



Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, PM, senior ministers Page 2



SECURITY IN OVERDRIVE AS KUWAIT FLIGHTS RESUME

Airport returns at 10% strength

Kuwait airport achieves steady, well-coordinated restart

By Munif Naif and Mohammad Ghanem
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Deputy Director General for Planning and Projects at the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) Saad Al-Otaibi confirmed the successful implementation of the Kuwait International Airport operational plan, stressing that it is proceeding in a smooth, professional and efficient manner.

In an interview with Kuwait TV, Al-Otaibi disclosed that flights resumed early Sunday morning and the trial operation is ongoing — at 10 percent capacity with 40 flights (20 departures and 20 arrivals), compared to 400 flights daily before Feb 28.

He said PACA approved the plan to resume operations at the airport and reopen the airspace effective Sunday, following its closure on Feb 28. He revealed that the plan was developed in coordination with the concerned authorities and partners at the airport, including the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait General Administration of Customs, Kuwait Fire Force, Ministry of Health, Kuwait Airways — the national carrier, and Jazeera Airways.

Continued on Page 5



Opinion

Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

This is Iran's modus operandi – stalling and buying time

THE second round of negotiations between Washington and Tehran has failed. More precisely, the Iranian negotiator does not want to admit defeat, and is instead attempting to stall and buy time.

When I said some time ago that the Iranians' habit is to stall in negotiations, I was referring to a wound the American negotiator does not want to see due to cultural differences, as well as because of the U.S. desire to prolong the blockade on Iranian ports, hoping it might lead to the regime's collapse.

Above all, many Arab citizens, especially in the Gulf, believe they understand the Iranian character best because we have dealt with them for thousands of years. As Arabs and Gulf citizens, we are fully aware that Iran seeks to buy time by any means necessary and raises the banner of victory after every defeat, even if its country is left in ruins.

This is why I have repeatedly stated that the Iranian regime, particularly the current one, has turned many defeats into narratives of victory, beginning with the overthrow of the Shah, the Iran-Iraq War, and the systematic interference in Gulf states through the formation of terrorist cells, bombings, assassination attempts, and threats to the holy sites in Makkah and Madinah. This also includes support for Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia and the backing of Hezbollah, which is relentlessly destroying Lebanon. The Iranian regime also played a role in the destruction of Syria and in fueling crises throughout the Arab world.

Continued on Page 5

Follow me on:

@Ahmedaljarallah

Ahmed aljarallah

ahmed@aljarallah.com



Scan QR code to visit the website: aljarallah.com

Kuwait decries Trump event security breach



Left: US President Donald Trump arrives at the James Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House after a shooting incident outside the ballroom at the annual White House Correspondents' Association Dinner in Washington, Saturday, April 25, 2026. Right: Members of law enforcement control shooting suspect Cole Tomas Allen during the White House Correspondents Dinner, Saturday, April 25, 2026, in Washington. (AP)



Gunman crossed states before Washington attack bid

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (Agencies): Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday condemned an attempted armed attack targeting a venue hosting the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner, attended by US President Donald Trump on Saturday evening. In a statement, the Ministry affirmed Kuwait's solidarity with the United States government and people, reiterating its firm rejection of all forms of violence.

The Kingdom of Bahrain also strongly condemned the attempted attack by a gunman at the annual White House Correspondents' Association Dinner held at the Washington Hilton, where President Donald J. Trump was present. In a statement issued Sunday, Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs praised the vigilance of the D.C. Secret Service and law enforcement authorities for

foiling the attack and apprehending the suspect. The Kingdom expressed solidarity with the United States and wished a swift recovery to the injured security officer, along with continued wellbeing for the US President.

The United Arab Emirates likewise condemned the attempted attack on President Trump during the same event. In a statement, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed solidarity with the President, his family, and the American people, while voicing deep concern over the incident. The Ministry reaffirmed its rejection of all forms of violence, extremism, and terrorism that threaten security and stability.

In Washington, President Donald Trump was somberly contemplative and unusually conciliatory after confronting what he saw as a third attempt on his life in less than two years. He suggested that his personal poli-

tics had made him a repeated target, but he also called for unity and bipartisan healing in an increasingly violent world.

"It's always shocking when something like this happens. Happened to me, a little bit. And that never changes," a subdued Trump told reporters in a hastily organized news conference at the White House late Saturday. Only a short time before, a man with guns and knives tried to rush past the security perimeter inside the Washington hotel where the Republican president was about to address the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Authorities are in the early stages of determining what happened and why. The shooting suspect was taken into custody and identified as Cole Tomas Allen, 31, of Torrance, California.

The accused gunman who tried to storm

the ballroom at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner with guns and knives traveled across the country before the event and is believed to have been targeting members of the Trump administration, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said Sunday.

Blanche also said officials believe the suspect traveled by train from California to Chicago and then on to Washington, where in recent days he checked in as a guest to the hotel where one of Washington's glitziest events was being held Saturday night.

Investigators have not publicly named the suspect, but two law enforcement officials familiar with the matter have identified him to The Associated Press as 31-year-old Cole Tomas Allen of Torrance, California.

Continued on Page 5

Amir issues decree appointing Al-Mashaan as new Deputy FM

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah signed a decree Sunday appointing Hamad Sulieman Mashaan Al-Mashaan as Deputy Foreign Minister.

The decree stipulated that the Foreign Minister should comply with this decree, which would take effect once published in the official gazette.



Hamad Sulieman Mashaan Al-Mashaan

Salons, clinics pass 1st checks

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Teams tasked to inspect salons and health institutes conducted their first round of inspection campaigns last Thursday, as part of the work of the oversight committee.

Sources informed the newspaper that the ministries of Health, Municipality and Commerce coordinated their efforts to ensure the success of these campaigns.

Sources said the inspection teams visited the Capital Mall where they checked the health institutes and salons for men and women to ensure compliance with the health regulations and requirements approved by the committee. They indicated that no violations were recorded, as all establishments adhered to the relevant decisions and regulations.

Sources disclosed that the committee operates according to the

decision of Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi to strengthen health oversight and guarantee adherence to professional standards. Sources added that the aim is to establish health requirements and technical standards for salons and health institutes and implement periodic inspection programs through field teams to ensure compliance with health and professional regulations.

Sources stated that the committee is also responsible for proposing penalties and legal measures against violating establishments, developing effective mechanisms for reporting health and administrative violations, monitoring radiation equipment use, ensuring compliance with safety procedures and the application of infection control standards and safe health practices, and checking establishment licenses and employee health certificates to protect the consumers.

Day by Day

WHEN people feel wronged, they often have no recourse but to turn in supplication to their Creator. Injustice is darkness, as everyone knows. Woe to the oppressor from the punishment of God Almighty. God's punishment for the oppressor is severe, and may include declining health and financial hardship.

Every oppressor will eventually be afflicted by one who is more oppressive than themselves.

... Yet tomorrow is another day.

Zahed Matar

Six decrees strip 1,266 citizenship

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Six decrees were published on Sunday in the official gazette "Kuwait Al-Yaum," revoking Kuwaiti citizenship from 1,266 individuals and those who acquired it by dependency, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

■ Decree No. 60/2026 revokes Kuwaiti citizenship from 1,242 individuals and those who acquired it by dependency.

■ Decree No. 61/2026 revokes citizenship from one individual and those who acquired it by dependency.

■ Decree No. 62/2026 revokes citizenship from a woman and those who acquired it by dependency.

■ Decree No. 65/2026 is based on Article 21 bis (a) of the Kuwaiti Nationality Law concerning forgery. It revokes the Kuwaiti citizenship certificates of 20 individuals and those who acquired it by

Continued on Page 5

Gradual return puts sports back in motion

Whistle blows again as training restarts

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Public Authority for Sport said that the joint committee tasked with studying the impact of the exceptional circumstances facing the country on the sports sector approved the resumption of trainings starting Sunday according to a schedule from 5:00 am to 7:00 pm.

The committee meeting was chaired by Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Dr Tareq Al-Jalahma.

The joint committee reviewed a number of proposed scenarios for the

gradual resumption of activities in line with health and regulatory requirements, stressing the need to implement evacuation protocols across all sports bodies and facilities as a precautionary measure, the Public Authority said in a statement.

The meeting also addressed an evaluation of the seventh week of the suspension of activities.

Minister Al-Jalahma affirmed that the joint committee is intensifying its work to examine all aspects related to the full return of sports activities,

stressing that the safety of players and all elements of the sports system remains a top priority in all decisions taken, statement added.

The current approach focuses on a carefully planned gradual return under strict conditions, with full readiness to implement evacuation protocols across all sports bodies and facilities to ensure an immediate response to any emergency situation, he added.

See Also Page 16

Attacks on Kuwait condemned

Pakistan reaffirms diplomatic path to ease regional tensions

By Fares Ghaleb
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Zafar Iqbal affirmed that his country supports all efforts to boost dialogue and de-escalate tensions, as it leads negotiations between the concerned parties.

In a statement to the newspaper, Iqbal pointed out that the priority is to encourage the continuation of negotiations and support conditions conducive to stability. He said "issues related to major maritime routes are of global



Dr. Zafar Iqbal

importance. Pakistan stressed the need to guarantee freedom of navigation and the uninterrupted flow of trade in accordance with the international law, while avoiding any action that could escalate tensions."

He confirmed that Pakistan is in close contact with regional partners on issues of mutual interest. He added that any negotiation framework and its implementation mechanisms are determined by the concerned parties, especially since regional efforts aim to support stability and cooperation.

Asked if there is a Pakistani proposal to extend the ceasefire, he clarified that decisions regarding timelines and mechanisms for any agreement rest with the concerned parties, reiterating that Pakistan supports the continuation of dialogue and efforts that lead to stability and prevent escalation.

Continued on Page 5



Jordan King, Kuwait FM review strong ties, discuss local scene



NBK – Egypt named Euromoney's 'Egypt's Best for Premium Banking Award 2026'



Prayer Timings

Fajr 03:47 Asr 03:21
 Sunrise .. 05:11 Maghrib .. 06:21
 Zohr 11:46 Isha 07:43



HH the Amir HH the Crown Prince HH the Premier

Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, PM, senior ministers

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sunday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah.

Crown Prince audiences

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace Sunday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, and Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah.



KUNA photo

Jordan's King Abdullah II receives the visiting Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in his office, in the presence of Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II.

Jordan King, Kuwait FM review strong ties, discuss local scene

AMMAN, April 26, (KUNA): Jordan's King Abdullah II discussed on Sunday with Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah the latest regional developments and efforts exerted in this regard, in the presence of Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the talks came during the king's reception of Sheikh Jarrah on the occasion of his official visit to Jordan.

The meeting reviewed the strong fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples, as well as ways to enhance cooperation across various fields.

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

The Minister of Foreign Affairs also met with Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi during his official visit to Jordan.

In a statement, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the meeting reviewed the longstanding fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples, with both sides stressing the importance of continuing to strengthen cooperation and coordination across all fields.

The two ministers also discussed regional developments and ongoing diplomatic efforts, emphasizing the need for these efforts to lead to a comprehensive and sustainable settlement that enhances security and stability in the region.

They affirmed continued Kuwaiti-Jordanian coordination to address current challenges amid sensitive regional developments.

Co-op launches EV fast charger

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Siddiq Co-operative Society Osama Al-Mashouh announced the launch of the first fast charger for electric vehicles (EV) among cooperative societies in Kuwait, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

This pioneering step reflects an ambitious future vision and a commitment to supporting environmental sustainability and keeping pace with the latest technologies in the energy and transportation sectors.

Al-Mashouh emphasized that this initiative stems from the cooperative society's social responsibility and its belief in the importance of adopting environmentally friendly solutions, contributing to reducing carbon emissions and promoting a culture of transition toward electric vehicles.

He stressed that the project reflects the

cooperative society's commitment to being at the forefront of supporting development and innovation in the cooperative sector by providing modern services that meet the needs of citizens and residents, keep pace with rapid changes in lifestyles and technology, and enhance the quality of life in the area.

Al-Mashouh noted that the cooperative society continues to adopt modern and sustainable initiatives that prioritize serving its shareholders and customers, contributing to strengthening its position as a leading model in cooperative work.

He stressed the cooperative society's commitment to launching more innovative projects that support sustainable development and enhance national efforts to protect the environment and improve the level of services provided.



Farwaniya Governorate photo

Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah meets senior firefighters.

Firemen response to blaze at airport fuel tank hailed

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Athbi Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah received on Sunday the Director of the Airport Fire Department, Brigadier General Musab Al-Ansari, and the Head of Plans and Emergencies at the Central Operations Department of the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), Colonel Khalifa Al-Suwaidi.

According to a press release issued by Farwaniya Governorate, the governor welcomed Brigadier General Al-Ansari and Colonel Al-Suwaidi, praising the huge efforts exerted by firefighting teams in responding to the fire that broke out recently in fuel tanks at Kuwait International Airport, and their rapid response and high level of efficiency.

Oman, Yemen slam drone attack on Kuwait sites

MUSCAT, April 26, (KUNA): Oman on Sunday condemned the targeting of two northern land border posts in Kuwait by drones.

In a Foreign Ministry statement, Oman affirmed solidarity with Kuwait and support for measures taken to safeguard its security and stability.

Oman reiterated its rejection of all acts threatening states' security and sovereignty, stressing the need to regional and international cooperation to combat violence, terrorism and hostile acts.

Yemen condemns

Yemen on Saturday condemned the attack on two northern border posts in Kuwait involving explosive-laden drones launched from Iraq.

In a statement obtained by KUNA, the Yemeni Foreign Ministry said the attacks represent a "loud" breach to sovereignty, safety and stability of the State of Kuwait, expressing full solidarity with Kuwait in whatever steps it takes to preserve them.

Security forces iron shield against Iranian aggression

United efforts blunted drone, ballistic, cruise missiles attacks

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): Kuwait military and security institutes have shown solid determination, unbreakable resolve and relentless sacrifice to form a shield through integrated systems against Iran's heinous aggression.

The steadfastness of these vigilant forces is embodied in continuous field operations and deep operational coordination linking the Kuwaiti Army, the Ministry of Interior, the National Guard, Kuwait Fire Force and other relevant entities, forming a defensive barrier characterized by the highest standards of efficiency and readiness.

From the armed forces' vigilance in confronting hostile incursions, to the National Guard securing vital sites and providing strategic support, to the Ministry of Interior's preemptive strikes dismantling cells seeking to destabilize the country to the heroism of firefighters. These roles integrated into one system that imposed an iron shield safeguarding national security and protecting its resources.

Since the outbreak of the conflict on February 28, the Ministry of Defense has represented the cornerstone of the comprehensive national response system - military, field and logistical. This was reflected in the full mobilization of its capabilities, based on proactive plans and highly qualified human and technical resources.

Units and formations of the Kuwaiti Army began their duties on the afternoon of Saturday, February 28, defending airspace and territory.

Systems

Armed forces and air defense systems monitored and tracked hostile targets and engaged them according to rules of engagement.

Due to high readiness and national spirit, Kuwait was able from the earliest hours to respond to challenges posed by the aggression through an organized set of defensive and protective measures covering all sectors of the state.

Field movements were accompanied by intensive media efforts marked by responsibility and clarity.

The Ministry of Defense issued a series of official statements to reassure citizens and residents, highlighting maximum readiness across all army

sectors and units to face various potential scenarios.

The MoD stressed that operations were managed through a high-level coordination system linking the military with all state institutions to ensure unified decision-making and rapid response, alongside continuous updates to keep the public informed.

Drones

On April 10, Kuwait Army announced the total toll of the Iranian aggression reached 852 drones, 354 ballistic missiles and 15 cruise missiles. It also reported that explosive ordnance disposal teams handled a large number of reports dealing with remnants and debris resulting from the attacks.

These teams addressed shrapnel and explosive remnants in separate operations aimed at safe disposal, while army firefighting teams responded to multiple incidents.

MoD data revealed that hostile targets included military bases, vital oil facilities, power stations, operational facilities of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, a building in the ministries complex, Kuwait International Airport, several ports and warehouses of a private logistics company.

In its first statement on February 28, the Ministry affirmed armed forces were carrying out their duty to defend Kuwait's sovereignty and counter threats to national security and stability. It urged the public to avoid any suspicious objects or debris and to report them immediately.

The National Guard also emerged as a fundamental pillar in the defense triangle, integrating its efforts with the army, police and Fire Force.

Kuwait National Guard's work spanned defensive integration, support of the home front, combat readiness, protection of airspace and facilities, as well as technical and radiological monitoring.

In early March, members of the National Guard's explosive disposal unit undertook a high-risk mission involving a drone warhead lodged at the bottom of a fuel tank filled with flammable materials, effectively a ticking bomb. After seven days of intensive work, the warhead was successfully extracted and destroyed.

Meanwhile, National Guard task forces secured 67 vital locations and demonstrated advanced capabilities in countering hostile drones using precise engagement systems that ensured debris fell in safe areas, minimizing risk to infrastructure and lives.

National Guard also deployed the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Chemical Defense and Radiological Monitoring, equipped with advanced detection systems and a network of monitoring stations, ensuring rapid response to any contamination risks.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Interior demonstrated strong vigilance through comprehensive measures, including banning drone use, suspending certain activities and increasing readiness at vital sites and border crossings.

From mid-March, security forces shifted to proactive operations, dismantling four cells - targeting Kuwait's security and stability - involving citizens, residents and non-Kuwaitis stripped of their nationality. Efforts extended into cyberspace to counter misinformation and track rumor spreaders.

The Ministry emphasized continued vigilance and readiness to address any threat under exceptional circumstances, alongside effective communication to keep the public informed and combat misinformation.

Kuwait Fire Force also recorded exceptional achievements, fighting fires caused by the attacks. In one major operation, teams controlled a large fire at Kuwait International Airport fuel tanks over 58 continuous hours.

From the onset of aggression, the Fire Force handled hundreds of incidents, including over 90 unusual reports involving fires from debris or direct strikes, while ensuring preparedness nationwide.

Security

A situation room was activated under Fire Force leadership, coordinating resources, technical support and site security. Additional precautionary measures included dividing rescue and hazardous materials teams and enhancing readiness across all centers.

A specialized media center was also established to provide accurate information and maintain public communication during the crisis.

The coordinated information flow among state agencies, especially through daily briefings, helped counter rumors and demonstrated effective crisis management.

Kuwait's military and security personnel demonstrated the highest levels of sacrifice, with martyrs and dozens injured in the line of duty. Their sacrifices standing as a lasting testament to the nation's enduring commitment to protecting the homeland.

Fish prices 'affordable' despite regional crisis

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The local fish market anticipates a new phase that could restore balance between local production and imported fish, amid government decisions aimed at revitalizing the fishing industry and opening import channels, and a reality marked by fluctuating supply.

After the issuance of decisions permitting the resumption of sailing fishing and recreational boats and the gradual reopening of airspace, many are optimistic that such decisions will strengthen food security through increased fish stocks and ease pressure on the local market.

Abdullah Al-Sarheed, head of Kuwait Fishermen Union, confirmed to the newspaper that the local market is currently experiencing abundance of fish in both quantity and quality. He affirmed that prices remain affordable for a large segment of consumers despite the challenges the sector faced recently. He stated that reopening the airspace and allowing fishing boats to resume sailing are considered strategic steps towards enhancing food security. He said these measures will lead to gradual re-balancing of supply and demand by increasing the local catch or easing import operations.

He disclosed that during the airspace closure, the union relied heavily on land imports to meet market needs. "This helped narrow the supply gaps, but it was not enough to achieve total stability, considering the high cost of land transport and limited options compared to air freight," he explained.

