknow batters, including Pant and Aiden Markram, were dismissed without scoring inside the first three overs as the home team was bowled out for 119 to ensure a 40-run win for Rajasthan.



Rajasthan Royals' Nandre Burger celebrates the wicket of Lucknow Super Giants' Mitchell Marsh during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Rajasthan Royals in Lucknow, India. (AP)

Jadeja stifled the chase further by grabbing the wicket of the struggling Nicholas Pooran for 22 in the 10th over, the batter holing out at mid-on in an attempt to ac-

celerate. Pooran's disappointing campaign has included four single-digit scores in seven games. Opening batter Mitchell Marsh

made a fighting 55 while fast bowlers Jofra Archer (3-20) and Nandre Burger (2-27) shared five wickets that left Lucknow skipper Pant disappointed.

"I don't have answers, the batting has let us down," Pant said. "We are disappointed as a team, as a group... no excuses out there. Including myself, we could have taken it deeper. As a batting group, we have to put our hands up."

Earlier, Rajasthan's aggressive top-order perished inside the first six overs with young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (8) striking two boundaries off his first two balls before falling to fast bowler Mohsin Khan (2-17).

Lucknow seemed to be in control with the Royals on 110-6 in the 16th over but Jadeja and Shubham Dubey (19 off 11 balls) shared a brisk 49-run stand.

Rajasthan has 10 points, one behind Punjab Kings. Lucknow has two wins from seven games and is just above rock-bottom Kolkata Knight Riders.

F1 rule tweaks introduced after Bearman high-speed crash scare

WASHINGTON, April 23, (AP): A repeat of the high-speed crash which left Oliver Bearman limping and alarmed the Formula 1 paddock "should basically be avoided" with regulation changes starting from next week's race in Miami, F1's governing body says.

Bearman was traveling at around 190 mph (306 kph) when he veered off track and slammed into the barrier while trying to avoid Franco Colapinto's slower-moving car at last month's Japanese Grand Prix.

The difference in speed between the two was around 30 mph (50 kph) because of key features of the 2026 cars. Bearman was using his "boost" mode for extra electrical power while Colapinto was low on electrical charge.

"We've got sometimes cases when one car is deploying too little power because it's charging up its batteries and another one is trying to overtake and approaching at quite a fast speed. That has been obviously a safety topic and we've been discussing how to resolve it," Nikolas Tombazis, who's overseen the development and changes to the 2026 rules as single-seater director at the FIA, said in a video statement Wednesday.

Restricting the impact of the boost mode and cutting the maximum allowed electrical power on "specific parts of the circuits maybe where we have corners or where they're a bit more twisty" could prevent a repeat, Tombazis argued. Bearman had been using the boost on a curved section as he approached Colapinto.

"So, in that respect, it means that the sort of problem we saw with Ollie Bearman's crash in Suzuka



In this file photo, Haas driver Oliver Bearman of Britain walks down pit lane following his crash during the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix at Suzuka in central Japan. (AP)

should basically be avoided from the next race onwards."

Bearman said on the "Up To Speed" podcast last week that the big difference in speed between him and Colapinto was an "unfortunate result of these regulations", and that the Argentine driver should have left him more space because of that.

"I was lucky not to hit him. It would have been much, much worse if I did," said the British driver.

Tombazis said the FIA would see how upcoming races go and push for more changes if needed. That usually needs the agreement of teams and engine manufacturers, but the FIA can intervene on its own on urgent safety grounds.

"It's not now job done, we can all go on holiday," Tombazis said. "We will keep monitoring. We'll keep reviewing and analyzing and so on. And, if there's any further interventions needed, of course we won't hesitate to take them."

Champions League spots up for grabs in tight race

PSG leads Lens by just 4 points as race for French league title heats up

PARIS, April 23, (AP): The suspense remains intense in Ligue 1, where Paris Saint-Germain is not as dominant as on the European stage at this crucial final stretch.

The reigning French champions defeated Nantes 3-0 at the Parc des Princes midweek but they had suffered a fifth loss in the French league last weekend - compared to two all last season - with a 2-1 home defeat against Lyon.