He said the union intends to implement a comprehensive plan in the coming phase to diversify import sources by targeting new markets in Asia, such as India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He revealed that the goal is to secure a stable supply of high-quality fish, particularly after stopping imports from Iran, which was a major source for the Kuwaiti market.

He added that fully reopening the airspace will give the market more flexibility in meeting demand and will expedite the arrival of fresh shipments. He believes this will positively impact product quality and price stability. He expects gradual improvement in supply levels in the coming period.

He confirmed that the union is coordinating with government agencies to expand fish distribution outlets. He cited the preliminary agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs to supply imported fish to cooperative societies at cost price to prevent unjustified price hikes.

In addition, Hamoud Hamdi, shift supervisor at the Fish Market in Sharq, informed the newspaper that the market is undergoing a transitional phase characterized by fluctuations due to several factors, such as the decline in local fish supply and temporary reliance on imports, given the exceptional circumstances the region witnessed recently.

He pointed out that the market relied almost entirely on land imports during the past period due to the airspace closure, which limited the speed and quantity of shipments. He said the reopening of Kuwait International Airport is a significant turning point, as it is expected to accelerate import operations and increase the supply, especially fresh fish.

Regarding the decision to allow recreational fishing, he considers it a positive decision for boat owners, as it restored their ability to fish within a specific timeframe. "However, it did not have the desired impact on the commercial fishing sector, because fishing areas remain restricted to a certain geographical area, so many commercial fishermen are still hesitant to sail, as the trips are not economically viable given the low returns," he explained.



KUNA photo

Kuwaiti entrepreneurs Taiba Al-Humaidhi and Sheikhha Awatif Al-Sabah took part in the inaugural Arab Women's Week organized by the Arab Entrepreneurs Board in London.

Kuwaiti entrepreneurs win laurels at UK women event

LONDON, April 26, (KUNA): Kuwaiti entrepreneurs Taiba Al-Humaidhi and Sheikhha Awatif Al-Sabah participated in the inaugural Arab Women's Week, organized by the Arab Entrepreneurs Board in London, alongside more than a thousand high-level figures from the UK and the Middle East and North Africa region.

Al-Humaidhi and Sheikhha Awatif Al-Sabah participated in an international program designed to empower Arab women and enhance their presence and influence on the global stage through meetings and dialogues that brought together leading figures, entrepreneurs, and influencers in the fields of innovation and social impact.

Al-Humaidhi, an entrepreneur, behavioral scientist, social impact leader, and founder of the "Lei Wa Lakom" platform, was honored in the British House of Lords with the "Entrepreneurship in Social Impact" award.

This award recognizes her role in promoting financial literacy and women's economic empowerment, as well as her knowledge-based and media initiatives that simplify financial concepts and transform them into practical tools that support more informed financial decision-making.

In a press statement, Al-Humaidhi said that she participated as a speaker in the Arab Women Business Forum dur-

ing a panel discussion that addressed the future of entrepreneurship and the role of financial literacy in supporting sustainable growth, where she highlighted the importance of transforming financial knowledge into practical tools.

She added that she presented a model for a new generation of Arab women leaders who combine research knowledge, innovation, and impactful creation, that draws on her academic experience in behavioral sciences from the London School of Economics.

Sheikha Awatif, a life coach, writer, and advocate for mental wellbeing and personal development, noted that she was honored during the week's events in recognition of her role in fostering resilience, clarity and purposeful leadership through her work in training, consulting, and women's empowerment initiatives.

In a press statement, Sheikha Awatif stated that she participated in a panel discussion within the international program where she shared her experiences and expertise through the establishment of the Pure Soul Training and Consulting Center.

Through their participation, Al-Humaidhi and Sheikhha Awatif highlighted the role of frontline workers in crises and extraordinary circumstances, considering them a fundamental segment in building and strengthening societies.

diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

Complex regional scene may stir global recession

"THE current situation between the United States and Iran is marked by extreme tension and fragility, under an unstable truce that the US president has extended indefinitely, on the condition that Iran presents a proposal to end the conflict that is acceptable to all parties," columnist Eng. Adel Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"The Iranian leadership appears unprepared for this, as concluding any settlement could trigger a popular uprising within Iran. The US naval blockade of Iranian ports is weakening Iran's capabilities. Meanwhile, the United States is imposing strict conditions for resuming negotiations and reaching a final settlement.



Adel Al-Kharafi

"At the same time, there is a divergence of positions among power centers within Iran, with one faction favoring negotiations to end economic and military pressure, and another insisting on military confrontation and rejecting the required concessions.

"Therefore, the Strait of Hormuz remains the primary flashpoint. Iran views it as a strategic bargaining chip, while Washington considers it a red line that cannot be crossed. This situation means that any clashes on the ground could completely derail the truce, potentially tipping the scales in favor of hardliners in Iran.

"This crisis has also triggered other crises in the region, including the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations, which could indirectly influence the nature of any comprehensive ceasefire.

"All of this represents a major turning point for the region as a whole. The United States continues to seek a breakthrough, including efforts to hold further meetings with Iran in Islamabad, as well as attempts to separate the Lebanese track from Iran's influence.

"Many complications have emerged in recent days. While the US president announced that the truce between Lebanon and Israel has been extended for another three weeks, Israeli violations continue, as do those by Hezbollah, which appears to be linking Lebanon's fate to Iran's.

"This creates a new crisis that Beirut is likely to face in the near future, especially given that 55 Lebanese villages and towns remain occupied. Israel continues to demolish these areas, while Hezbollah has been unable to stop it.

"Signs of weakness have become increasingly evident within Hezbollah, suggesting it may be unable to maintain the support of its traditional base, which has relied heavily on it and is now facing the hardships of displacement and forced migration.

"As a result, the regional landscape has become highly complex, with no clear indication of an imminent solution. This situation is further intensifying the global economic crisis, which, if it continues until the end of next month, could push the world into a recession lasting several years.

"If we consider the current US administration's prospects in the midterm elections in seven months, it is likely to face losses. As a result, we may see a shift in US policy, both locally and internationally.

"This points to further complications, particularly in the Arab world. The Gulf states need to prepare for these developments, especially since US-Iranian negotiations appear limited to specific issues that do not include the Gulf. The region's role may be treated as secondary, even though Gulf states are the main stakeholders and should have a final say in these arrangements.

"All of this makes self-reliance more important than ever for the Gulf states. Each side is testing how serious the others are about reaching a permanent settlement, who will secure the greatest gains, and who will bear the cost."

Also:

"There will be no peace, no security, and no dignified life for the people of Gaza as long as the remnants of Hamas rule them with their weapons," Palestinian journalist Adnan Makkawi wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"I cannot believe that Israel is unable to eliminate these remaining elements of Hamas in what remains of fragmented Gaza.

"Israel is content with the current situation in the Gaza Strip. Sixty percent of the Strip's area is under its control, and it is likely to remain there. The remaining 40 percent is in the hands of Hamas, which continues to deepen the suffering of Gazans. Meanwhile, after the war, Israel claims victory, and Hamas also claims victory.

"Therefore, the only loser is me, the true Gazan, the son of Gaza. After all this devastating war, destruction, killing, disability, and displacement, Hamas remains a burden on our people, controlling 40 percent of the devastated Gaza Strip. This means neither stability has been achieved nor has the suffering ended.

"In any case, and under any circumstances, I am a Gazan, born and raised,

and I will not find peace until Hamas is no longer present in Gaza and its control over it ends completely, even if Israel destroys what remains of the Gaza Strip's infrastructure.

"This will not happen, however. It is said that Israeli intelligence currently seeks to support the Sinwar family, those who chant "We are returning," especially after they were dealt a severe blow and a lesson they will not forget. They want them to govern Gaza and impose control over its people before they fully understand the reality of Hamas.

"The true Gazan is now caught between the hammer of Hamas and the anvil of Israel. How long will this continue? As I see it, and I represent only my own wounded perspective, it will continue until the rule of Netanyahu ends, until Trump's power fades, and until the people of Gaza rise against Hamas and the Sinwar family in Gaza. For God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves.

"From Him comes compensation, and upon Him rests accountability."



"Be wary of false affection that does not last, for its fickleness reveals an inner emptiness. No sincerity can be expected from it; it is like a passing cloud that brings no nourishing rain,"

Kuwaiti writer Fatima Nasser Al-Muzayel wrote for Al-Seyassah daily.

"Beware of those who pretend to care but are not genuine. Do not trust those who come close only when they are in need. You see them beside you only after others have turned away from them. In those moments, they remember you as a temporary refuge, not as a lasting presence. You are not the most important person in their lives, but you are simply the one available when no one else is.

"Some people drift away, leaving behind a deep void and a painful sense of betrayal. In such moments, you may not know whether to grieve their absence, question the sincerity of their past closeness, or wonder if you are the one who has changed. Perhaps they were never who you believed them to be.

"Such a person is unstable, and can turn against you without warning and without explanation, as if you were only a passing phase in their ever-changing moods.

"They only come to you when they need your company and speak to you when they have time to spare. You listen to their sweet words until you begin to feel safe with them, only to discover that the sincerity existed only in what they said.

"Then their hostility appears suddenly, as if they are pushing you to leave their life without a word.

"They deal with you according to their mood and availability, as though you are merely a way to fill the empty spaces in their days. They feel no hesitation in draining your presence, then walking away coldly, as if you meant nothing to them.

"They are like a mirage, showing you from a distance what they do not truly possess, taking your time, shaking your trust in relationships, and leaving you lost in self-reflection,

searching for a flaw that was never yours.

"You are trying to mend a crack you did not create. The worst part is that he is arrogant, quick to lie, and dismissive of both you and your feelings.

"If he ever considers returning, he will come back cold, without an apology and without any explanation for his change.

"He returns with a boldness that may make you believe he will never let you down again. Yet he disregards your feelings as if they do not matter, as if you are merely a minor detail in a story he does not see you as part of.

"Do not be comforted by someone who suddenly turns toward you, for they may turn away in exactly the same way.

"Those who are fickle in their affection carve a path in people's hearts, only to never walk it themselves. They plant seeds of attachment within you, then betray them with neglect that quietly withers them away. They light candles for you, only to deliberately extinguish them, leaving you in darkness.

"Do not entrust your heart to those who know only how to disappoint. Deep relationships are not built on flattery, but on steadiness and genuine feeling, not on what fades quickly. Beware of those who make you believe you are their priority, only to forget you later.

"True closeness does not need constant permission, and a dignified distance should remain harmless, not turn into hostility.

"Loyal souls do not waver; they remain steady, kind, and supportive.

"Preserve your dignity and do not allow the hesitant to knock on your door only when they grow tired of emptiness. Make your heart a place for the steadfast, not a passing stop for those who come and go."

— Compiled by Simi K. Kutty



KUNA photo
Palestinian children get their water containers filled by the Kuwaiti Namaa Charity volunteers.

Kuwaiti charity sets up Gaza project to fulfill water needs

GAZA, April 26, (KUNA): Kuwait's Namaa Charity announced implementing project supplying water to over 11,250 Palestinians in Gaza through 450 tanker deliveries to meet urgent needs amid deteriorating humanitarian conditions.

Namaa official Waleed Al-Bassam said the project responds to acute water shortages, particularly in northern Gaza, where infrastructure and basic services have severely declined.

He stressed that securing water is critical under current conditions, noting the effort seeks to ease suffering and support resi-

dent's resilience.

He affirmed Kuwait's continued humanitarian role through relief projects targeting the most vulnerable, reflecting its commitment to charitable work regionally and internationally.

Beneficiaries expressed appreciation for Kuwait's support, highlighting the importance of sustaining such initiatives.

The project comes amid worsening conditions in Gaza, where infrastructure damage has heightened risks of water contamination and disease, especially among children and the elderly.

Street names turn numbers

Top notch exempted: gov't

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: In accordance with Cabinet Resolution No. 666, issued at its 19th meeting of 2025, Kuwait Municipality has begun removing street and road name signs and replacing them with numbers, reports Al-Jarallah Al-Kharafi daily.

The teams of Kuwait Municipality's Construction Department are implementing the ministerial decision issued last November, following the approval of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs, Abdul Latif Al-Mishari.



Al-Mishari

The decision mandates the cancellation of the names of 591 main and secondary streets and roads, replacing them with numbers. The names of 66 streets and roads will remain unchanged, while the names of three streets will be modified.

The minister approved the Municipal Council's decision during its extraordinary

session held on October 19, in which the council approved the minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Studying Proposals and Requests Regarding the Naming of Cities, Suburbs, Districts, Streets, and Squares.

This committee, formed by Ministerial Resolution No. 558/2023, decided to replace the names of 591 streets with numbers, retain 66 existing names, and amend the names of three streets to reflect the cities and capitals of Arab countries.

The decision stipulates amending Articles 4 and 5 of Municipal Council Resolution No. M.B./M. and Resolution No. 4/45/04/2023/D2, issued on September 18, 2023, concerning the regulations and rules for naming cities, suburbs, districts, streets, and squares, to align with Cabinet resolutions as follows:

■ Cities, suburbs, and districts may not be named after individuals, except for those who have held the position of Amir or Crown Prince in the State of Kuwait.

■ Streets, roads, and squares may be named after the rulers of the State of Kuwait, kings, sultans, rulers, Amirs, heads of state of sister and friendly nations, historical figures, and certain members of the ruling family.

■ Naming after countries, cities, and capitals is also permissible, based on the principle of reciprocity.

■ The names of certain roads, streets, and squares that do not bear the names of indi-

PAMA nods promotions of nominated 122 staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The acting Director General of the Public Authority for Minors' Affairs (PAMA) Alia Al-Saqer approved the promotions of all 122 Kuwaiti employees nominated for promotion from various sectors of PAMA, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

She also approved adjustments to their allowances and bonuses based on their new grades, in accordance with the regulations set by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Al-Saqer stated that these promotions were granted to encourage and recognize the efforts of PAMA's employees.

She emphasized PAMA's commitment to granting bonuses and promotions to its outstanding staff who have dedicated themselves to serving the minors under its care throughout the year.

Al-Saqer expressed her hope that these promotions would motivate them to exert even greater effort and continuous dedication to achieving the PAMA's objectives.

Kuwaiti jailed 14 years in violent maid murder

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The Court of Appeals upheld the 14-year prison sentence imposed on a Kuwaiti citizen found guilty of killing an Asian domestic worker, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

Case files indicate that the defendant assaulted and beat the victim to death, then buried her remains in his garden in Saad Al-Abdullah to hide the crime.

The court also upheld the one-year imprisonment imposed on the wife, brother and father of the citizen. They were convicted of aiding the defendant by tampering with evidence and helping him dispose of the body.

Initially reported as a disappearance, the worker's case led to an investigation that revealed suspicious details and resulted in the arrest of the citizen.

Following his confession, he and his family members were tried and convicted, leading to the prison sentences upheld by the appellate court.

Other Voices

The memories of Indian movie era

By Ahmad alsarraf

Indian films have almost disappeared from Kuwaiti cinemas, after having long held second place after Arabic films, followed by American films, in terms of viewership.

The Cinema Company had dedicated the Al-Firdous Cinema building to Indian films, which was located on the site of the current Al-Hamra Tower.

The Eastern Cinema was the first movie theater, located behind the Dasman Diabetes Institute.

Egyptian black-and-white films preceded other films in cinemas by several years.

Initially, films were only watched at home. One of the most prominent figures involved in importing, selling, and renting them was my friend Yaqoub Malallah. His involvement in this trade was the key that enabled him to enter the world of finance and business through its widest avenues.

Seventy years ago, my father would rent a reel of Egyptian films every week and screen them in the courtyard of our house, which was divided into two sections with sheets - one for men and one for women - especially when neighbors or relatives joined us. Watching a movie was a truly enjoyable experience.

Some of the more religiously conservative members of the family, particularly the men, believed it was forbidden to watch the screen itself, as it displayed many explicit scenes. Over time, however, they grew accustomed to watching, especially when cheers erupted after a villain was struck, or when we shouted in desperation trying to warn the hero, Anwar Wagdi, of Mahmood El-Meligy's attempt to stab him in the back.

Later, cinemas such as Al-Firdous and Al-Hamra brought an end to home movie screenings.

The number of fans of Indian films increased, and among their most famous actors were Mukesh, Raj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, Shammai Kapoor, Madhubala, Meena Kumari, and Nargis. These actors, along with others, gradually became part of popular memory in both India and Gulf societies through their songs and legendary film stories.

I was fascinated while watching those films, despite their simple plots and modest production. I also noticed that the voices of the female singers in the films sounded very similar.

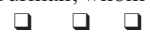
I initially thought this style of singing was part of Indian musical tradition. Later, I learned that 99 percent of the songs in those films featured playback singing, with the heroine or actress lip-syncing to a professional singer's voice. One of the most famous of these singers was Asha Bhosle, who passed away at the age of 92.

Asha Bhosle was born in September 1933 into the Mangeshkar family, a musical family. Her sister was Lata Mangeshkar, the renowned Indian singer.

She began singing at the age of six and continued her artistic career for over seven decades, recording approximately 12,000 songs.

Her voice was well-suited to classical songs, cabaret, pop music, and styles influenced by Western music.

She recorded works by renowned composers, including R. D. Burman, whom she later married.



email: a.alsarraf@alqabas.com.kw

Special Buffet

LARGEST SPREAD IN TOWN

Child Buffet KD 4.250	Adult Buffet KD 7.450
KD 3.450	KD 5.950

EVERY THURSDAY DINNER ONLY 6 PM TO 11 PM

EVERY FRIDAY LUNCH & DINNER 12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM & 6 PM TO 11 PM

EVERY SATURDAY LUNCH ONLY 12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

AVAILABLE AT HAWALLY BRANCH BEIRUT ST, LULU AL WATAN COMPLEX, OPPOSITE CBK 22626782 ☎ 22626783

AVAILABLE AT FAHAHEEL BRANCH 1ST FLOOR, AL HOOR BUILDING BLOCK NO.11, BEHIND TO CENTERPOINT 23911175 ☎ 23911174

Social Affairs achieves 100% project completion rate in Q4

Operational plan delivers across all sectors

By Fares Ghaleb

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Financial, Administrative and Cooperative Affairs and Chairman of the Operational Plan Preparation and Follow Up Committee at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr. Sayed Issa announced that the ministry achieved 100 percent completion rate in implementing its projects in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025/2026.

He said a total of 148 projects in various sectors and departments of the ministry were implemented, proving the institutional progress in monitoring programs and initiatives, adherence to approved timelines, and transforming the plan into action.

He disclosed that the fourth-quarter results confirmed the ability of the ministry to manage its operational plan using a rigorous monitoring methodology in differ-

ent organizational units.

He added the projects are for the Office of the Minister, Office of the Undersecretary, Planning and Administrative Development Sector, Financial and Administrative Affairs and Cooperative Affairs and Cooperation Sector, Social Welfare Sector, Social Development Sector, and Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

He stressed that this achievement is the culmination of a cumulative work process that began with the launching of the operational plan in 2016. He pointed out that the operational plan, under the guidance of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah and Undersecretary Dr. Khaled Al-Ajmi, is an executive roadmap for measuring the performance of sectors and departments, monitoring project progress, strengthening coordination among affiliated entities, and improving institutional per-



Dr. Issa

formance.

He disclosed that the Financial, Administrative and Cooperation Affairs Sector have 30 projects, 27 for the Office of the Undersecretary, 25 for the Social Development Sector, 21 for the Social Welfare Sector, 17 for the Cooperative Sector, 16 for the Planning and Administrative Development Sector, eight for the Office of the Minister, and four for the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

He said the Financial, Administrative and Cooperation Affairs Sector recorded the highest number of projects, given the nature of its responsibilities related to developing the work environment, administrative services, human resources, procurement and warehousing, and financial and organizational aspects, as well as its role in supporting other sectors and enabling them to implement their operational programs.