With five Ligue 1 matches left to play, they have just a four-point lead over second-place Lens ahead of Saturday's trip to Angers.

Luis Enrique's team has to travel to Lens in May, after the league postponed their game on April 11 due to PSG's involvement in the Champions League. And with PSG's busy schedule due to the Champions League, the Ligue 1 title is far from being decided.

"You wanted a more open and competitive league? You've got it," Enrique said. "Lens is having a very good season, and it will be difficult all the way to the final match."

Lens travels to Brest on Friday. Although the duel in the title race is taking the spotlight, the battle for the Champions League places is just as close.

Seven-time champion Lyon leads fourth-place Lille on goal difference with the top three gaining direct entry to the Champions League and the side in fourth entering qualifying. Lyon hosts struggling Auxerre on Saturday while Lille travels to Paris FC on Sunday.

Although its hopes of qualifying for the Champions League have been dented by a 10th loss this season,



PSG's Lucas Beraldo heads the ball during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Nantes in Paris, France. (AP)

Marseille remains hopeful, lagging just two points behind Lyon ahead of hosting Nice at the Vélodrome stadium on Sunday.

Fifth-place Rennes is also in the mix, one point above Marseille, and takes on Nantes.

Rennes has been transformed under coach Franck Haise - who was won six of eight games since taking charge.

Afonso Moreira: The 21-year-

old Portugal forward had his best performance of the season against PSG, according to his coach Paulo Fonseca, and was outstanding either breaking from the left flank or holding up the ball. He also combined well with Brazil forward Endrick in what could be a crucial partnership in the remaining games.

Dominik Greif: The imposing Slovakian has been brilliant in goal for Lyon this season and saved a penalty against PSG, following a standout performance in the previous game.

Esteban Lepaul: He was without a club a few years ago when Lyon released him and is now Ligue 1's top scorer with 17 goals for high-flying Rennes. Lepaul shoots with every precision and has a gift for finding space.

Ilan Kebbal: The Algeria midfielder is Paris FC's top scorer with nine goals and his outstanding recent form has been at the heart of the club's inspired turnaround under coach Antoine Kombouaré.

PSG will be without Vitinha after the Portugal midfielder limped off with a right foot injury during the loss to Lyon. PSG said Vitinha is sidelined by an inflammation in his heel following a knock sustained during the match.

Best of the Rest

Japan to play Ireland in Australia: Japan will host Ireland in a rugby Nations Championship test in Australia on July 11 as part of a doubleheader at a stadium north of Sydney after Australia takes on France.

Rugby Australia on Thursday said the Newcastle match will be the first neutral test hosted in Australia since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ireland has won 10 of 11 tests against Japan dating to the 1991 Rugby World Cup, with Japan's only victory coming at home in the 2019 Rugby World Cup at Shizuoka Stadium. Ireland won the most recent encounter 41-10 at Dublin in November.

After the test against France, Australia's Wallabies will play Italy on July 18 in Perth, Western Australia.

The inaugural Nations Championship pits the top 12 nations from the Northern and Southern hemispheres in a six-round contest for global supremacy. The tournament will culminate in a Finals Weekend at Twickenham in London in November. (AP)

Eliash gets nomination for re-election: The billionaire British-Swedish president of skiing's governing body is standing for re-election as a candidate from the country of Georgia.

The International Ski and Snowboard Federation on Wednesday published the list of five candidates for the June 11 election, which ended speculation about which member federation had nominated its incumbent leader Johan Eliash.

The British snowsport federation nominated its chief executive Victoria Gosling for the FIS presidency and Swedish media reported this week its national federation would not back Eliash, who has often been unpopular with European ski officials.

Sweden-born Eliash, the owner of the Head sportswear brand that provides skis to many top racers including Lindsey Vonn, also is a citizen of his adopted home Britain.

He was nominated by the British federation before winning the FIS presidency in 2021, and was classed as a British candidate when he ran in the International Olympic Committee presidential election last year won by Kirsty Coventry. Eliash has been an IOC member for two years. (AP)

Pistons end longest home playoff losing streak

OKC surges to 2-0 lead over Suns

DETROIT, April 23, (AP): Cade Cunningham had 27 points, 11 assists and six rebounds to lead the top-seeded Detroit Pistons to a 98-83 win over the eighth-seeded Orlando Magic, evening their first-round series and ending the longest home losing streak in NBA playoff history.

The Pistons had lost 11 straight home postseason games, a drought that started in 2008.

Game 3 is Saturday in Orlando. Detroit dominated the third quarter, turning a tie game into a rout by outscoring the Magic 38-16 in the period with six players scoring at least five points.

After Cunningham scored a career playoff-high 39 points in Game 1 and didn't get much help, the All-Star guard had plenty of support, with five teammates scoring in double figures.



Orlando Magic forward Franz Wagner (22) goes to the basket against Detroit Pistons forward Tobias Harris (12) during the second half in Game 2 of a first-round NBA basketball playoff series in Detroit. (AP)

Jalen Suggs scored 19 points and Paolo Banchero had 18 for the Magic. They combined to miss 21 of 35 shots as the team shot 33% and was held to a season low in points.

Detroit's Tobias Harris scored 16 points, Jalen Duren and Ausar Thompson had 11 each, and Duncan Robertson and Isaiah Stewart each scored 10. Robinson made three much-needed 3-pointers for a team that struggles with outside shooting.

Orlando's Franz Wagner and Desmond Bane had 12 points apiece and Wendell Carter Jr. was limited to three points on 1-of-6 shooting after he scored 17 in the opener.

The Magic did not trail in the opener as their starters scored at least 16 points apiece and the Pistons had just two players in double figures.

Detroit took its first lead of the series on the opening possession of Game 2 and jumped to a 14-7 lead with a desperately needed strong start after coming out sluggish in Game 1.

The Pistons led by four points after the opening quarter and the game was tied at 46 entering the third period, when Detroit looked like the defensive-minded team that had the best record in the Eastern Conference.

Both teams will have two days to make adjustments for Game 3.

Detroit hasn't advanced beyond the first playoff round in 18 years and Orlando hasn't reached the second round in 16 years.

Thunder 120, Suns 107

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 37 points and nine assists, and the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Phoenix Suns to take a 2-0 lead in their first-round Western Conference playoff series.

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 25 points in the series-opening win on Sunday, going 5 for 18 from the field. He bounced back in Game 2 with 13-for-25 shooting after being presented the NBA Clutch Player of the Year trophy before the game.

Chet Holmgren and Jalen Williams each added 19 points for Oklahoma



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, right, drives past Phoenix Suns guard Jalen Green during the second half in Game 2 of a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series in Oklahoma City. (AP)

City, though Williams left the game in the third quarter with a left hamstring injury and did not return. Williams, an All-Star in 2024-25, missed 30 games this season with a right hamstring injury after missing the first 19 games of the season following surgery on his right wrist.

Five higher-seeded teams had lost home games in the first week of the playoffs before Wednesday, including the top three seeds in the Eastern Conference, Detroit, Boston and

New York, and the No. 2 and 3 seeds in the West, San Antonio and Denver. Oklahoma City avoided that fate by shooting 47.3% from the field and forcing 21 turnovers.

Dillon Brooks led the Suns with 30 points before fouling out in the fourth quarter. Devin Booker scored 22 points and Jalen Green added 21 for Phoenix, which will host Game 3 on Saturday.

The Thunder led 65-57 at halftime. Williams made his first six field

goals and had 19 points at the break, while Gilgeous-Alexander had 17 points on 7-for-13 shooting.

The action picked up early in the second half as Brooks and Oklahoma City's Lu Dort - both members of Canada's national team - got double technical fouls after a brief skirmish following a made free throw.

Holmgren started the second half hot. He scored eight points in just over four minutes to help the Thunder go up 77-63 and force a Phoenix

timeout. Oklahoma City extended the lead to 100-77 at the end of the third quarter.