He stated that the Office of the Undersecretary plays a vital role in monitoring, coordination and administrative oversight, linking work processes in different sectors, and ensuring project implementation according to approved frameworks.

He revealed that the Social De-

velopment Sector covered areas related to charitable organizations, foundations, public benefit associations, private nurseries, community development, and other activities serving the community and enhancing the ministry's social role.

He added that the Social Welfare Sector developed services and work system, and raised the efficiency of the social and humanitarian programs offered by the ministry.

He pointed out that the Cooperative Sector focused on monitoring and developing cooperative work, strengthening oversight of cooperative societies, and improving services provided to shareholders and consumers.

He said the Planning and Administrative Development developed work systems, monitored plans, improved performance, and strengthened institutional capacities within the ministry, thus, building a more efficient and organized administrative system.

He reiterated that achieving 100 percent completion rate in the fourth quarter is the result of continuous monitoring and coordination among sectors and departments.

Embassy of Japan

Study in Japan!

Japanese gov't scholarship for '27

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The Embassy of Japan is pleased to announce that the Government of Japan's scholarship to those who wish to study at Japanese universities as undergraduate and research students.

The Japanese Government Scholarship was established in 1954 in order to increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries as well as to make an international contribution to the intellectual field.

All Kuwaiti citizens who meet the qualifications below are eligible to apply:

Undergraduate Students			
Requirements	Age	Years of Study*	Fields of Study
• Completed 12-year school curriculum • Good academic standing, etc.	Born on or after April 2, 2002.	5 years From April 2027 to March 2032.	•Natural Sciences •Social Sciences and Humanities

* Five years of study including one year for studying Japanese language.

Research Students			
Requirements	Age	Years of Study*	Fields of Study
• Completed 16 years of school education, etc.	Born on or after April 2, 1992.	From April, September or October 2027 to March 2029.	Any field of study majored in university, or related to it.

*Years of study might extend depending on the major category.

■ Application forms, detailed information and other conditions can be downloaded from Embassy's Website: (https://www.kw.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html).

■ The Embassy will start accepting applications from Sunday, May 3, 2026.

■ The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday June 11, 2026 at 03:00 P.M.

■ Applications must secure an appointment in advance and submit their applications to the Embassy by hand.

The application process consists of document screening, written examination, and personal interview.

Applicants are advised to prepare for the exam by referring to the past exam samples: (<https://www.studyin-japan.go.jp/en/planning/scholarship/application/examination/>)

For inquiries, please contact cultural section, Embassy of Japan at:

• **Tel: 2530 9426**

• **Email: culturalsection@kw.mofa.go.jp**

PAMA launches summer jobs program for minors

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): The Public Authority for Minors Affairs (PAMA) launched Sunday a program that provided summer jobs for minors in coordination with government and private institutions.

The program, dubbed "Baader Weyana" and

in its fourth year now, would be implemented in cooperation with 19 training agencies to provide jobs for 400 minors during summer holiday, PAMA Acting Director General Alyaa Al-Saqer told KUNA.

She said minors wishing to join the program could

register online starting next Sunday, May 3, and that ages would be between 15 and 21 years old.

Al-Saqer said PAMA has been keen on offering programs contributing to new skills amongst minors, as well as spending their time in something useful.

MoE reopens student data update link to speed up textbook delivery

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The Ministry of Education announced on Thursday the reopening of the student data update link, effective immediately until Sunday, reports Al-Seyassah daily.

In a press release, the ministry urged students who have not yet received their textbooks to access the link - examcom.moe.edu.kw/BookRequest - and update their information to ensure a quick and easy delivery process.

The ministry had previously announced

on March 25 the distribution of the second batch of textbooks for the second semester, delivering them directly to students' homes.

Over the past period, the ministry has been working on a detailed operational plan that includes compiling student data and addresses, and coordinating transportation and distribution according to well-defined schedules. This ensures equitable distribution, faster delivery, and guarantees that students receive their books on time.

90 contracts to upgrade power grid

MEW forms panel to review SAB's data systems tender observations

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Dr. Adel Al-Zamel, issued a decision to study and review the observations of the State Audit Bureau (SAB) regarding the tender for upgrading data collection and analysis equipment for power generation plants and main substations.

The decision aims to enhance transparency and ensure the integrity of technical and financial procedures.

Article 1 of the decision stipulates the formation of a specialized working group to respond to SAB's inquiries and clarify the terms in the tender documents, particularly those related to the term "country of origin," which was interpreted in two different ways, thus requiring clarification.

This decision is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to strengthen governance, adhere to regulatory standards, and ensure the

efficient implementation of energy infrastructure development projects, thereby supporting the sustainability of electricity and water services.

Meanwhile, the ministry recently received conditional approval from SAB for a tender for operation and maintenance work for power generation and water desalination plants, valued at 12.826 million dinars. The ministry is expected to award the contract soon.

The Ministry unveiled its plan to tender 90 contracts within the electricity transmission network sector for the current fiscal year.

These contracts are for the modernization of the electricity network in order to meet the expected surge of power consumption during summer due to the excessive heat. They include the provision of cables and overhead lines in several areas. The main components of these contracts are the procurement and installations in main substations in various areas.

This project is vital due to the rising demand for high-voltage electricity and ensuring continuous power supply.

In a related development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) reviewed the bids for the maintenance of street lighting in the Capital Governorate. Eight companies participated in the bidding. These bids will be forwarded to the ministry for technical evaluation, and then the contract will be awarded to the most qualified bidder.



Dr. Al-Zamel

Timely feedback guides student progress

KU urges faster grading, early results

By Abdulrahman Al-Shammari

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Dean of the College of Life Sciences at Kuwait University Dr. Ahmed Al-Lafi emphasized the importance of expediting the correction of exams and assessments, as well as announcing the results promptly, for the students to know their academic progress and make informed decisions about their studies.

Al-Lafi issued a circular to faculty members, urging them to speed up the correction of various exams and assessments and upload grades on the approved electronic platforms to provide the students with an accurate picture of their academic standing during the semester.

He explained that this directive coincides with the decision of the Kuwait University Council to extend the course withdrawal period until the last day of classes. He said this decision aims to give students more time to assess their academic performance and make informed decisions on whether to continue or

withdraw from a course.

He pointed out that providing students with access to their actual academic standing during the semester is not just an administrative procedure, but a fundamental aspect

of ensuring equal opportunities for all students. He believes that early awareness of academic performance helps students improve their grades or make the most suitable decision at the right time.

He stressed that announcing test results early also reduces psychological pressure on students and boosts their confidence in the educational process.

He then affirmed that the college is keen on implementing the best academic practices in the interest of the students and to improve the quality of university education.



Dr. Al-Lafi



albander | البندر
Hotel & Resort | الفنادق

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

Terms & conditions apply

Initiative aims to curb flooding and repurpose sites for sustainable water storage

Council proposal to convert sand quarries into rainwater reservoirs

By Inaas Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Municipal Council member Farah Al-Roumi submitted a proposal to utilize sand quarries as rainwater reservoirs.

In the preamble of her proposal, Al-Roumi pointed out that the recurring rainwater accumulation during the

rainy season and its negative consequences necessitates practical and sustainable solutions.

She emphasized the importance of maximizing the use of available resources and adopting economically and environmentally efficient solutions.

She explained that after opera-

tion, sand quarries leave behind deep and unused spaces and underground cracks, which could be repurposed for dual public benefit -- prevention of rainwater accumulation and utilizing the water for various purposes after treatment.

The proposal consists of several phases, starting with technical and hy-

drological assessments to determine the viability of selected sites based on storage potential, safety standards, and soil characteristics. It includes the identification of engineering specifications for site rehabilitation, integration of reservoirs with the existing rainwater drainage systems, and close coordination with the regulatory bodies to

evaluate environmental impact and ensure compliance with national standards.

It explores frameworks for repurposing collected water for industrial or agricultural uses, and defines structured protocols for the long-term management, operation and maintenance of facilities.

Continued from Page 1

This is

Iran's activities in Palestine, especially Gaza, are another matter altogether. The Iranian regime implicated Hamas in the attack of October 7, 2023, and then abandoned them the following day, despite extensive coordination with Hamas leaders, most notably Ismail Haniyeh, who was reportedly killed in Tehran in coordination with the Iranian regime.

Today, a similar scenario is unfolding in Islamabad, which has attempted to bridge the gap between the two parties.

However, the Iranian negotiator has thwarted Pakistani efforts, as he has nothing substantive to offer and continues instead to obstruct progress.

On the other hand, the Iranian regime is threatened by the possibility of a popular uprising.

This situation explains the Iranian negotiator's insistence on stalling and buying time through negotiations that, as many see it, will only prolong a state of neither war nor peace, which is highly dangerous.

Over the past few days, the Iranian regime violated the declared truce through its Iraqi proxies, which launched an attack on Kuwait. This violation was accompanied by media campaigns targeting Gulf states.

Each time, the Iranian regime used the presence of American bases in Gulf states as a pretext for repeated escalation, despite the fact that Gulf capitals had contacted Tehran prior to any military operations and made it clear that they would not allow U.S. forces to use those bases to launch attacks on Iran.

However, from the very first moments, the Revolutionary Guard launched attacks on civilian facilities in Gulf countries, which indicates that hostile intentions were premeditated in advance against the Gulf states, rather than being a reaction to any American-Israeli attack.

Therefore, the Arab Gulf states must adopt a new strategy for dealing with

Iran and Iraq, as both are viewed as parties involved in the aggression. The Gulf states should demand that Iran and Iraq pay reparations for the damages incurred. This is a right enshrined in international law, and the Gulf states should not relinquish it.

Similar cases occurred in Germany and Japan after World War II, as well as following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

As the saying goes, cauterization is the last remedy. Likewise, Iran must be compelled to end its delay tactics by imposing sanctions and obligating it to pay compensation to the affected countries. Otherwise, the Iranian regime will continue to plague the region and instigate crises worldwide.

Airport returns

He added that flights are operated smoothly and efficiently, as per the directive of Defense Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ali Al-Sabah and under the close monitoring of PACA Director General Sheikh Hamoud Al-Sabah.

On the other hand, acting Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Airways Captain Abdulwahab Al-Shatti congratulated the Kuwaiti people, particularly the travelers, on the reopening of airspace and resumption of operations at the airport, specifically Terminal Four (T4), where four flights departed to Egypt, Beirut, Oman and Manila.

In a televised statement, Al-Shatti disclosed that the management of the airlines adopted the plan for passengers arriving at the airport, in cooperation with PACA. He stated that this plan was announced on social media. "Upon arrival, passengers must proceed to the parking areas for disembarkation and security checks, then to the jetway, and finally, to the airport. The companions of passengers are banned inside the airport for security reasons, to avoid overcrowding and to prevent unnecessary gatherings in certain areas," he added.

Chief Government Affairs Officer at Jazeera Airways Eng. Nasser Al-Obaid

said "the feeling of reopening the airspace and resuming airport operations is indescribable, as it signifies return to normalcy. I extend my gratitude to the members of our Armed Forces who exerted tremendous efforts to protect the nation and ensure our safety. I also thank the authorities in the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which kept us connected to the world. Our operations were transferred to Saudi Arabia, which opened its airports without conditions or restrictions."

He added that the current procedures of the airways, implemented in coordination with PACA, Civil Defense and Ministry of Interior, include operating six flights, compared to the previous 60 flights daily, or 10 percent of capacity. "The number of flights will increase in the coming period. This week, we will operate 48 flights to 10 destinations," he revealed.

He pointed out that the goal of reopening the airspace and resuming airport operations is to instill a sense of security, just as a citizen enters a supermarket and finds the shelves full of goods, feeling safe and secure. "The operational procedures that were implemented are sufficient and intensive. They were taken in coordination with PACA, in order to take precautions in case there is a risk. On this basis, operations were restored, and the sound of the airport, which we missed, returned," he concluded.

Earlier, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib, carried out inspection tours to monitor the security preparations for the resumption of airport operations and assess the level of security readiness and arrangements for passenger arrivals and departures.

He also conducted a maritime inspection tour of several Coast Guard sites to follow-up on the decision to allow fishing and recreational boats to sail, and assess the field readiness.

On Saturday, Major General Al-Wuhaib affirmed that the ministry has developed a comprehensive plan to secure operations at Kuwait International Airport.

He said the plan focuses on intensifying security presence, enhancing performance efficiency, and utilizing all available resources to ensure a smooth and safe passenger experience.

According to an official statement issued by the ministry, Major General Al-Wuhaib said these remarks following a tour he conducted at Kuwait International Airport.

Major General Al-Wuhaib emphasized that the current phase requires a high level of security readiness.

He highlighted the importance of intensifying efforts, raising the level of preparedness, and strengthening field coordination among the various units.

During the tour, Major General Al-Wuhaib met with senior officials and personnel of the Ports Security Sector and conveyed the greetings of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah.

He highlighted Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's commitment to ensuring the readiness of the security system at airports and enhancing the efficiency of security procedures. This is aimed at ensuring the smooth flow of traffic and the quick processing of passenger transactions without compromising security screening requirements.

Major General Al-Wuhaib reviewed the workflow in the arrival and departure halls, the readiness of the passport control departments, security inspection procedures, and the measures in place to regulate passenger flow.

Upon his arrival, Major General Al-Wuhaib was received by Assistant Undersecretary for Supporting Security Services, Major General Ali Al-Adwani.

It is worth highlighting that the Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) recently announced the reopening of airspace at the airport starting Sunday, April 26, following a temporary and precautionary closure since February 28 due to regional developments and Iranian attacks on the State of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib also conducted a maritime inspection tour of several Coast Guard sites.

According to another official statement issued by the Ministry of Interior, Major General Al-Wuhaib was received by the Director General of the Coast Guard, Brigadier General (Navy) Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah.

During the tour, Major General Al-Wuhaib reviewed workflow and procedures in place to regulate boat traffic, ensuring the safety of sea users and the smooth flow of maritime movement.

Brigadier General Sheikh Mubarak presented modern navigational aids and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in supporting security operations and enhancing surveillance capabilities.

The tour included a visit to the Nawaf Al-Ahmad Coast Guard Base on the northern island, where Major General Al-Wuhaib reviewed the progress of the new radar system tower project and its advanced capabilities for monitoring and securing maritime borders.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of readiness and strengthening field presence to ensure the optimal implementation of the decision and to safeguard public safety.

Major General Abdulwahab Al-Wuhaib commended the efforts of Coast Guard personnel, praising their vital role in protecting Kuwait's territorial waters and expressing his appreciation for their dedication.

The suspect is believed to have purchased the firearms he carried within the last couple of years, Blanche said. He is not being cooperative and is expected to face multiple charges on Monday.

Video posted by Trump showed the suspect running past security barricades as Secret Service agents ran toward him. One officer was shot in a bullet-resistant vest but was recovering, officials said. The gunman was taken into custody and was not injured, but was being evaluated at a hospital, police said.

"He failed," Blanche said on CBS's "Face the Nation." "Law enforcement did their jobs."

Social media posts that appear to match the suspect show he is a highly educated tutor and amateur video game developer.

Six decrees

dependency, including a former MP after the revocation of his father's citizenship.

■ Decree No. 66/2026 revokes Kuwaiti citizenship from one person and those who acquired it by dependency.

■ Decree No. 67/2026 revokes Kuwaiti citizenship from one person and those who acquired it by dependency.

Pakistan reaffirms

On the seriousness of the response of the Iranian side and the guarantees they are seeking, he asserted "it is inappropriate for a mediator to comment on the position of any other party. Progress in such discussions depends on all parties' commitment to engage in constructive negotiations. The focus is on restraint, dialogue and adherence to agreed conditions."

He added that his country condemned the attacks on Kuwait and that its leadership affirmed its solidarity with the brotherly Kuwaiti people, expressing sincere condolences for the loss of precious lives and wishing speedy recovery for the injured.

Kuwait decries

Law enforcement officials who have examined the gunman's electronic devices and his writings preliminarily believe he intended to target administration members in attendance at the dinner. He attempted to charge into the cavernous ballroom at the Washington Hilton but was tackled to the ground in a chaotic scene that resulted in shots being fired, President Donald Trump being hurried off the stage and guests ducking for cover beneath their tables.

"It does appear that he did in fact set out to target folks who work in the administration, likely including the president," Blanche told NBC's "Meet the Press."



Hala Industrial Co.
— Custom Wooden Solutions —



Crafted Storage. Engineered Precision

- ✓ Premium Natural Wood
- ✓ Custom-Made Dimensions
- ✓ Factory Direct Quality

☎ 60660817 - 66448545
 📷 Hala_Industrial
 ✉ hala@halakw.com

Subhan Industrial - Block 10 - Street 5 - Plot 151

'It's not a healthy lifestyle'

US Congress keeps holding all-nighters and creating dysfunction after dark

WASHINGTON, April 26, (AP) — Just as the Senate prepared to launch into a late-night vote series, Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana went to the floor to vent.

Frustrated and seemingly exhausted Wednesday, Kennedy said he wanted more time to debate his amendments to a budget resolution to fund immigration enforcement agencies. But he had another complaint.

"Frankly I am worried about the health of some of our members," Kennedy said as 9 p.m. approached. "Not that they're in bad health, but it's hard to stay up all night."

More than 6 hours later, just past 3:30 a.m., senators wrapped up another marathon voting session on amendments and filed out of the chamber, dazed, tired and resigned to soon doing it all again.

It's a complaint as old as the Congress, with leaders in both major political parties often turning to the torturous grind of an overnight session to exhaust members, overcome objections and push legislation to passage. But it's a scenario that is playing out again and again, nearly business as usual, as the House and the Senate fracture and careen from one crisis to the next.

Lawmakers say it's a symptom of a broken Congress that leaders are increasingly forced to govern in the dead of night.

"The dysfunction is getting worse," said Republican Sen. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota, who has been in Congress for 14 years. Lawmakers have become "less mature," he said, as a

growing number act only in their own self-interest and hold up bills or delay proceedings.

"It's not a healthy lifestyle," Cramer said, for the country or the lawmakers. "There's less concern for the team effort."

In the last few weeks, Congress has repeatedly debated pressing national issues at night - leading to confusion and turmoil in both chambers.

Much of the drama has centered, as it increasingly does, on government funding.

In late March, Senate Republicans struck a deal with Democrats to reopen most of the Department of Homeland Security, including the Transportation Security Administration, while Democrats continued to block money for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol after the shootings of two protesters in Minneapolis. It was a breakthrough, and Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., passed the spending bill by voice vote - meaning there were no objections on either side - just past 2 a.m.

Senators then flew home for a two-week recess, leaving final passage to the House. But House lawmakers who were asleep when the final Senate agreement was announced woke up and angrily rejected it, saying they wouldn't pass legislation that didn't include funding for the immigration enforcement agencies. Senators were then forced to figure out a new plan for reopening the department, and it remains unresolved.

An equally contentious matter, the renewal of surveillance powers for



The moon emerges from the clouds over the U.S. Capitol dome in Washington on Dec 2, 2025. (AP)

federal spy agencies, also devolved into an after-hours affair.

House GOP leaders kept members in session well past midnight last week while trying and ultimately failing to pass different versions of a foreign surveillance bill. Scrambling to pass an extension of the law ahead of a Monday deadline, leaders eventually cobbled together a 10-day extension past 2 a.m.

Members of both parties were exasperated by the last-minute mayhem.

"Who the hell is running this place?" said Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass. He said Republicans threw the bill together "on the back of a napkin in the back room in the middle of the night."

continue to block. It's become the default mode of governing for majorities in Congress as bipartisanship on major issues fades away.