Oklahoma City pushed the lead to 26 points early in the fourth quarter before Phoenix made a final push. Booker made a pull-up jumper and was fouled. He missed the free throw, but he rebounded and made a mid-range jumper to cut Oklahoma City's lead to 110-97 with five minutes to play. The Suns got no closer than 10 points.

Madrid visits fifth-placed Betis

Barca to start run-in for La Liga title without the injured Yamal at Getafe

BARCELONA, Spain, April 23, (AP): Barcelona will start its run-in for the La Liga title without the injured Lamine Yamal when it visits Getafe on Saturday.

The defending champion said on Thursday that Yamal, the team's top scorer and assist maker, will miss the final six games of the season after he injured a muscle in his left leg while playing the day before.

The 18-year-old Yamal secured the 1-0 win over Celta Vigo in La Liga on Wednesday but after his spot kick he immediately dropped to the ground and grabbed the back of his left leg. He was promptly substituted.

Barcelona added that its doctors expect Yamal will be fit in time to play for Spain at the World Cup starting in seven weeks.

Barcelona holds a healthy nine-point lead over second-placed Real Madrid as the season enters its home stretch.

Madrid visits fifth-placed Real Betis on Friday needing a victory to maintain its options of catching the defending champion. Madrid will visit Barcelona in three rounds on May 10.

La Liga is the only chance either powerhouse has to finish the season with a major title after both were eliminated in the Champions League quarterfinals last week.

"Our objective has to be to win all six matches, regardless of what Barcelona does," said Madrid coach Alvaro Arbeloa, who replaced Xabi

Alonso midseason and is most likely to be replaced this summer.

Atletico, which beat Barcelona to reach the final four of the Champions League, will most likely prioritize next week's semifinal against Arsenal over its domestic match against Athletic Bilbao on Saturday.



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, left, and Celta's Sergio Carreira challenge for the ball during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Celta Vigo in Barcelona, Spain. (AP)

Coach Diego Simeone is sure to rotate his squad and rest his best players for Wednesday's home game against Arsenal.

Villarreal hosts Celta on Sunday aiming to hold onto third place and the corresponding Champions League berth for next season.

With Raphinha also likely to be unavailable, coach Hansi Flick still has options to form his starting front line. They include forward Marcus Rashford, winger Rooney Bardghji or even Dani Olmo, Gavi Paéz or Fermin López shifting forward from the midfield.

Kylian Mbappé leads the league with 24 goals - three more than Mallorca's Vedat Muriqi - after he scored to help Madrid beat Alaves 2-1 on Tuesday. That broke a winless run of four games overall for Arbeloa's side.

Besides Yamal and Raphinha, Barcelona will likely also be without right back Joao Cancelo after he was injured in the Celta win, too.

Madrid will be missing central defender Eder Militão and in-form midfielder Arda Güler after the club said on Wednesday they both had muscle injuries.

'The necessary arrangements made'

Officials confirm Iran's WC participation

GENEVA, Switzerland, April 23, (AP): An Iranian government spokesperson says the men's national team is preparing for "proud and successful participation" in its World Cup games in the United States.

Iran's ability and willingness to go to the World Cup across north America starting June 11 has been unclear since the U.S. and Israel launched military attacks Feb. 28.

"The Ministry of Youth and Sports made an announcement about the full preparedness of our national soccer team for presence in the 2026 World Cup in the U.S., by the order of the minister," Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohejerani told Iran's state TV.

FIFA has consistently said Iran will stick to the World Cup game schedule decided last December, and refused to negotiate any suggestion of playing the team's games in Mexico.

Progress was made March 31 when FIFA President Gianni Infantino went to meet Iranian soccer leaders and players in Turkey where the team had two warmup games.

Though the Iranian soccer league has shut down during the war, the team's official Instagram account posted photos this week of a practice in Tehran.

Mohejerani added "the necessary arrangements that these dear ones need for the team's proud and successful participation, (have been made)."

Infantino promised the Iranian team three weeks ago he would help find a training camp outside of the country for the team to

prepare for the World Cup. That could also be in Turkey, where Iran played warmup games last month in Antalya against Nigeria and Costa Rica.

FIFA did not immediately confirm details Wednesday of a possible camp being organized.

Iran is scheduled to play two group-stage games at the Los Angeles Rams' stadium in Inglewood - against New Zealand and Belgium - then face Egypt in Seattle.



In this file photo, Iran's Mehdi Taremi shoots a penalty kick to score his side's second goal during a friendly soccer match between Iran and Costa Rica, in Antalya, southern Turkey. (AP)

Milan vs Juventus clash goes beyond Champions League race

Inter routed in Europe but dominant at home

ROME, April 23, (AP): Best known in Europe for memorable defeats in recent seasons, Inter Milan remains a force at home in Italy.

In Cristian Chivu's first season coaching the club, Inter is closing in on the Serie A title and could still raise two trophies after also reaching the Italian Cup final.

If Inter wins at Torino and Napoli and AC Milan don't win this weekend, Inter can clinch the Italian league title with four rounds remaining.

The domestic success has come in sharp contrast to Inter's ouster from this season's Champions League by tiny Norwegian club Bodø/Glimt; and a 5-0 rout by Paris Saint-Germain in last season's final.

Not since José Mourinho led Inter to a treble in 2010 has Inter won



Inter Milan's Petar Susic celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during the Italian Cup, return-leg soccer match between Inter Milan and Como, in Milan, Italy. (AP)

the league and Cup in the same season.

Chivu played on the 2010 team and is quickly making a name for himself in the coaching ranks after helping Parma avoid relegation last season.

"I'm just Cristian. My only responsibility is to these players," Chivu said when asked about being compared to Mourinho. "I'm just trying to do my job in the best manner possible for those who believed in me, for those wonderful players, and I hope to achieve some of our objectives."

Chivu was asked about the possibility of winning both trophies after Inter came back from two goals down to beat Como 3-2 in the Italian Cup semifinals. Inter will face Lazio in the May 13 final.

A matchup between second-place Milan and fourth-place Juventus on Sunday isn't just about securing Champions League places. It's also a meeting between the two top United States internationals in Italy.

Milan forward Christian Pulisic has not scored since December for club or country, while McKennie has become an indispensable player for Juventus since Luciano Spalletti was named coach in October.

After this meeting, Pulisic and McKennie won't see each other again until they unite for national team training camp at a home World Cup. Inter goalkeeper Josep Martínez made several spectacular saves against Como in the Italian Cup using a butterfly position borrowed from hockey goaltenders.

By dropping to his knees and raising his arms to cover more space, Martínez was able to make reflex saves seem easy.

Still, Martínez remains Inter's second choice 'keeper after Yann Sommer, who is expected to start at Torino on Sunday.

Inter captain and Serie A scoring leader Lautaro Martínez remains out with a muscle issue.

Authorities in Milan are investigating an alleged prostitution ring that reportedly has involved more than 70 soccer players. Four people have been arrested for allegedly arranging the escort service, although no players have been placed under formal investigation.

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Lucknow Super Giants' Digvesh Rathi bowls a delivery during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Lucknow Super Giants and Rajasthan Royals in Lucknow, India. (AP)
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Sports

The Whites return home ... Sheikh Al-Youssef hails achievement

Kuwait Club: The summit is ours after sealing final place in Challenge League

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Kuwait Club returned to home after booking its place in the AFC Challenge League final against Cambodia's Svay Rieng with a 2-1 victory over Kyrgyz side Muras United in the semifinal held in Bishkek.

The final will be staged in Kuwait on May 13. The club now stands one step away from a fourth continental title, having previously lifted the AFC Cup three times.

Despite the suspension of domestic football since early March, Kuwait Club delivered a strong response on the pitch, overcoming challenges and difficult conditions to reach another Asian final, underlining its ambition to add more silverware to its continental record.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Football Association Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef congratulated Kuwait Club Chairman Khaled



Players celebrate Kuwait Club winning goal.

Al-Ghanem, the board, players, and technical and administrative staff, praising their achievement and confirming full federation support ahead of the final.

Honorary club president Marzouq Al-Ghanem also celebrated

the qualification, posting on "X": "The summit is ours," describing the victory as one worthy of the club's history and stature. He said Kuwait Club continues to build on its legacy, reaching the final with a deserved win and a winning men-

talities rooted in major occasions.