Reconciliation allows the Senate majority to bypass the filibuster and pass budget-related bills along party lines. First, though, they have to get through two lengthy series of votes - and that's where the dreaded "vote-arama" comes in.

The process is open-ended, which means lawmakers in both parties can offer as many amendments as they want to put the other side on record - or, as Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska describes it, "to make each other miserable."

Leaders generally hold the votes in the middle of the night, as they did Wednesday into Thursday, in hopes of exhausting both sides and forcing senators to stay on the floor and vote quickly. But instead of waiting around between amendment votes, Murkowski walked back and forth between the chamber and her "hideaway," a small office each senator has in the Capitol building.

"I'm at 14,291 steps," she said just after 11 p.m., looking at her smartwatch, which was also telling her that her bedtime was approaching. She said if she couldn't sleep, she might as well get more exercise.

Senators went through the same reconciliation process last year, in extremes, as they labored for weeks to pass President Donald Trump's package of spending and tax cuts, which he dubbed One Big Beautiful Bill.

The bill had barely enough Repub-

lican support to pass, and the Senate and the House held nearly back-to-back all-night sessions to pass it by Trump's July 4 deadline. In the Senate, GOP leaders kept the long vote series open for hours on end as they worked to win support from Murkowski and others.

"It's insane," Murkowski said of the late nights. "My mom always said, 'Nothing good happens after midnight.'"

Overnight votes are certainly nothing new in Congress. The Affordable Care Act, President Barack Obama's signature health care law, passed the Senate in the early hours of Christmas Eve in 2009 after weeks of negotiations, just in time for senators to get home for the holidays. Countless other big bills have been passed in the dead of night, as well.

But lawmakers say the after-dark routine has gotten worse and more frequent.

"Part of what's changed here is there's a lot of heavy lifting that you have to do to get a bill passed," said Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, who has served in Congress since 1981, when he was elected to the House. "I think at some point you've got to have a forcing mechanism, and one of the easiest is to stay up until the wee hours so that everybody is basically trying not to fall asleep on national TV."

Democratic Sen. Andy Kim of New Jersey, a relative newcomer to the Senate elected in 2024, said there's an eventual question of whether anyone is watching.



This photo provided by the Office of Gov. Brian Kemp shows smoke produced from a wildfire in Brantley County, Ga on April 24. (AP)

America

Georgia wildfires continue to threaten residents:

Two wildfires in southeastern Georgia continued to threaten homes and lives on Saturday as officials warned that strong winds could spread the flames.

Brantley County Manager Joey Cason called it a "dynamic situation" in a video posted to social media and begged residents to "please evacuate" if ordered to do so. "This fire is going to move rapidly once these winds get here later today," he said.

The Highway 82 Fire has been burning since Monday and has destroyed at least 87 homes. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said Friday that is the most for a single wildfire in the state's history.

The blaze was started by a foil balloon hitting live power lines. That created an electrical arc that ignited combustible material on the ground.

An infrared flight that detects heat was conducted overnight Friday, helping officials to better map the fire. A joint statement issued by multiple government agencies said the fire's perimeter was more than 14.8 square miles (38 square kilometers) and it was only about 10% contained.

Meanwhile a second fire about 70 miles (110 kilometers) to the southwest in Clinch and Echols counties, near the Florida state line, has burned more than 46.9 square miles (121 square kilometers) and destroyed at least 35 homes. Started by sparks from a welding operation, that wildfire was also about 10% contained. (AP)

Officer killed in Chicago hospital shooting: A police officer died and another was critically injured after a man in police custody and receiving treatment at a Chicago

hospital opened fire on them Saturday, according to officials.

"Officers transported an individual over to the Swedish hospital for an observation, at which time two of our officers were shot," Chicago police Superintendent Larry Snelling said at a news conference in the afternoon. "One was shot critically. It (the death) was pronounced. The second officer right now is fighting for his life in the hospital behind us."

The officer remained in critical condition Saturday evening, authorities said in a statement.

The suspect, who was not publicly identified, fled the Endeavor Health Swedish Hospital after the shooting at around 10:50 a.m. He was later detained and a gun was recovered, police said.

The hospital said its campus was placed on lockdown, and patients and staff at the health facility were safe. (AP)

Ex-Idaho gov Kempthorne dies: Former Idaho gov and US Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne has died at age 74, his family said in a written statement Saturday.

Kempthorne died Friday evening in Boise, the statement said. No cause was given. He had been diagnosed with colon cancer last year.

"Beyond his public service, he was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather whose greatest joy came from time spent with family and the people he met along the way," his family said. "He had a rare gift for truly seeing others - remembering names, stories, and the small details that made each person feel known and valued."

Kempthorne, a moderate Republican, was elected mayor of Boise in 1985 at age 34, and he was credited with revitalizing the downtown by securing an agreement to build a convention center and promoting other development. He served seven years before winning the US Senate seat vacated by Sen. Steve Symms in 1992. (AP)

16 dead in strikes as Chernobyl 'versary highlights N-risks of Russia-Ukraine war

KYIV, Ukraine, April 26, (AP) — Strikes across Ukraine, Russian-occupied territory and Russia killed at least 16 people, authorities said, as the 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster prompted fresh warnings about the risks posed by attacks near the plant during Russia's more than four-year invasion of its neighbor.

The death toll from Russian drone and missile strikes on the city of Dnipro rose to nine, regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said Sunday.

One man was killed in a Ukrainian drone strike on the port city of Sevastopol, in Russian-occupied Crimea, Moscow-installed authorities said Sunday. Russia annexed the peninsula from Ukraine in 2014, a move that most of the world considered illegal, and has used it as a staging and supply point during the war.

Leonid Pasechnik, the Russia-installed governor in Ukraine's Luhansk region - of which Russia earlier this month said it had taken full control, a claim denied by Ukraine - said three people were killed in an overnight Ukrainian drone strike on a village, after reporting two people were killed in the early hours of Saturday.

Ukraine did not comment on either at-



People bring candles at a memorial dedicated to firefighters and workers who died after the 1986 Chornobyl (Chernobyl) nuclear disaster, ahead of its 40th anniversary in Slavutych, Ukraine on April 26. Chornobyl is the

tack, which could not be independently verified by The Associated Press.

The latest strikes came after a woman was killed in a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Belgorod border region, according to local authorities.

Ukrainian forces also struck an oil refinery in Yaroslavl, deep inside Russian territory, Ukraine's General Staff said Sunday. The strikes sparked fires at the facility, which processes 15 million tons of oil a year and produces gasoline, diesel and jet fuel for the Russian military. Russia did not immediately comment.

Police in N.Ireland declare security alert after reports of car bomb blast

LONDON, April 26, (AP) — Police in Northern Ireland have declared a security alert in the town of Dunmurry, on the outskirts of Belfast, after reports that a car bomb exploded near a police station.

Homes in the vicinity have been evacuated and members of the public are advised to avoid the area, the Police Service of Northern Ireland said on Sunday.

"It is distressing and disturbing to wake up to the news that a car bomb exploded outside Dunmurry police station last night," said Sorcha Eastwood, a member of the U.K. Parliament who represents the Langan Valley, southwest of Belfast.

"A busy area, a car bomb left outside residential housing, small businesses and any number of people out and about on a Saturday night working or socialising," she said. "It is only through the grace of God that there are no casualties." Police have released no information about the motive for the attack.

Last month, police said a "crude but viable" improvised bomb was used in an attempted attack on another PSNI station in Lurgan, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) southwest of Dunmurry.

Two masked men stopped a delivery driver, placed the device in the trunk of his car and forced him at gunpoint to take the device to the police station, according to authorities. Police carried out a controlled explosion after about 100 homes were evacuated.



Forensic investigators inspect the site of a car bomb that exploded outside Dunmurry police station in South Belfast on April 26. (AP)

Police said it was likely that the Lurgan attack was carried out by dissident Republican groups in a "pathetic attempt to remain relevant and provoke fear."

The 1998 Good Friday Accords largely ended decades of violence between Republican groups opposed to British rule and those who want to maintain the region's ties to the United Kingdom. Dissident groups that oppose the peace process still carry out sporadic attacks.

PM vows to rebuild Hungary's 'nat'l side'

Orbán steps back after landslide loss

BUDAPEST, Hungary, April 26, (AP) — Outgoing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán will not take his seat in parliament following a landslide election loss this month, and will instead focus on rebuilding his nationalist-populist political community, he announced Saturday in a video on social media.

Hungary's April 12 election brought an end to Orbán's 16 years in power when voters cast their ballots overwhelmingly for a center-right challenger who promised to crack down on endemic corruption and restore Hungary's democratic institutions that had been eroded under Orbán.

That challenger, the Tisza party led by Hungary's incoming Prime Minister Péter Magyar, won a two-thirds majority in parliament that will allow it to undo many of Orbán's policies.

Since the election, the long-serving prime minister's future role in Hungarian political life, and whether he will retain a role in government, has been uncertain.

But in a video posted to Facebook, Orbán said his party's caucus in parliament would be "radically transformed" following the election loss, and that he would not take his seat.

"Our task now is not in parliament," Orbán said, but in the "reorganization" of his political camp that he calls the "national side."

"I have led our community for near-



Hungary Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, (center), on the tribune during a World Cup 2026 Group F qualifying soccer match between Ireland and Hungary at the Aviva stadium in Dublin, on Sept 6, 2025. (AP)

ly four decades," Orbán said. "This camp has always been the most united and cohesive political community in Hungary."

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

When the new parliament forms on May 9, it will be the first time since

Hungary's transition from state socialism in 1990 that Orbán has not held a seat among lawmakers.

In his statement, Orbán suggested he would remain the president of his Fidesz party after the party's congress convenes in June to elect its leader.

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

Europe

Russia dismisses US anti-nuke claim as lie: Claims that Russia intends to develop anti-satellite nuclear weapons are a lie being spread by Washington to justify its own aggressive space militarization policy, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Friday.

"Washington's absurd speculations have nothing to do with reality and are part of a propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the space activities of the Russian Federation and its initiatives to prevent an arms race in outer space," the Russian diplomat said during her briefing.

She noted that US space policy is becoming increasingly aggressive and provocative in nature. In her view, under the fabricated pretext of a "Russian threat," Washington is intensifying its efforts to build up its military potential in orbit.

Zakharova said that Russia strictly complies with its international obligations in space exploration and consistently advocates for the development of a legally binding document that would prohibit the placement of weapons in outer

space, as well as the use or threat of force against space objects. (Xinhua)

G7 reaffirms commitment to NPT: The G7 countries reaffirmed on Friday their unwavering commitment to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Treaty.

A French Foreign Ministry quoted a declaration statement by the group as saying that they "emphasize the authority and primacy of the NPT as a cornerstone of the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as a basis for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the development of peaceful uses of nuclear technology."

The statement said, "faced with the urgent and unprecedented challenges that threaten global security and stability, we commit to working with all States Parties to ensure the success of the 2026 Review Conference and to seek the broadest possible consensus on measures aimed at strengthening the NPT regime on its three pillars."

"We call on states that have not yet done so to join the NPT, and all States Parties to completely fulfil their obligations under the Treaty."

"We recognize the essential role that the Treaty plays in promoting international peace and security, preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and significantly reducing stockpiles of nuclear weapons from the highest levels reached during of the Cold War." (KUNA)



Zakharova

Cambodia government readies new conscription law for men aged 18-25

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, April 26, (Agencies): A law requiring Cambodian males aged 18 to 25 to serve in the military for two years has gained Cabinet approval following two spates of deadly combat last year with neighboring Thailand.

The new draft law on conscription will replace an existing law dating from 2006 that was never implemented and no longer addresses current and future needs, a government spokesperson said Friday.

The existing law specified 30 as the maximum call-up age. Women will be allowed to serve on a voluntary basis. Spokesperson Pen Bona said the draft law, with eight chapters and 20 articles, was adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on Thursday.

Fighting between Cambodia and Thailand flared twice last year over contending claims to territory along their shared border.

Hundreds of thousands of people in both countries were displaced and about 100 Cambodian soldiers and civilians lost their lives. There has been no new fighting since a December ceasefire, though tensions remain high.

A government statement described military service as an essential duty and a great honor allowing the Cambodian people to contribute to national development and defend the motherland.

Prime Minister Hun Manet said in July last year when relations with Thailand were deteriorating that Cambodia would implement conscription this year. He said that soldiers joining through conscription are more effective and professional than a voluntary force, and that conscription will be used to fill shortages and upgrade military capabilities.

The legislation will be sent to the National Assembly and the Senate for approval, and become law once King Norodom Sihamoni signs it.



Cambodian military members participate together with government civil servants in the country's 70th Independence Day, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Nov 9, 2023. (AP)

Cambodia expresses regret if Thailand scraps maritime MoU

Cambodia has expressed deep regret if Thailand decides to unilaterally withdraw from the maritime memorandum of understanding (MoU).

In a statement dated Friday and released to the media on Saturday, Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation said Cambodia and Thailand signed the MoU regarding the Area of their Overlapping Maritime Claims to the Continental Shelf in 2001 (MoU-2001).

It is deeply regrettable if Thailand decides to unilaterally withdraw from the MoU-2001, the statement said.

It added that more than a technical arrangement, the MoU-2001 reflected the genuine will and common interest of both countries to pursue, in good faith, a mutually acceptable framework for the joint exploitation of resources in the overlapping claims area, while simultaneously advancing maritime

boundary delimitation in accordance with international law.

Thailand's unilateral withdrawal from the MoU-2001 will be a step departing from the cooperative spirit underpinning the signing of this document, the statement said.

Cambodia, for its part, remains firmly and consistently committed to both the letter and the spirit of the MoU-2001, as well as to the goodwill and good faith that guided its conclusion in 2001.

The statement came after Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul revealed on Thursday that the National Security Council has confirmed the abolition of a maritime MoU on the issue of overlapping sea areas signed with Cambodia during the tenure of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The cabinet will review the relevant decision as soon as possible, Anutin noted.

The resolutions of the National Security Council shall be submitted to the Thai cabinet for approval before they come into effect.

2 Americans among suspected communist rebels killed in clash with troops: Philippines

MANILA, Philippines, April 26, (AP): Two Americans were among 19 suspected communist guerrillas who were killed in clashes with Philippine troops in a central province earlier this week, a government anti-insurgency task force said Saturday night.

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict said the Americans were killed with 17 other suspected New People's Army guerrillas in a series of clashes with army forces on April 19 in the coastal town of Toboso in Negros Occidental province. The deadly fighting was first reported on Monday.

The task force warned Americans of Filipino descent in the United States to be wary of being lured by left-wing activist groups into joining or supporting Filipino insurgents in the Philippines in a recruitment process it described as "terror-grooming."

The U.S. and the Philippines have separately designated the New People's Army as a terrorist organization.

Human rights groups, however, called for an independent investigation into the clashes, saying that civilians were killed including a student leader from the state-run University of the Philippines, two local advocates for farmers' rights and a local community journalist who wanted to show support for impoverished villagers.

"We call on the international community to monitor this case closely, as it is not an isolated incident but part of a continuing pattern of International Humanitarian Law violations across the Philippine countryside," the National Union of People's Lawyers, a human rights group, said.

Undersecretary Ernesto Torres Jr., the executive director of the counter-insurgency task force, identified the two slain Americans as Lyle Prijoles and Kai Dana-Rene Sorem.

The US Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Torres said that all 19 people killed have been identified and their re-



A US trooper salutes during the opening ceremonies of the joint military exercise dubbed 'Balikatan' or 'Shoulder to Shoulder,' on April 20, at Camp Aguinaldo military headquarters in Quezon city, Philippines. (AP)

mains have been turned over to family. "These facts point to a disturbing convergence: foreign nationals in a live combat setting, where the risks are immediate and the consequences irreversible," he said.

"The presence of two American fatalities in a single encounter should prompt careful reflection on how involvement in certain activities or networks may lead to unintended exposure to dangerous environments," Torres said.

The two Americans arrived in the Philippines in March and "were believed to have subsequently traveled to Negros Occidental, where they were killed on April 19," Torres said, without providing other details.

"Our thoughts are with their families, who now face the burden of loss under circumstances that unfolded far from their homes," Torres said.

Military officials said the clash erupted as army troops responded

to information provided by villagers about the presence of suspected rebels, and that a rebel commander with a bounty of 1 million pesos (\$16,600) on his head was killed. A soldier was wounded in the fighting.

Troops seized 24 firearms at the scene of the clashes and an unspecified number of fleeing guerrillas were captured, the task force said.

At its peak decades ago, the insurgent force had an estimated 25,000 fighters, who waged one of Asia's longest-running communist rebellions. Battle defeats, factional divisions and surrenders, however, have reduced the number of rebels to below 900, according to security officials.

Peace talks brokered by Norway collapsed under the previous Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte, after both sides accused the other of continuing deadly attacks despite the negotiations.

4 vying to be next UN chief try to set themselves apart as race heats up

UNITED NATIONS, April 26, (AP): Four candidates vying to lead the United Nations have spent hours being grilled about their views on issues from restoring global peace to ending escalating poverty - in what the UN General Assembly president called one of the toughest job interviews in the world.

There was no clear victor after Chile's Michelle Bachelet, Argentina's Rafael Grossi, Costa Rica's Rebeca Grynspan and Senegal's Macky Sall fielded questions from UN ambassadors this past week.

Plus, other candidates could wait until after the initial auditions to jump into the race to succeed UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Jan 1.

"This role matters," said General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock, who presided over the question-and-answer sessions. "The secretary-general is not only the head of the UN and the world's top diplomat - she or he also represents all 8 billion of us, defending the UN Charter and leading on peace, development, human rights."

All four said they would focus on those three pillars of the UN, especially its founding role following World War II of ensuring international peace and security and preventing conflicts - which it has not been able to do in Iran, Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and other global hot spots because of wide divisions. They also pledged to spur reforms to the more than 80-year-old institution.

Bachelet, 74, a two-time president of Chile and former UN human rights chief, told the ambassadors that the U.N. must try to avoid crises and that she has the right leadership skills.

"I stand before you to reclaim the urgent need for dialogue," she said, stressing that the UN must anticipate, prevent and unite. The next secretary-general also needs to be "physically present in the field" to help tackle



Former vice president Rebeca Grynspan gives a news conference in San Jose, Costa Rica on Oct 8, 2025. (AP)

problems, she said.

Grossi, 65, a former Argentine diplomat who has been director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency since 2019, said that with the world so polarized, "there are enormous, huge doubts about our institution" in solving global problems.

Unless the UN has effective leadership and support from all countries, it won't regain a key place at the table, he said, "so we have to concentrate on that." He also said the next UN chief must visit global hot spots.

Grynspan, 65, a former Costa Rican vice president who has been secretary-general of the UN trade and development agency since 2021, said she knows how to stand up for principles while under pressure. As secretary-general, she said she would "continue to be the moral voice and the impartial voice that the secretary-general has to be."

The UN has become "a risk-conservative organization," she warned. "We need to take more risks - and I am ready to fail and try again."

Sall, 64, who was president of Sen-

egal for 12 years, said the UN needs to "regain its place at the global table."

If chosen, he said he would be "a bridge-builder" and that his first priority would be "to contribute to restoring trust, to calm tensions, reduce fragmentation and breathe renewed hope into our collective action."

Bachelet, a medical doctor, responded to a letter from 28 Republican US lawmakers calling her a "pro-abortion zealot" and asking Secretary of State Marco Rubio to veto her, saying the issue is controversial and that she respects every country's right to decide.