He added that the club's current success reflects a long-standing culture of ambition and excellence, where trophies are not a goal but a tradition, and concluded by looking ahead to the final at home against Svay Rieng, aiming to complete the journey with a title.

Player Amr Abdel Fattah, who was named Man of the Match, credited the entire squad, saying the award reflects collective effort rather than individual performance, stressing that the main objective was reaching the final.

Captain Fahd Al-Hajri praised the team's spirit and consistency, while thanking the club management for its continuous support.

Ahmed Al-Dhafiri also highlighted the achievement, saying the team is now one step away from a new Asian title, and commended the efforts of the Minister of Youth and Sports, Dr. Tareq Al-Jalal, for facilitating the team's campaign in the tournament.

Sheikh Al-Badr, Kazakhstan envoy discuss boosting sports cooperation



Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr with Kazakhstan envoy Yerzhan Yelekeyev

KUWAIT CITY, April 23: Sheikh Khaled Al-Badr Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwaiti and Asian Aquatics Federations, held talks with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Kuwait, Yerzhan Yelekeyev, during an official visit aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation in sports.

The meeting reviewed the latest developments in aquatic sports at regional and international levels, and explored ways to enhance collaboration through the exchange of technical and administrative expertise. Both sides also discussed the possibility of organizing joint training camps to help improve performance and develop national sporting talent in both countries.

They further considered coordination on hosting continental and international events, which would support Kuwait and Kazakhstan's presence on the global sports stage, particularly in swimming, diving, and water polo.

Both parties stressed the importance of continued cooperation between sports bodies and relevant institutions, highlighting sport as a vital tool for strengthening ties between nations and supporting the growth of aquatic disciplines.

Jiu-jitsu fighters face tough tests at Asian Beach Games

Kuwait sailing team eyes steady start



Kuwait's aquathlon team prepares for the opening event.

SANYA, April 23: Kuwait's national jiu-jitsu team begins its journey today at the 6th Asian Beach Games in Sanya, which runs until April 30.

Fahad Al-Marzouqi kicks off Kuwait's participation with a challenging Round of 32 bouts in the 77kg category against an opponent from the Philippines, as he targets a strong run into the latter stages of the competition.

In the 69kg category, Yusuf Al-Dousari also opens his campaign in the Round of 32, facing a fighter from Singapore. The jiu-jitsu events get underway at 4 a.m., with Al-Dousari aiming to make a strong impact in a highly competitive field featuring some of Asia's best athletes.

In sailing, Kuwait continues its participation with

renewed ambition, as the second race of the Optimist junior class begins at 6 a.m. Sailors Zakaria Bouhamad and Abdulaziz Al-Mansour will look to improve their points and standings.

The ILCA4 trio of Ali Anki, Hamad Al-Masoud, and Sara Al-Ajmi return to action, aiming to climb the overall rankings amid intense competition.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's aquathlon athletes Abdulaziz Al-Huwaidi and Mohammed Bukhalaf have completed their Asian campaign after a demanding endurance test combining swimming and running.

Al-Huwaidi finished 26th, with Bukhalaf placing 27th out of 40 competitors, in a field featuring some of the continent's top endurance athletes.

the hour after a lengthy VAR check that determined there was a foul on the Lazio goalkeeper. (AP)

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World Cup dreamer - Gnabry: Germany forward Serge Gnabry has ruled himself out of the World Cup after tearing a muscle in his right thigh while training with Bayern Munich.

Bayern said on Saturday that Gnabry had torn the adductor muscle in his thigh and would be out "for a longer period" without giving any further details.

The player confirmed on Instagram that he'll miss the World Cup in Mexico, Canada and the United States in June.

"The last few days have been tough to process. A Bayern season which still holds much to play for after securing another Bundesliga title on the weekend," Gnabry wrote. "As for the World Cup dream with Germany. That's sadly over for me.