She called herself a strong believer in women's rights to decide on their own lives and how many children to have. As secretary-general, she said she would do whatever is necessary to advance agreements by U.N. member nations, including on promoting gender equality.

By tradition, the job of secretary-general rotates by region, and this year it is Latin America's turn. Sall, the only candidate from outside the region, said the UN Charter doesn't bar any candidates.



People gather around vehicles damaged in an attack on the Pan-American Highway in Cajibío, Colombia on April 25, that killed at least a dozen people and authorities blamed on dissident groups of the former FARC rebels. (AP)

Explosive device kills 13 and injures 38 on bus in Colombia

An explosive device killed 13 people traveling on a bus in southwestern Colombia on Saturday, an attack the country's army chief described as a "terrorist act" that also left at least 38 injured as violence linked to drug trafficking in the region escalates.

Octavio Guzmán, the governor of the region of Cauca, said on X that the device was set off while the bus was traveling along the Panamerican Highway in the municipality of Cajibío. Five children were among the injured, Cauca Health Secretary Carolina Ca-

margo told Noticias Caracol, a TV news program.

Gen. Hugo López, commander of Colombia's Armed Forces, told a news conference that it was a "terrorist act" and blamed the network of a man known as "Iván Mordisco" - one of Colombia's most wanted figures - and the Jaime Martínez faction. Both are dissidents of the now-defunct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia that operate in the region.

Neither Iván Mordisco nor the Jaime Martínez faction abide by the peace agreement signed with

the state in 2016.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro condemned the attack on X.

"Those who carried out the attack and killed seven civilians - and wounded 17 others - in Cajibío - many of them Indigenous people - are terrorists, fascists, and drug traffickers," he wrote.

The attack is the latest in a spate of explosions that have attempted to target public infrastructure. At least 26 incidents have taken place in the past two days in southwestern Colombia, which López said has only affected civilians. (AP)

Islamic militants, separatists claim sweeping attacks across Mali

DAKAR, Senegal, April 26, (AP): Islamic militants and separatists said they attacked several locations in Mali's capital, Bamako, and other cities on Saturday in one of the largest coordinated attacks in the West African country in recent years. The government gave no death toll but said that 16 people were wounded in the attacks.

Mali has previously faced insurgencies fought by militants affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group, as well as a separatist rebellion in the country's north.

Most of the details of the unfolding attacks on Saturday came from local residents, who spoke to The Associated Press over the phone.

The al-Qaeda-linked militant group JNIM claimed responsibility for the attacks on Bamako's international airport and four other cities in central and northern Mali. The claim, posted on its website Azallaq, said the attacks were carried out jointly with the Azawad Liberation Front, a Tuareg-led separatist group.

The Malian army said in a statement that "unidentified armed terrorist groups targeted certain locations and barracks" in Bamako and that soldiers were "engaged in eliminating the at-



This photo released by Front of Azawad Liberation, shows militants on the streets in Kidal, northern Mali on April 25. (AP)

tackers."

Another statement later said the situation was under control.

An Associated Press journalist in Bamako heard sustained heavy and automatic weapons gunfire from the direction of Modibo Keita International Airport, around 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the city center. A helicopter flew over nearby neighbor-

hoods. The airport is adjacent to an air base used by Mali's air force. A resident living near the airport also reported gunfire and three helicopters overhead.

The US Embassy in Bamako issued a security alert citing reports of explosions and gunfire near Kati and the international airport, and urged U.S. citizens to shelter in place and avoid travel there.

Mali's government spokesperson Gen. Issa Ousmane Coulibaly, said on state television late Saturday that 16 people were wounded, including civilians and military personnel, and that several militants were killed. He did not provide a death toll.

The governor of Bamako's district, Abdoulaye Coulibaly, announced a three-day overnight curfew, from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

A resident of Kati, a town near Bamako that is home to Mali's main military base, said he was woken by the sound of gunfire and explosions.

Gen Assimi Goita, the leader of Mali's military junta, resides in Kati. The residence of Mali's defense minister, Sadio Camara, was heavily damaged by an explosion during the attack, a nearby shopkeeper told the AP.

Subcontinent

6 hurt during evacuation at Delhi airport: At least six passengers were injured early Sunday when a flight of the Swiss International Airlines had to suspend takeoff after one of its engines caught fire on one of the runways of Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, the airport said.

All passengers had to be immediately evacuated. The Delhi-Zurich flight was abandoned at around 01:08 am local time. There were 232 people on board, and the injured passengers were later admitted to a local private hospital.

A full emergency was declared at Delhi Airport, said the airport's management in an official statement.

"In the early hours of this morning, a full emergency was declared at Delhi Airport involving Swiss International Airlines Flight LX 147 (DEL-ZRH) on Runway 2810," said the statement.

An online report by The Times of India quoted Swiss International Airlines as saying in a statement, "The aircraft involved is an Airbus A330 (HB-JHK). SWISS has established a task force. There were 228 passengers and 4 infants on board. The crew rejected the takeoff and, following an assessment of the situation, decided as a precaution to evacuate the aircraft." (Xinhua)

Flash flood kills 3 in Afghanistan: Flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall killed three people and damaged dozens of homes in northern Afghanistan's Baghlan province, a local official said on Saturday.

Hedayatullah Hamdard, head of the provincial disaster management department, said that nearly 30 residential houses were either destroyed or severely damaged.

He added that assessment teams have been deployed to evaluate the extent of the damage, while efforts are underway to provide emergency assistance to those in need.

Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to natural disasters such



Kids clean up outside their homes after flooding in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan on April 13. (Xinhua)

as floods and landslides, particularly during the spring season, which frequently results in loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure. (Xinhua)

5 dead in Afghanistan house collapse: Five members of a family died and two others sustained injuries as the roof of their house caved in in western Afghanistan's Badghis province on Saturday, a statement of the provincial police office confirmed.

The deadly incident took place in the wee hours of Saturday in the provincial capital Qala-e-Naw, the statement said, adding that the victims included four children and a woman, and two more members of the family were injured. Earlier, a similar incident left two dead in the eastern Wardak province on Wednesday.

People in post-war Afghanistan are mostly living in mud houses, which are vulnerable to natural disasters, including rain and flooding, as parts of the country have experienced torrential rains and flash floods over the past couple of weeks. (Xinhua)

Bursa Kuwait ends higher

KUWAIT CITY, April 26, (KUNA): Bursa Kuwait closed Sunday's trading session on a positive note, with its general index advancing 37.70 points, or 0.42 percent, to settle at 8,916.70 points. Trading activity saw 533.8 million shares change hands through 32,731 cash transactions, with a total value of KD 112.2 million (approximately USD 366.7 million).

The main market index recorded stronger gains, climbing 108.06 points, or 1.29 percent, to reach

8,495.45 points. A total of 354 million shares were traded across 19,055 transactions, valued at KD 46.5 million (around USD 151.9 million).

Meanwhile, the premier market index edged higher by 24.69 points, or 0.26 percent, closing at 9,469.03 points. Trading volume stood at 179.7 million shares through 13,676 transactions, with a total value of KD 65.7 million (approximately USD 214.7 million).

Business

Kuwaiti issuances recorded a 41% increase when compared to the same quarter last year

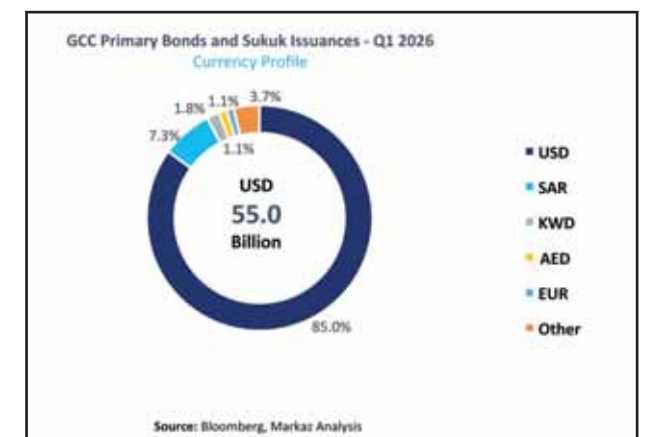
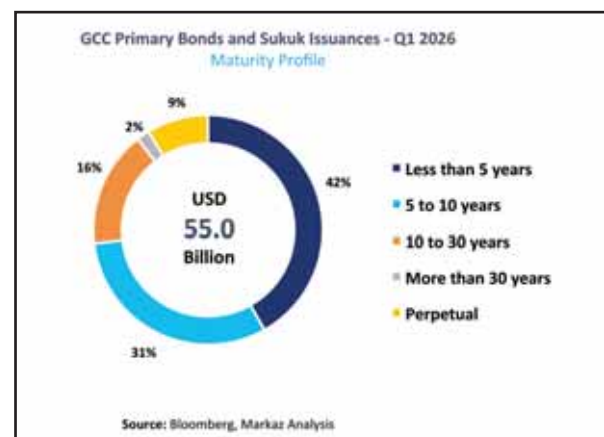
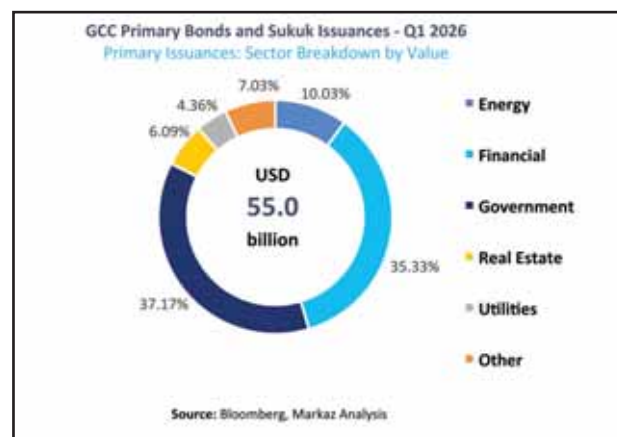
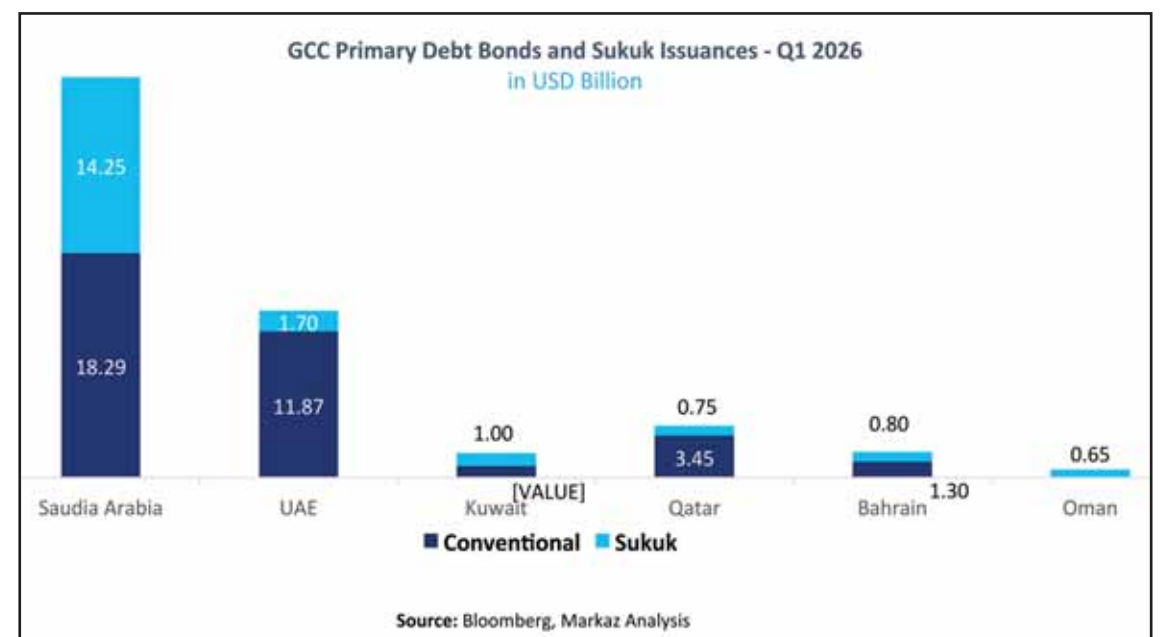
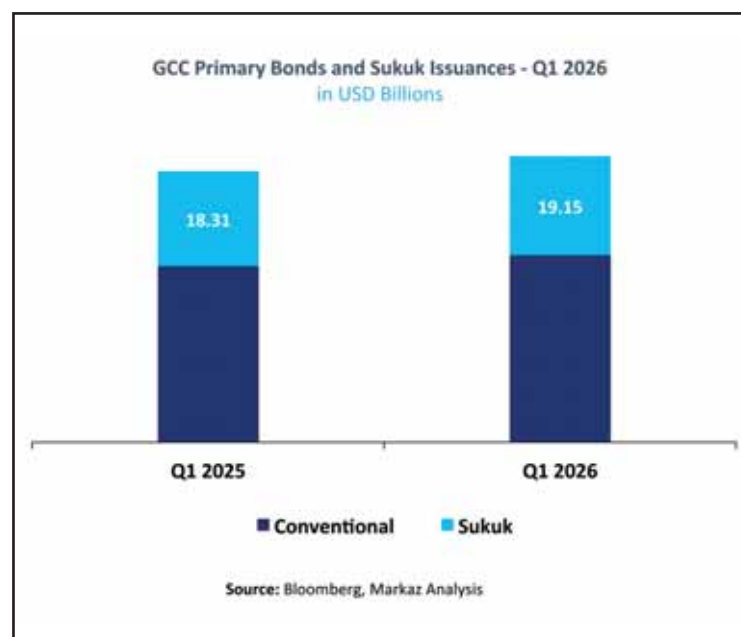
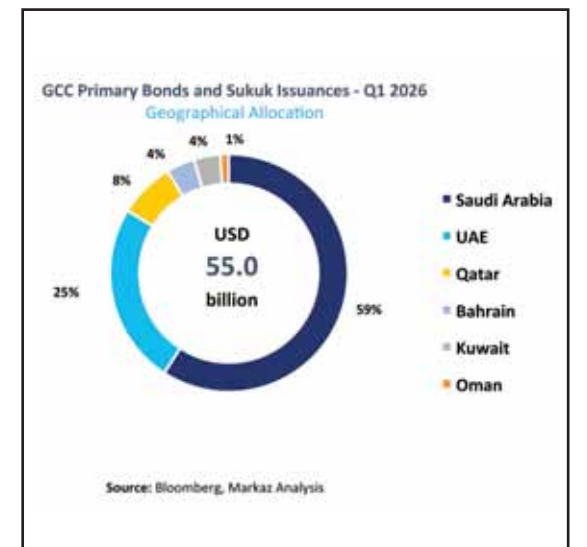
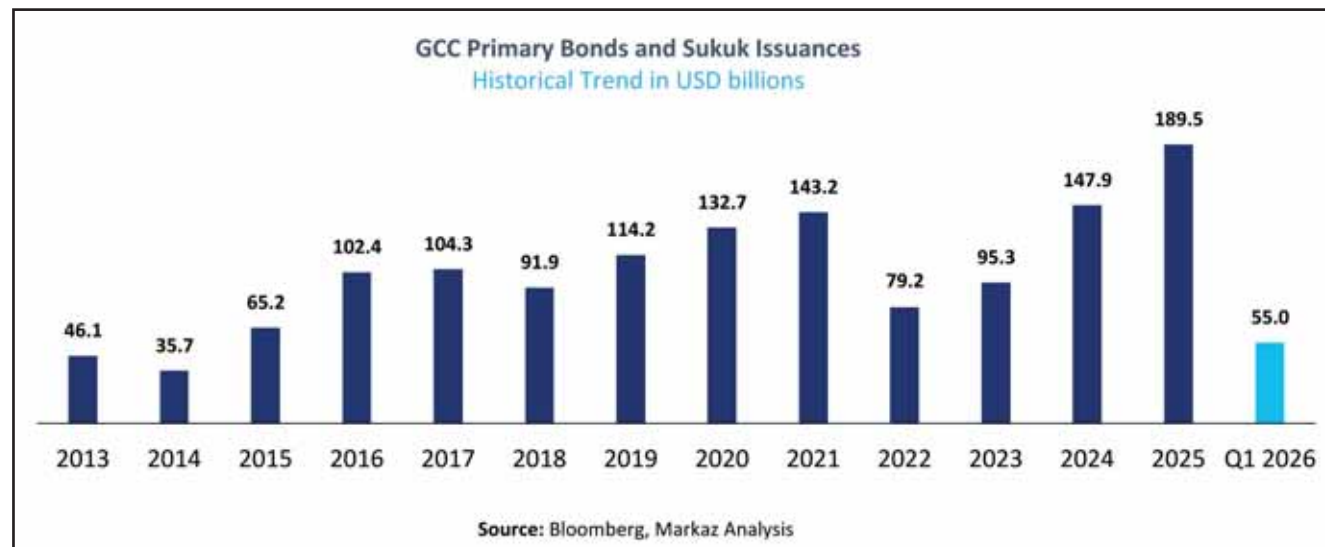
Markaz Report: GCC fixed income market sees \$55.04 billion in primary issuances during Q1 2026, representing 5.64% increase

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: In its Fixed Income Report, Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" states that primary debt issuances of Bonds and Sukuk in the Gulf Cooperation Council ("GCC") Countries amounted to USD 55.04 billion through 95 issuances during Q1 2026, a 5.64% increase from the same quarter last year, where issuances in Q1 2025 amounted to USD 52.10 billion.

Issuances by Geography: Saudi-based issuances led the GCC during Q1 2026, raising USD 32.54 billion through 42 issuances, up slightly from USD 31.56 billion in Q1 2025, an increase of 3.1%, and representing 59.1% of issuances during the quarter. UAE-based issuances ranked second, with USD 13.57 billion through 36 issuances, representing 24.7% of the market, an increase of 33.1% from the same quarter last year. Qatari entities were the third largest issuers in terms of value, with USD 4.20 billion issued through 11 issuances, a decrease of 41.2% from the same quarter last year and representing 7.6% of the issuances in Q1 2026. Bahraini issuers follow, with a total issuance size of USD 2.10 billion through 2 issuances, a 37.2% increase from Q1 2025. Kuwaiti issuances recorded a 40.7% increase from the same quarter last year, recording a total value of USD 1.98 billion through 3 issuances. Omani entities recorded the lowest value of issuances during the quarter, with USD 650 million raised through 1 issuance, representing 1.2% of the total value of issuances.

Sovereign vs. Corporate: Total GCC corporate primary issuances increased by 5.7% in Q1 2026, amounting to USD 34.58 billion raised, compared to USD 32.71 billion raised in Q1 2025. Corporate issuances represented 62.8% of total issuances for Q1 2026, in line with the preference of issuances in Q1 2025 where more corporates issued than sovereigns (Corporate issuances Q1 2025: 62.8%). Government related corporate entities raised USD 2.65 billion through 2 issuances during the quarter, a decrease of 60.9% from Q1 2025 (USD 6.78 billion through 6 issuances). Total GCC sovereign primary issuances increased by 5.5% in Q1 2026, raising USD 20.46 billion during the quarter, representing 37.2% of total issuances.

Conventional vs. Sukuk: Conventional issuances increased by 6.2% in Q1 2026 compared to Q1 2025, raising a total of USD 35.89 billion for the quarter. Sukuk issuances, meanwhile, increased by 4.6% in Q1 2026, resulting in a total value of USD 19.15 billion for the quarter. As for issuance preferences, Q1 2026 saw an increased appetite for conventional issuances in the



GCC, representing 65.2% of total issuances for the quarter. This is in line with issuance preferences from Q1 2025, where more conventional bonds were issued also.