"Like the rest of the country, I'll be supporting the boys from home. Now it's time to focus on recovery and getting back for pre-season. Thank you for all the messages." (AP)

Man City top of Premier League as Haaland's winner relegates Burnley

Leeds rescues late draw, moves nine points clear of drop zone

LONDON, April 23, (AP): Manchester City completed its ominous, late-season rise to the top of the Premier League by beating Burnley 1-0 thanks to Erling Haaland's early goal, ending Arsenal's 200-day stay in first place.

The result condemned American-owned Burnley to relegation after one season back in the top flight.

Haaland ran onto Jeremy Doku's pass to convert a deft finish in the fifth minute for his league-high 24th goal of the campaign, which allowed City to back up its 2-1 victory over Arsenal on Sunday that, for many, turned Pep Guardiola's team into the title favorite.

However, with goal difference potentially coming into play, City might regret not putting more past Burnley at Turf Moor.

Winning by a one-goal margin left City and Arsenal tied on both points (70) and goal difference (+37). City only leads courtesy of more goals scored (66 to Arsenal's 63).

"I was not frustrated, why would I be?" Guardiola said. "We won three points, we are top of the league."

Haaland and Rayan Cherki struck the goal frame and Nico O'Reilly had a weak shot saved with the net at his mercy as City's players threw everything at Burnley - they finished the game having had 28 shots - in an effort to rack up the goals.

"In these types of games, if you score the second or third that you deserve, everything's more fluid and

natural," Guardiola said.

"But," he added, "the main target was winning the game."

City was nine points adrift of Arsenal after drawing with West Ham on March 14. Three straight wins, combined with back-to-back losses for Arsenal, has seen the title race turn on its head.

For next-to-last Burnley, a third relegation from the Premier League in the last five seasons has been an inevitability for weeks.

Scott Parker's team slipped to its 22nd loss of the campaign and is 13 points from safety with four games left.

Burnley will be going down with last-place Wolverhampton, whose fate was sealed at the weekend, and one other team.

In the other match Wednesday, Leeds scored in the seventh minute of stoppage time to draw 2-2 at Bournemouth and edge nine points clear of third-to-last Tottenham, which occupies the other place in the relegation zone.

Sean Longstaff's late equalizer denied Bournemouth a win that would have lifted the team to sixth place, four points off the Champions League qualification positions.

Storm clouds are hovering over the American ownership project at Chelsea that has swung from being regarded as bold and exciting to now being considered reckless and damaging.

Reaching the FA Cup final on Sunday likely will do little to change that.

What should be an exciting weekend for Chelsea and its fans - another trip to Wembley Stadium, this time for a semifinal against Leeds - is back-dropped by a growing crisis at a club

that so often resembles a soap opera.

Anger is rising to the surface among fans and disillusionment among players after a humiliating exit from the Champions League - 8-2 on aggregate to Paris Saint-Germain - and a goalless streak amid five straight losses in the Premier League that marks the team's worst run of league results in 114 years.

Liam Rosenior, an inexperienced 41-year-old coach, bore the brunt of the ire and was duly fired on Wednesday, four months into a reign that veered badly off course over the last few weeks.

During the 3-0 loss at Brighton on Tuesday, match-going supporters chanted - in no uncertain terms - for Rosenior's departure and the coach himself called out his players in media interviews when he criticized their "lack of spirit" and "unacceptable" performance. He was always unlikely to survive after such an outburst.

Bubbling under the surface, meanwhile, is growing tension about the direction the U.S. owners have taken Chelsea and the massive financial concerns that come with it.

Since the 2022 purchase of Chelsea by a consortium fronted by Los Angeles Dodgers part-owner Todd Boehly and largely funded by private equity company Clearlake Capital, the club's leadership has spent around \$2.5 billion on new, mostly young and unproven players on long contracts and taken on a debt approaching \$2 billion, according to figures compiled by The Athletic. Chelsea's most recent financial results revealed the club made pre-tax losses of \$350 million, a record high in the Premier League era.



Manchester City's Erling Haaland, left, and Burnley's Hjalmar Ekdal fight for the ball during the Premier League soccer match between Burnley and Manchester City in Burnley, England. (AP)