Sector Segmentation: Government issuances led the bond and sukuk issuances in Q1 2026, with a total value of USD 20.46 billion through 12 issuances representing 37.2% of total issuances. The financial sector follows, with USD 19.45 billion through 64 issuances, representing 35.3% of total issuances. This represents an increase in government issuance (5.5%) and a decrease for the financial sector issuances (-14.0%) when compared to the same quarter last year. The energy sector follows, with USD 5.52 billion through 6 issuances,

representing 10.0% of total issuances, with the remaining sectors together representing a smaller portion of total issuance (17.5%).

Maturity Profile: In Q1 2026, primary issuances with less than 5-year tenors represented 41.8% of GCC debt capital markets with a total value amounting to USD 23.01 billion through 58 issuances. Primary issuances with 5-10-year tenors followed, raising USD 17.24 billion through 21 issuances, representing 31.3% of total issuances. Primary issuances with 10-30-year tenors represented 16.4% of GCC debt capital markets with a total value of USD 9.00 billion through 5 issuances during the quarter. One issuance came in with a

maturity greater than ("GT") 30 years with a value of USD 1 billion, while perpetual issuances saw an increase in both the size and number of issuances when compared to Q1 2025, with a total value of USD 4.79 billion through 10 issuances.

Issue Size Profile: During Q1 2026, GCC primary issuances ranged in size from USD 10.0 million to USD 3.5 billion. Issuances with issue size of USD 1 billion or greater raised the largest amount, totaling USD 33.33 billion through 20 issuances and representing 60.6% of the total amount issued in the GCC. Issuances sized between USD 500 million and USD 1 billion followed, with a total issuance size of

USD 15.37 billion through 24 issuances. The highest number of issuances was under USD 100 million issue size, where there were 31 issuances that raised a total amount of USD 1.00 billion during Q1 2026.

Currency Profile: US Dollar-denominated issuances led the GCC Bonds and Sukuk primary market again in Q1 2026, raising a total of USD 46.78 billion through 62 issuances, representing a substantial 85.0% of the total value raised in primary issuances during the quarter. The second largest issue currency was the Saudi Riyal (SAR), where SAR denominated issuances raised a total of USD 4.04 billion through 5 issuances. As for currencies bucketed under

"Other" which totaled USD 1.30 billion, the Singaporean Dollar (SGD) represented 1.6% of total issuances with a total value of USD 897 million through 10 issuances.

Rating: In terms of value, a total of 76.8% of GCC Conventional and Sukuk bonds were rated in Q1 2026 by at least one of the following rating agencies: Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Fitch and Capital Intelligence, a decrease from Q1 2025 (84.9% of all issuances rated). Investment Grade issuances accounted for 62.5% of the total issuances during the year, while Sub-Investment Grade accounted for 14.2% of rated bonds.

KPI eyes Sharjah expansion via ENOC talks

By Najeh Bilal

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), acting through its Q8 Aviation subsidiary, is currently in talks with the Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) in Dubai.

Official data obtained by the newspaper indicate that these discussions are on broadening collaborative efforts to cover Sharjah International Airport.

This move aligns with the goal of KPI to expand into the Middle East and adjacent territories, building on its significant footprint in Europe and other continents, where it currently serves 75 airports.

Beyond these talks, KPI is also in high-level negotiations with Air Astana, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Philippine Airlines.

This planned growth is a continuation of the regional achievements of KPI, specifically its successful entry into the fuel sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The primary aviation hubs of the nation are witnessing rise in passenger volume, which consequently propelled fuel demand.

Dubai International Airport remains a leading regional hub for passenger traffic, experiencing a surge in flight activity, alongside Maktoum International Airport.

Initial efforts to penetrate the aviation fuel sector in Dubai were hindered by established suppliers within the Dubai Fuel Storage and Supply Joint Venture.

To overcome these challenges, Q8 Aviation partnered with ENOC, which designated the company as an authorized fuel distributor.

This strategy allowed Q8 Aviation to immediately begin supplying fuel at both airports, initially focusing on international flights.

Since establishing its presence at both airports, Q8

Aviation secured its first contract with Royal Brunei Airlines at Dubai International Airport and obtained contracts at Maktoum International Airport, specifically with Air Baltic and Hainan Airlines.

Despite intense competition among numerous suppliers at both airports, Q8 Aviation successfully navigated these challenges through continuous communication with ENOC and direct engagement with the airlines, leveraging insights gained from industry events, such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA) conference.

KPI stated on its website that it is committed to provide safe and efficient fuel supplies at competitive prices, along with reliable customer service.

Its clientele includes commercial airlines, air cargo carriers, military organizations, private aircraft operators and distributors.

It disclosed that it usually supplies more than 2,000 aircraft daily in all sectors of the aviation industry, as well as supplying fuel to more than 200 major international airlines at many of the most important international airports, in addition to a growing network of regional airports.

It attributed its leadership in the aviation fuel sector to its production of high-quality products, especially after its success in blending sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) at its import terminal in France, where it produced this environmentally friendly fuel from renewable materials, such as used cooking oil (UCO) and agricultural waste.

This was done in accordance with the standards of the voluntary sustainability certification in compliance with environmental standards (ISCC EU), which the European Commission fully recognized, especially since sustainable aviation fuel reduces carbon dioxide emissions by more than 90 percent during its lifespan, compared to traditional aviation fuel.

Duqm steel project highlights Oman's investment push

Oman signs \$520 mln deals to boost industry

MUSCAT, April 26, (KUNA): Oman signed on Sunday a series of investment agreements and a memorandum of cooperation worth more than OMR 200 million (USD 520 million) to implement key projects across its economic, including a project with a Kuwaiti company.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones said the agreements cover projects in electric vehicle battery manufacturing, as well as factories in steel, cement, pipes, adhesives, tile processing, and a pharmaceutical warehouse, in addition to a memorandum outlining three investment opportunities.

Authority Chairman Qais Al-Yousef said the agreements mark an important step in boosting economic diversification across governorates and strengthening Oman's position as a regional hub for high-quality investments.

He added that the projects reflect growing investor confidence in Oman's competitive investment environment, noting continued efforts to enhance incentives,

flexible regulations, and modern infrastructure in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Director General of Investment Development Saeed Al-Qurainee said total investments in the zones reached OMR 22.4 billion (USD 58 billion) by the end of last year, marking a 6.8 percent increase compared to 2024.

The Omani-Kuwaiti agreement involves Al-Shaya Group establishing a steel billet plant in the Duqm Special Economic Zone with investments of OMR 41 million (USD 107 million) and an initial production capacity of around 306,000 metric tons annually.

CEO of the zone Ahmed Akaak said the project represents a qualitative addition to steel industries in Duqm, while Alshaya Group CEO Abdul Latif Al-Shaya noted the location's strategic advantages, including proximity to Duqm Port overlooking the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, integrated infrastructure, and strong investment incentives.

He added the project aims to

meet growing regional demand for steel, reduce imports, and increase local value-added, noting it will use electric arc furnace technology with lower carbon intensity. Commercial production is expected to begin in 2028, rising to 342,000 tons annually by 2030.

Separately, the authority signed an agreement with GFCL EV Products to establish a lithium-ion battery anode materials plant in the Salalah Free Zone with investments of OMR 35 million (USD 91 million).

Meanwhile, Khazaen Economic City signed four new investment agreements worth over OMR 12.8 million (USD 33 million) covering projects in adhesives manufacturing, tile processing, infrastructure products, pharmaceuticals warehousing, and plastic pipe production.

In addition, the authority signed a memorandum with Majan Gulf Investment to develop three investment opportunities valued at over OMR 110 million (USD 286 million) across various economic zones.

Moving 2,000+ passengers on day one

Jazeera resumes direct flights from T5 after 57-day closure



Jazeera restarts international routes from Kuwait Airport T5.

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, today marked its operational return with the first direct flights departing from T5 at Kuwait International Airport. The flight represents the restoration of direct international connectivity from Kuwait following 57 days of airport closures. Jazeera operated a total of six flights to Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul and Mumbai and flew over 2,000 passengers between 8 am to 4 pm, following the guidelines of the Kuwait DGCA.

- Flights operated to Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul and Mumbai, over 2,000 passengers transported
- Other flights scheduled this week include Amman, Damascus, Delhi, Kochi, Jeddah and Riyadh

As part of the temporary operational procedures, passengers were requested to update their passport information 12 hours prior to their flight and reporting to drop off point at Jazeera's Park & Fly building 4 hours prior to their flight before transferring to T5 in buses. All processes and procedures for check-in and departures were concluded smoothly with flights taking off on time.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said: "Today's departures from Jazeera Terminal 5 mark a defining milestone in our return to direct connectivity from Kuwait. This goes beyond the resumption of these six routes. It represents the restoration of direct connectivity for our community and a reaffirmation of our role in keeping people and essential supply chains moving from and to Kuwait. The flights that were operated today included our first flight to Beirut since the temporary closure of Kuwait International Airport and we are proud to once again fly directly from our home base. With thorough operational planning, readiness, and service delivery, we ensured the highest levels of safety and efficiency with a keen focus on a positive customer experience. We

would like to express our deepest appreciation to the Kuwait DGCA, Ministry of Interior and all other government stakeholders for their cooperation and support in resuming our airport operations."

Flying direct for limited hours from T5, Jazeera Airways will also continue flights to other destinations via Dammam from Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref Hall No. 8. Through this alternative corridor, the airline ensures the movement of a larger number of people, communities, and supply chains.

As the airline resumes operations from its home base as well as Mishref Hall No. 8, Jazeera Airways remains focused on delivering safe, reliable, and efficient travel, while continuing to reconnect families, restore critical links, and support the broader recovery of Kuwait's aviation sector

Till 2 May, Jazeera Airways has scheduled 48 flights to Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul and Mumbai Amman, Damascus, Delhi, Kochi, Jeddah and Riyadh. To book seats passengers can visit jazeeraairways.com, the Jazeera app or call the customer relations team at 177 (Kuwait) or +965 2205 4944 (International).

Affirming its leadership & service excellence

NBK – Egypt named Euromoney's 'Egypt's Best for Premium Banking Award 2026'

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Further reinforcing its market leadership while setting new benchmarks in delivering fully integrated banking services aligned with the highest international standards, National Bank of Kuwait – Egypt (NBK – Egypt) announced that it has been awarded Euromoney's "Egypt's Best for Premier Banking Award" for 2026. The award, granted annually by Euromoney to leading financial institutions worldwide, recognizes NBK – Egypt as the best bank in Egypt for premium banking packages and services. This recognition reflects the Bank's strong performance against a rigorous set of criteria, including service quality, innovation, customer experience, the sophistication of financial solutions, and market impact. It reinforces NBK – Egypt's leadership and growing standing in the Egyptian banking sector, while highlighting its ability to meet the evolving needs of its clients.

The award from Euromoney represents international recognition of the quality and sophistication of the Bank's premium products and services, particularly those tailored for high-net-worth segments such as Privilege Banking and Beyond Banking. These offerings deliver a differentiated experience through a comprehensive suite of products and services tailored to clients' lifestyles, combining convenience, flexibility, and bespoke solutions that exceed expectations. They are designed to enable effective wealth management and growth, enhancing clients' personal and professional aspirations both within Egypt and internationally.

Strategic Leadership Reinforcing International Confidence

This prestigious global recognition underscores the strong confidence international institutions place in NBK – Egypt's performance, highlighting its ability to set a benchmark for excellence in modern banking.

Beyond recognizing outstanding performance, this achievement represents a direct testament to the success of the Group's strategic vision in the Egyptian market, which is anchored in delivering sustainable growth driven by diversification, resilience, and the ability to adapt to evolving economic conditions.

NBK – Egypt has firmly established a leading presence in the Egyptian market, one of the region's largest markets offering significant investment potential, by capitalizing on the Group's scale, institutional depth, and global expertise, while embedding best-in-class banking practices across its operations. This strategy continues to strengthen the Bank's ability to deliver sophisticated, forward-looking financial solutions tailored to the evolving needs of its diverse client base.

Furthermore, this recognition underscores the strength and effectiveness of the Bank's business model, as well as its ability to strike a disciplined balance between growth, governance, and risk management, reinforcing the confidence of investors and international institutions while supporting the sustainability of its long-term performance. It further underscores the strength of NBK Group's long-term strategic vision since its entry into the Egyptian market in



NBK – Egypt

- This achievement reflects the confidence of international institutions in the Bank's performance and its ability to deliver a benchmark banking model
- The award underscores the Bank's strong commitment to maintaining the highest standards of excellence and further strengthening its leading position in the Egyptian market
- NBK-Egypt continues to reinforce its standing by earning further accolades, driven by the delivery of innovative banking solutions and enhanced customer experiences
- This international recognition highlights the quality and advancement of the Bank's premium products and services, and its ability to efficiently meet evolving customer needs

2007, with NBK – Egypt now representing the largest Kuwaiti investment in the country.

Strategic Execution Reflecting the Highest Standards of Excellence

The Bank continues to invest in strengthening its technological infrastructure and expanding its digital capabilities, enabling the delivery of a seamless, end-to-end banking experience defined by efficiency, agility, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of diverse customer segments, while maintaining the highest standards of quality and reliability.

In parallel, the Bank places strong emphasis on building long-term client relationships grounded in trust and value creation, enhancing customer satisfaction and supporting sustainable growth. This approach further reinforces NBK – Egypt's commitment to its role as a leading financial institution contributing meaningfully to the development of the Egyptian banking sector.

NBK – Egypt has been at the forefront of digital transformation, accelerating the evolution of its banking capabilities through sustained strategic investments. This has enabled the Bank to deliver a seamless, fully integrated digital banking experience, empowering customers to manage their financial needs with ease, flexibility, and convenience – anytime, anywhere.

It also adopts a disciplined, insight-driven approach grounded in rigorous analysis of market dynamics, enabling the design and delivery of advanced, tailored banking solutions that address the diverse needs of both retail and corporate clients, while redefining the customer experience beyond the traditional scope of banking services.

Complementing this approach, the Bank continues to invest in its digital channels and technology infrastructure, expanding electronic banking services while enhancing efficiency and elevating the overall customer experience. These efforts are closely aligned with the national digital transformation and financial inclusion agenda set by the Egyptian government and the Central Bank of Egypt, and are fully consistent with the strategic priorities of Egypt Vision 2030.

Hovering near highs: Markets balance growth, policy, and geopolitics

By National Bank of Kuwait

GLOBAL markets navigated a week shaped by competing forces: a powerful ongoing equity recovery anchored by strong Q1 earnings, and a geopolitical situation that refused to resolve cleanly. The week opened in risk-off mode following a weekend collapse of US-Iran peace talks and the re-closure of the Strait of Hormuz, reversing much of the optimism that had driven the S&P 500 to a historic 7,000 plus close the prior week. However, ceasefire extensions, including a separately announced three-week extension of the Lebanon truce, prevented the situation from spiraling into full escalation, keeping the worst-case scenario off the table and equity markets broadly supported even as they gave back some recent gains. By the end of the week, the S&P 500 remained close to its all-time high, supported by Q1 earnings tracking toward high-teens growth year-on-year, with technology, communication services, and consumer discretionary leading the April recovery. Energy stocks continued to pull back from their war-driven highs but stabilized as oil neared the \$100 mark. The Federal Reserve's April 28-29 meeting now looms as the week's defining scheduled catalyst, with markets pricing a near-unanimous hold at 3.50-3.75% and attention is on any guidance regarding the path forward given the ceasefire's fragility.

North America

Retail Surge Driven by Energy Prices Masks Unseen Consumer Strength

US retail sales surged 1.7% in March, its biggest monthly jump in over a year and comfortably above consensus expectations, with total sales reaching \$752.1 billion. The headline strength was substantially driven by a 15.5% month-on-month spike in gasoline station sales, reflecting the war-driven energy price surge rather than genuine improvement in consumer spending power. Stripping out gas, the underlying picture was more nuanced: Bank of America card data showed solid broad-based spending by higher-income households, but lower-income consumers were disproportionately squeezed by fuel costs. The control group reading, which feeds directly into GDP calculations by excluding autos, gasoline, food services, and building materials, was the key number to watch, and it suggested that while the headline looked impressive, it was primarily energy-price driven rather than a genuine consumer confidence rebound. For the Fed, this print is a double-edged signal: strong nominal spending supports the case for holding rates, but energy-driven inflation inflating the number limits the signal's informational value for the underlying growth trajectory.

War Signals Gradual Easing Path While Defending Fed Independence

Kevin Warsh appeared before the Senate Banking Committee for his confirmation hearing as the next Fed Chair, succeeding Jerome Powell whose term expires May 15. The testimony was closely parsed by markets for signals on Fed independence, the rate path, and his inflation framework. Warsh struck a broadly balanced tone, he defended the Federal Reserve's institutional independence from political pressure, a significant statement given the White House's vocal desire for rate cuts, and reaffirmed commitment to the Fed's 2% inflation mandate. On the rate path, he expressed support for three to

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	Forward
EUR	1.1758	1.1668	1.1791	1.1720	1.1650	1.1810	1.1767
GBP	1.3509	1.3444	1.3544	1.3531	1.3440	1.3600	1.3528
JPY	158.59	158.54	159.84	159.37	158.55	160.45	158.17
CHF	0.7811	0.7773	0.7876	0.7844	0.7775	0.8000	0.7775

four rate cuts in 2026 if economic conditions warranted, a notably more dovish view than current market pricing, and indicated that the war had not fundamentally altered his medium-term inflation outlook. He also highlighted structural disinflation from AI-driven productivity gains as a factor that could allow policy to ease without reigniting price pressures. Markets interpreted the testimony as modestly dovish relative to feared hawkish outcomes, contributing to a softening of the dollar in the session and a modest improvement in rate-sensitive equity sectors.

Manufacturing PMI Rebounds on Inventory Build, but Cost Pressures Intensify

US business activity rebounded to a three-month high in April, with the Flash Composite PMI rising to 52.0 from March's near-stagnation reading of 50.3, a result that came in above expectations and provided a clear signal that the US economy is absorbing the energy shock considerably better than its European counterparts. Manufacturing led the recovery, with output rising at the sharpest rate in four years as new orders surged to their strongest level since May 2022, driven, as elsewhere, by firms front-loading purchases and building buffer stocks in anticipation of further supply disruptions. Services also recovered modestly from March's contractionary reading, returning to expansion territory. However, the S&P Global commentary was measured: the manufacturing strength was attributed in part to inventory building driven by supply concerns rather than genuine end-demand acceleration, and price pressures intensified sharply. The monthly jump in average selling prices was the largest since July 2022, with both input cost inflation and supply chain delays worsening.

The Greenback was last seen trading at 98.533.

Energy-Driven Inflation Complicates Policy Outlook for the BoC

Canada's headline CPI accelerated sharply in March, rising 0.9% month-on-month and 2.4% year-on-year, a significant jump from February's 1.8% annual rate and well above forecasts. The primary driver was energy, particularly gasoline prices, which surged on the back of the Iran war-related supply disruption. The year-on-year headline figure more than doubled in a single month, reflecting how quickly the oil shock transmitted into consumer prices. Importantly, core inflation measures, the Bank of Canada's preferred gauge of underlying price pressure, showed a more contained picture, as energy-adjusted core CPI remained relatively stable. This is a critical distinction: if the oil shock proves temporary, head-

line will normalize without requiring a policy response; if it embeds in wages and services, the BoC will face a tightening dilemma. The BoC is widely expected to hold rates at 2.25% at its April 16 meeting, with markets pricing the first hike arriving in October 2026.

The USD/CAD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3668.

United Kingdom

Fuel-Driven Inflation Pushes UK CPI Higher Amid Growing Policy Dilemma

UK headline CPI rose to 3.3% in March, above the consensus forecast of 3.0% and the highest reading in three months, driven primarily by a sharp acceleration in motor fuel prices as the Iran conflict began feeding into pump prices. On a monthly basis, CPI rose 0.7%, more than double the 0.3% increase recorded a year earlier. Core CPI came in at 3.1%, broadly stable and slightly softer than February's 3.2%, suggesting that the inflation pickup in March was predominantly energy-driven rather than a broadening of domestic price pressures for now. Services inflation, the Bank of England's most closely watched gauge of domestically generated price pressure, edged higher to 4.5% from 4.3%. Producer input prices surged 5.4% year-on-year, with crude oil input costs up 58.3%, signaling significant pipeline price pressure yet to fully feed through into consumer prices. The BoE, which voted unanimously to hold at 3.75% in March, is operating in a difficult environment: inflation is rising again, services inflation is persistent, and yet the growth outlook is softening under the weight of the energy shock. Markets are currently pricing multiple BoE rate hikes by year-end, and this print reinforces the upside inflation risk narrative.

UK Activity Beats Expectations, but Cost Pressures and Confidence Weaken

The UK Flash Manufacturing PMI delivered a significant upside surprise in April, rising to 53.6, a 47-month high and comfortably above the 49.9 forecast. The composite PMI also improved to 52.0, suggesting that unlike the Eurozone, the UK private sector continued to expand in April. The manufacturing beat reflected front-loading of orders and inventory build-up, similar to patterns seen in other major economies, as firms responded to the Middle East supply chain disruption. However, the headline improvement masked an acute deterioration in cost conditions, where input price inflation jumped to its highest level in over three years, with supply chain stress spread-

ing rapidly. Business confidence deteriorated sharply despite the activity beat, as firms struggled to reconcile strong near-term demand with a deeply uncertain cost and growth outlook.

The GBP/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.3531.

Europe

Eurozone Slips Into Contraction as Energy Shock Hits Services Hard

The Eurozone Flash PMI Composite for April dropped sharply to 48.6, below the 50-expansion threshold for the first time in 16 months, as the Iran conflict's economic impact hit services activity hard across the bloc. The reading represents a significant deterioration from March's 50.7 and came in well below consensus forecasts, sending a clear signal that Europe is bearing a disproportionate share of the global energy shock. Germany's private sector returned to contraction for the first time in nearly a year, with services weakening sharply as consumer and business confidence deteriorated under the weight of rising energy costs. Paradoxically, the Eurozone manufacturing PMI actually rose to a 47-month high, driven by the same inventory front-loading dynamic seen in prior months, as manufacturers built supply buffers in anticipation of further disruption. However, cost pressures surged to extreme levels, with input price inflation hitting multi-year highs. The collapse in services activity is the critical concern: it suggests the energy shock is already depressing household spending and business investment in real terms. For the ECB, which had been contemplating rate hikes to address energy-driven inflation, this data significantly complicates the picture, as hiking into a contracting economy risks deepening the downturn.

The EUR/USD currency pair was last seen trading at 1.1720.

Asia-Pacific

China Holds Rates Steady as Growth Holds but Domestic Demand Lags

The People's Bank of China held both benchmark lending rates unchanged for the eleventh consecutive month, in line with market expectations. The 1-year LPR, which anchors most corporate and household loans, remained at a historic low of 3.00%, while the 5-year LPR, used as the reference for mortgage rates, was kept at 3.50%. The decision reflects Beijing's cautious policy stance amid the dual challenge of managing the energy shock from the Middle East conflict while domestic demand remains soft. China's economy grew 5.0% year-on-year in Q1 2026, reaching the high end of Beijing's 4.5-5% target and supported by strong external demand and industrial activity. However, retail sales, credit growth, and property sector data remain subdued, pointing to persistent weakness in domestic consumption. DBS has revised its 2026 easing expectation to just a 10bps cut in the 1Y LPR, from 20bps previously, reflecting a more measured outlook.

The USD/CNY currency pair was last seen trading at 6.8359

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Dinar USD/KWD closed last week at 0.30650.

What's On

SPOTLIGHT



Got a birthday or event?
Share your story and snapshots with Arab Times!
Email your write-up and photos to
arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com
We'll feature it on our What's On page!

As part of its sponsorship of the national 'Arfaj Flower' initiative

Gulf Bank continues to support Kuwaiti enterprises and gifts customers Arfaj flower cake



A group photo of the Gulf Bank team during the events.



A child receives Arfaj flower cake.

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting small and medium sized enterprises and empowering Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, Gulf Bank resumed its distinctive community initiative, "Nuqsat Al Khaleej," in collaboration with De La Rue Café. The initiative featured the distribution of specially designed cake inspired by the Arfaj flower, Kuwait's national flower, in a symbolic gesture that reflects national pride, celebrates Kuwait's rich environmental heritage, and highlights the Bank's continued support for local businesses and homegrown talent.

The initiative comes as part of Gulf Bank's sponsorship of the national "Arfaj Flower" initiative, further reinforcing the Bank's role in supporting meaningful community programs that promote unity, resilience, and pride in Kuwait's identity. It also reflects the Bank's appreciation for initiatives that carry a deeper national message, especially following the exceptional circumstances recently witnessed in the region.

As part of this initiative, Gulf Bank had recently distributed Arfaj flower pins to its employees, in recognition of their dedication and commitment to providing customers with uninterrupted, high quality banking services during the exceptional circumstances experienced by the country. The gesture served

as a token of appreciation for their professionalism, resilience, and sense of responsibility.

The Arfaj flower, which grows naturally in Kuwait's desert environment, carries strong national symbolism. Known for its bright yellow color and ability to withstand harsh climatic conditions, the Arfaj represents strength, endurance, renewal, and natural beauty. These values mirror the spirit of Kuwait and its people, as well as the dedication of the men and women serving on the frontlines across various sectors, who have demonstrated courage, sacrifice, and commitment in protecting the community.

The "Nuqsat Al Khaleej" initiative received wide engagement from customers, who expressed their appreciation to Gulf Bank for this thoughtful and meaningful gesture. Customers praised the Bank's efforts in supporting Kuwaiti projects, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and strengthening the spirit of community participation. They also expressed their gratitude and deep appreciation for the frontline personnel across various entities, whose efforts continue to safeguard the wellbeing of society.

Through this initiative, Gulf Bank reaffirms its commitment to launching purposeful programs that create shared value by combining support for the

local economy with the promotion of national values. The Bank continues to play an active role in empowering Kuwaiti SMEs, increasing their visibility, and enabling them to reach new customer segments, in line with its broader commitment to contributing to a strong, sustainable, and diversified national economy.

The name "Nuqsat Al-Khaleej" is inspired by the Arabic word "Nuqsa," which refers to a homemade dish traditionally shared with family, friends, and neighbors as an expression of generosity and care. This cultural tradition represents the spirit of giving that characterizes Ramadan. By adopting this concept, Gulf Bank translates an authentic social practice into a modern corporate initiative that embodies its values and heritage.

Gulf Bank remains committed to advancing sustainability standards within the community across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. The Bank continues to develop and support carefully selected initiatives that deliver meaningful impact for both the Bank and society, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait Vision 2035.

Indian community in Kuwait showcases solidarity with Kuwait & its armed forces through AI Arfaj Flower crafting workshop

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: In a symbolic gesture of solidarity with Kuwait, the Bengali Cultural Society (BCS), a leading Indian socio-cultural organisation in Kuwait, recently organised a unique AI Arfaj flower-crafting workshop at a private community hall in Fintas. The initiative, curated by Chaitali B Roy and led by BCS President Alokesh Roy, brought together members of the Indian community to express their deep-rooted connection with their adopted home.

At the heart of the event was the creation of hand-crafted representations of the AI Arfaj, Kuwait's national flower, widely regarded as a symbol of resilience, endurance, and unity. Participants carefully crafted the flowers by hand, transforming a simple artistic activity into a powerful expression of gratitude and belonging. The workshop space reflected both creativity and emotion, as each piece symbolised respect for Kuwait and its enduring spirit.

Adding to the significance of the initiative were thoughtfully displayed messages from members of the Indian community, expressing their gratitude, admiration, and solidarity with Kuwait. These messages reinforced the collective sentiment of appreciation for a nation that many consider their second home.

Speaking on the occasion, Alokesh Roy, President of BCS, emphasised the Indian community's deep sense of gratitude, noting that "for decades, Kuwait has been a second home to generations of Indians, and this initiative is a small but sincere expression of our solidarity and appreciation." Cultural journalist and author, Chaitali B Roy, highlighted the intent behind the workshop, saying that "the AI Arfaj, which thrives in the harshest conditions, beautifully represents Kuwait's resilience, something the Indian community deeply admires and stands in solidarity with."

The event was attended by prominent Kuwaiti personality Sara Akbar, CEO of Oilserv, also known as 'Kuwait's Iron Lady', whose presence added significance to the occasion. "I always felt that one of my ancestors probably came from India," said Ms Akbar in her address, "because I have this fascination with Indian culture, with Indian colours, and Indian music. So, I was really thrilled to be invited to this event." In her address, Ms Akbar expressed admiration for the initiative and highlighted the Indian community's invaluable contribution to Kuwait's growth and daily life. "In every sector across Kuwait, the Indian community plays a vital role in driving development, service, and daily life. This is

something you should all take great pride in," she said. She further noted that in key sectors such as healthcare, Indian professionals are often at the forefront, adding that their dedication and expertise are deeply appreciated.

Ms. Akbar also commended the spirit behind the workshop, describing it as a meaningful way for Indians to demonstrate unity and support for Kuwait. Expressing her appreciation, she thanked the organisers for the initiative and reaffirmed her willingness to support the Indian community in future endeavours.

The event concluded on a touching note, with Indian school children delivering short speeches expressing their love, gratitude, and loyalty to Kuwait, capturing the emotional bond shared by the younger generation with the country they proudly call home.

The AI Arfaj workshop stood as a quiet yet powerful reminder of the enduring ties between Kuwait and its Indian residents, ties built on mutual respect, contribution, and a shared sense of home. The event was further enriched by the presence of the President and Vice President of IDF alongside the former Chairman of ICAI Kuwait.

Researchers flag risks of AI-driven persuasive ads

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

By **Brian Jay Tang**, University of Michigan and **Kang G. Shin**, University of Michigan

Hundreds of millions of people consult artificial intelligence chatbots on a daily basis for everything from product recommendations to romance, making them a tempting audience to target with potentially below-the-radar advertising. Indeed, our research suggests AI chatbots could easily be used for covert advertising to manipulate their human users.

We are computer scientists who have been tracking AI safety and privacy for several years. In a study we published in an Association for Computing Machinery journal, we found that chatbots trained to embed personalized product ads in replies to queries influenced people's choices about products. And most participants didn't recognize that they were being manipulated.

These findings come at a pivotal moment. In 2023, Microsoft started running ads in Bing Chat, now called Copilot. Since then, Google and OpenAI have experimented with advertisements in their own chatbots. Meta has started to send people customized ads on Facebook and Instagram based on their interactions with Meta's generative AI tools.

The major companies are competing for an edge: In late March, OpenAI lured away Meta's longtime advertising executive, Dave Dugan, to lead OpenAI's advertising operations.

Tech companies have made ads part of nearly every large free web service, video channel and social media platform. But the latest AI models could take this practice to a new level of risk for consumers.

People don't simply use chatbots to search for information and media or to produce content. They turn to the bots for a great variety of tasks, as complex as life advice and emotional support. People are increasingly treating chatbots as companions and therapists, with some users even developing deep relationships with AI.

In these circumstances, people can easily forget that companies ultimately create chatbots to turn a profit. And to that end, AI companies are motivated to thoroughly profile users so ads become more effective and profitable.

A single prompt to a chatbot can reveal a lot more about a user than the person might expect.

A 2024 study showed that large language models can infer a wide range of personal data, preferences and even a person's thinking patterns during routine queries. "Help me write an essay on the history of American fiction" could indicate that the user is a high school student. "Give me recipe suggestions for a quick week-night dinner" could indicate that the user is a working parent. A single conversation can provide a surprising amount of detail. Over time, a full chat history could create a remarkably rich profile.

To show how this might happen in practice, we built a chatbot that quietly wove ads into its conversations with people, suggesting products and services based on the conversation itself. We asked 179 people to complete everyday online tasks using one of three chatbots: one typical of those on the web today,

one that slipped in undisclosed ads and one that clearly labeled sponsored suggestions. Participants didn't know the experiment was about advertising.

For example, when participants asked our chatbot for a diet and exercise plan, the ad version would suggest using a specific app for tracking calories. It presented that sponsored content as an unbiased recommendation, even though it was meant to manipulate people. Many participants indicated that they had been influenced by the AI and that it had affected their decisions. Some participants even said they had completely "outsourced" their decision-making to the chatbot.

Half of the participants who received sponsored and disclosed ads indicated they did not notice the presence of advertising language in the responses they received. This led to a concerning result: Although ads made the chatbot perform 3% to 4% worse on many tasks, numerous users indicated they preferred the advertising chatbot responses over the nonadvertising responses. They even said the ad-infused responses felt more friendly and helpful.

This kind of subtle influence can have larger consequences when it arises in other areas of life, such as political and social views. Profiling users, and using psychology to target them, has been part of social media algorithms and web advertising for more than a decade.

But in our view, chatbots are likely to deepen these trends. That's because the first priority of social media algorithms is to keep you engaged with the content. They personalize ads based on your search history.

Chatbots, however, can go further by trying to persuade you directly, based on your expressed beliefs, emotions and vulnerabilities. And chatbots that can reason and act on their own are far more effective than conventional algorithms at autonomously soliciting information from users. A chatbot with a purpose can keep probing someone until it gets the information it wants, resulting in a more accurate profile of them.

This type of autonomous interrogation is feasible, aligns with AI companies' business models and has raised concern among regulators. Right now OpenAI is rolling out ads in ChatGPT, but the company said that it will not allow ad placement to alter the AI chatbot's replies.

But permitting personalized ads within chatbot responses is just a step away. Our research suggests that if AI companies take that step, many human users may not even recognize when it happens.

Here are some steps you can take to try to detect AI chatbot advertising.

Look for any disclosure text - words such as "ad," "advertisement" and "sponsored" - even if it is faint or otherwise hard to see. These are mandatory under Federal Trade Commission regulations. Amazon, Google and other major online platforms have these as well.

Think about whether that product or brand mention makes sense and is widely known. AI learns from text and images on the internet, so popular brands are likely to be ingrained in the models. If it's a new product or small-name product, it is more likely that it could be advertising.

An unusual shift in intent or tone is a potential sign of an advertisement. An analogy to this on YouTube is the often abrupt or jarring transition to a sponsored section on videos made by content creators. (AP)



Photos during the event.

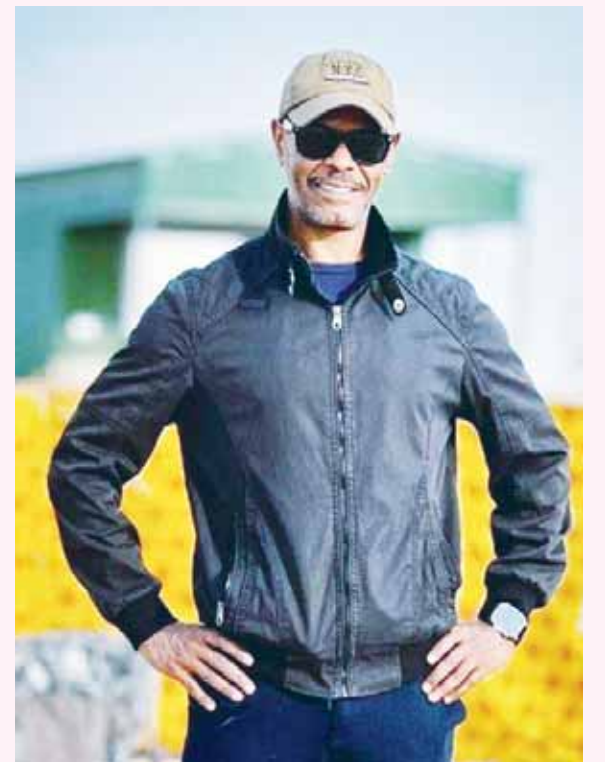
Television



Fawz Al-Shatti



The cast of 'Maze'



Mohammad Daham Al-Shammari

Star-studded drama keeps audiences guessing

'Maze' weaves crime, mystery into Gulf drama puzzle

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

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The series, "Maze," currently airing on Shahid, stands out in the context of Gulf dramas, which often combine social commentary with a sense of mystery surrounding the events and leave viewers with unanswered questions.

This new run comes after it was forgotten amidst the crowded lineup of shows aired last Ramadan.

Written by Ali Shams and Directed by Mohammad Daham Al-Shammari, the series stars prominent Gulf actors in leading and guest roles, including Salah Al-Mulla, Faisal Al-Omairi, Fawz Al-Shatti, Reem Rahma, Abdullah Al-Turkmani, Hussein Al-Haddad, Nour Mahmoud, Rahaf Al-Enezi, Abdullah Zaid, Abdulmohsen Al-Qaffas, Khaled Amin, Latifa Al-Majran and Abdunasser Al-Zayer.

It is a fitting title for a unique experience that leaves viewers with countless questions. The plot lines intertwine, weaving together themes of revenge, murder, crime, mystery, power struggles and money laundering.

This array of themes, presented by Shams, sometimes leaves us bewildered and, at other times, makes us belatedly grasp the situation.

The beauty of this work lies in its departure from the norm, emphasizing that this type of production enjoys high viewership, because it attempts to break free from traditional molds.

This allows the director to flex his creative muscles and work with a relaxed mindset, especially since the events in the series revolve around multiple dimensions like crime, psychology, suspense, thriller and the complexities of the human psyche, which yearns for both revenge and fear.

Although the story and elements of the crime are clear to the viewers, Daham skillfully draws the audience in, making them participants in the game. Their emotions are manipulated to the point of sympathizing with the killer in a struggle to decipher the dramatic codes.

From its very first episodes, the series revealed its nature: answers exist, but they are not easy, clear and linear paths unfold, yet they are winding, a web of intertwined relationships gradually unravels within a structure resembling a puzzle.

The narratives intertwine and clash, creating disorientation for the characters. This approach is commendable for the creators in terms of ambition, but it also puts the work in a delicate position.



Faisal Al-Omairi and Hussein Al-Haddad

Ambiguity sometimes transforms from an aesthetic tool into a dramatic burden that weighs down the viewers, especially when it overshadows the clarity of motivations or the sequence of events.

It is a clever script. The dialogues in the series made the difference, allowing certain actors to shine and steal the show, particularly in important scenes that delve into psychological conflict.

However, at other times, it falls into the trap of direct explanation, as if the script does not fully trust the visuals' ability to express meaning. Indeed, the detective stories are supposed to remain mysterious until the

very end. With Fawz Al-Shatti as 'Sarah', Reem Rahma as 'Hayat', Faisal Al-Omairi as 'Colonel Ahmed', Abdullah Al-Turkmani as 'Attorney Abdullah', Salah Al-Mulla as 'Judge Jassim', Abdullah Al-Zaid as 'Officer Salem', Hussein Al-Haddad as 'Officer Raed', Nour Mahmoud as 'Maryam', Ali Al-Muhaini as 'Bader' and Rahaf Al-Enezi as 'Habiba', these characters are the main elements forming the dramatic scene.

They participate in most of the conflicts and dialogues, resulting in a duel of performances. This is the 'game' of Director Bouaziz, who is keen on building independent and complex characters, where no one is presented as 'absolute good' or 'pure evil'. Rather, motivations drive the scene.

Actor Hussein Al-Haddad, despite his masterful performance, has a body of work and aspirations as an actor that far surpass this role.

Abdullah Al-Zaid makes a strong comeback, although some of his dialogue is exaggeratedly emotional.

Khaled Amin, a guest star, is the main catalyst for events after his character's murder, while other actors excel in delivering a quiet, internal performance that leaves a deeper impression.

The work adopts a clear vision, creating a visually charged atmosphere of tension. The slow pace is not a casual choice, but rather part of the work's philosophy, used to prolong moments of anxiety and immerse the viewer in the characters' psychological states.

Lighting plays a vital role, with reliance on shadows and sharp contrasts, enhancing the sense of mystery and suffocation.

The camera also gets very close to faces, attempting to capture the subtlest emotions, while unconventional angles contribute to creating a constant feeling of instability. However, this vision, despite its coherence, suffers from some repetition. The excessive use of the same visual tools gradually diminishes the impact, making some scenes seem like a mere rehash of what was shown before.

Furthermore, the slow pace - important as it is - may become a source of boredom for a segment of the audience, especially in episodes lacking clear dramatic development.

Daham always relies on actress Fawz Al-Shatti for the female lead. She is the talisman of his successful works and a 'joker', while Reem Rahma is a performance actress.

"Maze" is not an ambitious work but a purely professional one, not a risky adventure but a guaranteed success due to the presence of all the elements of a successful production.

Variety

NEW YORK: New York-based Murray Hill Art Museum on Saturday unveiled an exhibition of rare prints of works by Italian Renaissance master Raphael.

Raffaello di Giovanni Santi (1483-1520), known as Raphael, is widely regarded as one of the masters of the Italian Renaissance.

The exhibition brings together 100 rare engravings and lithographs from its own collection, along with loans from private collectors across the United States. A number of artists and collectors from the New York metropolitan area attended the opening ceremony.

After closing at the end of June, the rare prints will travel to Shanghai, Xi'an, and Wuhan in China, organizers said. (Xinhua)

LOME: The sixth International Book Fair of Lome was held on Friday at the Togolese Center for Exhibitions and Fairs (CETEF).

Organized by the Association of Writers of Togo (AET) and the literary club Le Litteraire in partnership with CETEF, the two-day event aims to promote the development of the country's book industry and provide a platform for exchanges among stakeholders.



Anate

Supported by the Togo's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, the event features a delegation of authors from neighboring Benin, serving as a platform for exchanges among writers, publishers, booksellers, institutions and readers.

It also seeks to enhance the visibility of Togolese literary production and stimulate the still-developing local book market.

"The fair provides a platform bringing together all stakeholders of the book value chain," said AET President Koumelelo Anate. (Xinhua)

When pop culture becomes a monument

Rocky exhibit explores power of fictional heroes

PHILADELPHIA, April 26, (AP): Every day, visitors from around the world make their way to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art - not necessarily for the galleries inside, but for a statue of a fictional boxer from Philadelphia.

The bronze figure of Rocky Balboa - arms raised in victory, clad in boxing trunks and boots - has become a point of pilgrimage for people around the world.

For decades, the museum kept an uncomfortable distance from this kind of devotion. Now, it is embracing it - and inviting Rocky in.

Opening this weekend, "Rising Up: Rocky and the Making of Monuments" examines how a fictional fighter became a real-world symbol, placing the statue within the sweep of art history and Philadelphia's identity. The exhibition is the brainchild of guest curator Paul Farber, who spent years exploring the meaning of the statue and public monuments - including through his NPR podcasts - before bringing the conversation into the museum.

The exhibition spans more than 2,000 years of boxing imagery, tracing a thread of human struggle that Louis Marchesano, the museum's deputy director of curatorial affairs and conservation, said helps explain Rocky's enduring pull.

"The common theme that runs throughout 2,000 years of boxing imagery is that people respond to the body under struggle, a conflict in much the same way today as they did 2,500 years ago," Marchesano said. "It's not simply about watching two people beat each other up - it's about endurance, internal fortitude and in-



The Rocky statue overlooks the city skyline outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, Wednesday, April 22, 2026. (AP)

ternal struggle."

When the bronze statue was left on the steps after filming the "Rocky" movies, the museum fought to have it removed. It was eventually relocated to South Philadelphia before returning to the bottom of the steps in 2006. It was welcomed back, but never fully embraced. The city owns the spot where the statue sits - not the museum. "The museum has had - and I hate

to say this, no pun intended - a rocky relationship with the statue," Marchesano said.

"It took us decades to come to terms with it," he added. "But I'm glad that we did."

According to the Philadelphia Visitor Center, about 4 million people visit the steps each year - rivaling the nearby Liberty Bell in annual foot traffic.

David Muller, a wrestling coach

from France who recently brought his students to the steps, said he thinks Balboa's trials and travails are "good for the next generation."

"The movie 'Rocky' is important for the mind of sport and the mind of life," Muller said, after running with them up the steps as they raised their hands at the top, smiling and punching the air like boxers.

Kate Tarchalska traveled from Po-

land with family and made the statue one of their stops.

"He was my hero when I was younger," she said. "And now I am so glad I could be in the same spot as him."

Suraj Kumar, visiting his aunt in Philadelphia from St. Louis, made a point to photograph the statue to share with his father, who first introduced him to the films when he was growing up in Bengaluru, India.

"When I got to know this statue is here, I was like, I really have to come down here," he said.

One gallery places Rocky in the global boxing fever of the 1970s, featuring works by Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol - all created during a time when boxing had the world's attention.

"In the 1970s, we knew minute by minute who the heavyweight champion of the world was," Marchesano said. "The artists in this gallery are responding to that global frenzy. Sylvester Stallone, in 'Rocky,' was doing the same - thinking about internal and external struggle."

Another gallery turns to Philadelphia itself, presenting photographs of the Blue Horizon boxing gym and a section on Joe Frazier, whose real-life story at least partially inspired Rocky. "Without Joe Frazier, Rocky doesn't exist," Marchesano said.

When the exhibition closes in August, the statue inside will move to a permanent home at the top of the museum's steps - a place it has never officially held. The statue currently outside remains on loan from Stallone.

Rocky's longtime spot at the bottom of the steps won't be empty - a statue of Frazier will replace it.

Ancient landscapes, modern lens at Macao art show

MACAO, April 26, (Xinhua): An exhibition featuring landscape paintings from the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911) opened on Friday at the Macao Museum of Art (MAM), showcasing the artistic achievements of Chinese literati and the aesthetics of landscape painting.

Titled "Duet of Nature: Ming and Qing Landscape Paintings from the National Museum of

China," the exhibition is jointly organized by the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) government's cultural affairs bureau and the National Museum of China, with MAM as the executive organizer.

The exhibition presents 65 sets of landscape paintings dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries. It is divided into two sections and highlights

the evolution of landscape painting and artists' expression of personal sentiments through depictions of nature.

Leong Wai Man, president of the cultural affairs bureau, said in her opening remarks that during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the traditional Chinese art of landscape painting reached its pinnacle. The exhibition, she underlined, not

only enhances Macao's influence in the artistic world at home and abroad, but also contributes to Macao's image as a "base for exchange and cooperation where Chinese culture is the mainstream and diverse cultures coexist."

Blending traditional art with modern technology, the exhibition also features immersive and digital displays.

Travel

Sanyuesan celebrations lifts Guangxi travel to new heights

Love-themed local festival in China gaining national fame



Locals and overseas visitors sing folk songs in a call-and-response style at Huangluo Village of Longsheng County, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, April 19, 2026. (Xinhua)

NANNING, April 26, (Xinhua): At the foot of a roaring waterfall in Jingxi, a mountainous county-level city mostly populated by the Zhuang ethnic group, Zheng Feiyu stood with a microphone in hand, singing into the drifting mist.

"I never imagined I could actually perform in scenes I had only seen in old movies," said the 28-year-old traveler from Chengdu, recalling the classic 1960s musical Liu Sanjie featuring a legendary Zhuang folk singer.

Zheng is among a growing wave of visitors drawn to south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region during the Sanyuesan Festival, also known as the Double Third Festival, with related celebrations running from April 18 to May 24 this year.

The festival is a major celebration across many ethnic regions of southern China, particularly in Guangxi, where it is often regarded as a local "Valentine's Day." It is a time for local young men and women to sing folk



Students perform a bamboo-stick dance at an event celebrating the Sanyuesan Festival in Wuzhou City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, April 16, 2026. (Xinhua)

songs in a call-and-response style and toss embroidered silk balls as tokens of affection.

Recognized as a national intangible cultural heritage and designated as a statutory holiday in Guangxi in 2014, the festival ushers in more than 1,000 themed activities this year. Travelers can join bamboo-stick dances, try making five-color glutinous rice, or immerse themselves in other traditional activities.

In recent years, the regional festival has blossomed into a tourism event with wider influence, thanks to surging interest in local ethnic cultures and local efforts to reinvent traditional practices for the young generation.

Data from major travel platforms highlight the festival's surge in popularity. Meituan Travel reported a 361-percent year-on-year increase in bookings for cultural and tourism activities in Guangxi between April 17 and 23, with those born after 1995 accounting for 53 percent

of the total. Searches for "Sanyuesan cuisines" rose 151 percent, while those for ethnic attire increased nearly fivefold.

Allure of Culture

This year, many Chinese cities introduced school spring breaks, helping fuel domestic travel.

"We are catering to a national appetite for springtime travel," said Liu Rihong, a local performer who has been receiving a growing number of visitors.

Local communities have developed tourism offerings combining homestays, farm-to-table meals, and specialty products such as five-color glutinous rice, handwoven brocade and tea.

Along a tributary of the Lijiang River in Yangshuo, clusters of tents for tourists line the banks. In the tents, people learn to brew local style oil tea over portable stoves while quietly enjoying the beautiful scenery.

In Liuzhou's Yaobu ancient town, traditional teahouses are packed with tourists enjoying live song performances.

For Yu Qiaoming, who runs a guesthouse near a waterfall, the influx of travelers has been a lifeline during a largely off-season period at this tourist spot. "Every room is booked," said Yu.

Experience economy

Experts say the popularity of this cultural festival offers a glimpse into the country's evolving tourism sector that is placing greater focus on culture and experience.

"Tourism is essentially an experience economy," said Dai Bin, president of the China Tourism Academy. "Travelers are no longer satisfied with a bed, a view and a ticket. They seek emotional values like connection, joy and a sense of belonging."

"I didn't just want a travel photo at Instagrammable spots. I wanted it all -- the silver headress, the five-color rice, the feeling of stepping into a living tradition," said Jiang Jiayi, a 27-year-old media consultant from Shanghai.

To attract visitors, Guangxi has rolled out a range of incentives, including vouchers for shopping, dining and accommodation, and a "ticket-stub policy" that allows visitors to use stubs from concerts, festivals, flights and trains to access discounts on scenic spots, dining and accommodation.

Guangxi is not alone in this effort. Across China, authorities are tapping local cultural traditions to draw visitors and boost local economies, from the "parade of the gods" folk tradition in Fujian Province to water-splashing celebrations in Yunnan Province.

The outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) calls for further efforts to shape tourism through culture and highlight culture through tourism, and to build China into a leading country in tourism.

Tourism continued to show vitality in 2025, with domestic trips rising by 16.2 percent. A blue book by the China Tourism Academy estimated further growth of 6 percent in 2026, reaching nearly 7 billion.

The challenge facing Guangxi is whether this surge can translate into year-round vitality. Efforts are underway to embed festival culture into everyday life, from Zhuang brocade in fashion and dining to the expansion of industries such as luosifen noodles.

"The key is turning culture into a lasting asset rather than a one-time event," Dai said. "This is what keeps spending momentum going long after the music stops."

Lifestyle

One face of country's longevity

Japan awakens to Radio Taiso exercise tradition

TOKYO, April 26, (AP): This is how Japan wakes up. It's called Radio Taiso - Exercise Radio in English - a simple yet dynamic way to start the day.

Japanese radio plays music every morning at 6:30 to accompany basic instructions for calisthenics, and millions perform in the choreography: in parks, workplaces, schools - and at home.

Radio Taiso has an almost 100-year history, formally introduced in 1928 and coinciding with the enthronement of Emperor Hirohito. The tradition endures because the exercises are suitable for all ages and capabilities, and easily accessible.

We're talking about basic exercise movements: reach to the sky to limber up, twist at the torso, bend at the hips, swing the arms and get the shoulders loose, or jump or run in place.

Exercisers can make it as strenuous as they wish, and it's over in just 10 minutes, all done to the rhythm of a soft piano melody. Japan has one of the longest-lived populations on Earth, and this ritual is credited for promoting physical and social well-being.

If you're interested you can find Radio Taiso routines on YouTube in English and in other languages.

There are about a dozen basic moves that can be done standing or seated. The idea is to keep moving and, though the program runs early in the morning, many devotees repeat it on their own later in the day.

The routine features a trio of three-minute segments that get slightly more difficult - but not much. Most Radio Taiso followers know the sequences by heart, but beginners can join in and quickly pick up the routines. No equipment is needed.

The program begins with arms exercises - lifting the arms, circling the arms and stretching the arms side-to-



People perform a stretching exercise while listening to music and guidance from radio at a public park in Tokyo, Monday, April 6, 2026. (AP)

side. It's followed by bending from the waist and twisting at the waist.

Shoulder raises are incorporated with a few mini-jumping exercises and marching-in place moves. Along the way you add in neck exercises, moves to stretch the chest and small squats for leg power.

Each movement is repeated four to eight times with instructions throughout to relax, breathe, and inhale and exhale slowly.

Mieko Kobayashi is 88 and goes to Kiba Park - an expansive layout in the

east Tokyo area - almost every day, where a large group gathers without fail.

"If it's cold or raining, I don't go," she said. "By moving my body, I feel better."

She and her 77-year-old friend, Yoshiko Nagao, said that some who go to the park daily live alone, and this is an important social anchor - particularly for the elderly.

"Laughing and chatting while taking a walk after (the exercise) is also good," Nagao added. "We come even

on New Year's Day."

Kenji Iguchi is 83 - he'd pass for 60 - and he's been a regular for about 20 years.

"It's for my joints, mainly the knees and back, because of my age," Iguchi said.

"I get up a 5 a.m. anyway," he added. "I come to the park about 6 and do a round of walking ahead of the Radio Taiso session. Most of the faces are familiar, and coming here and getting together with them is also one of the things I look forward to."

Beyond the algorithm

Brick-and-Mortar bookstores go digital to win back readers

JINAN, April 26, (Xinhua): China's brick-and-mortar bookshops, once under pressure from the growth of online reading and e-commerce, are now adopting digital tools in an effort to reconnect with readers.

Founded in 2014 in Binzhou, east China's Shandong Province, Puhe Reading Space began as a small traditional bookstore reliant on book sales. When online competition squeezed margins, it moved away from price wars and began using digital platforms to cultivate reader communities.

"Online channels such as our e-shop and WeChat groups allow us to maintain full-lifecycle engagement with our members," said Wang Hong, the bookstore's founder. She added that the bookstore also uses livestream sessions as a kind of "online living room," where staff and long-time readers can deepen their connections through cultural conversations.

A recent national reading survey showed that the overall reading rate among Chinese adults rose to 82.3 percent in 2025. However, digital formats now dominate the market, with nearly 80 percent of readers using mobile phones to meet their literary needs.

Industry experts said brick-and-mortar bookstores will need to offer immersive, in-person experiences that digital reading cannot replicate, turning bookstores into part of a broader lifestyle.

"Even in the internet era, people cannot confine all aspects of life to the virtual world. They still need a connection with what is around them," said Ma Ruijie, an associate professor at the School of Journalism and Communication, Nankai University.

To draw people back into physical spaces, some bookstores are experimenting with formats that go beyond traditional reading, combining immersive in-person experiences with digital tools to reshape how readers engage with books.

In a shopping mall in the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou, a bookstore has introduced five small theaters that stage scenes from classic books as immersive performances, turning what was once a quiet retail space into a cultural venue.

In Wuhan, central China's Hubei Province, a bookstore has developed a circular reading model through an online mini-program, allowing readers to resell books after finishing them while receiving recommendations based on their reading habits. Puhe has also embraced artificial intelligence (AI), hosting workshops that teach readers how to turn passages from classic literature into visual posters.

"AI has not replaced reading," Wang said. "Instead, it has become a powerful tool for broadening cultural reach."



Citizens read books at a bookstore in Changchun, northeast China's Jilin Province, April 19, 2026. (Xinhua)

Across the sector, such efforts reflect a broader rethinking of the services that bookstores try to provide.

Physical bookstores remain irreplaceable as cultural and social spaces, where readers seek not only books, but spiritual resonance and a sense of belonging, said Zhao Jianying, a professor at the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

He added that digital reading and physical reading serve different functions and are complementary rather than substitutes. "Digital reading solves the problem of access, while physical bookstores and print reading enable deeper engagement," he said.

That shift is also seeing strong policy support. A regulation on promoting nationwide reading, which took effect in February, encourages brick-and-mortar bookstores to improve reading conditions and carry out reading activities, while strengthening their role in providing public reading services.

This year's government work report for the first time calls for supporting the development of physical bookstores. At the same time, local governments have introduced measures such as rent reductions and integration into public cultural systems.

Zhang Xiao, an industry observer based in Zhejiang Province, said the core competitiveness of brick-and-mortar bookstores lies in combining quality content with improved operational efficiency.

AI technology helps address high labour costs and low service efficiency, Zhang said, adding that the sector is expected to encourage bookstores across the country to share resources and work more closely through technology, in an effort to explore more sustainable business models.

China-Greece archaeology project launched in Athens

ATHENS, April 26, (Xinhua): The Angelokastro archaeological project under the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens was officially launched here on Friday, marking the first archaeological collaboration project launched by the institute since its founding.

Located in western Greece, the Angelokastro project also marks the first time that Chinese archaeologists, together with scholars from non-Western countries, have participated in leading roles of an excavation project in a core region of Western civilization.

The project is jointly carried out by the Greek Ministry of Culture's General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, the Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada, and the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Constantina Benissi, head of the Department for the Supervision of Greek and Foreign Scientific Institutions and the Coordination of International Cooperation and Organizations at the Greek Ministry of Culture, said at the launch ceremony that the project is an important part of systematic cooperation between the ministry and the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens, adding that it has been approved as part of a five-year joint archaeological program.

Founded in November 2024, the Chinese School of Classical Studies at Athens is the first research institute of classical civilizations established in Greece by an Asian country. It aims to promote in-depth studies by Chinese scholars of Greek civilization and other world civilizations, and to strengthen academic exchanges, collaboration and talent development between Chinese, Greek, European and global research institutions in the fields of archaeology and civilization studies.

Kuwait recalls Danlac goat milk formula over safety concerns

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) announced the recall of Danlac goat milk formula based on monitoring reports from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RAS-FF), reports Al-Seyassah daily.

PAFN noted that the company is carrying out a voluntary precautionary recall of several batches of the infant formula due to the potential presence of cereulide, in order to protect consumer health and safety.

It confirmed the immediate suspension of distribution

of all affected batches and stated that it is continuing to remove the product from the market in coordination with relevant authorities. All necessary precautionary measures are being taken to ensure food safety and protect consumer health in Kuwait.

PAFN urged consumers to check the batch number printed on the packaging. If the number matches the specified batches, they should immediately stop using the product and follow the instructions issued through PAFN's official channels.



The Milky Way stretches across the night sky as seen from the Atacama Desert, Chile on April 15. (AP)

China launches new test sats for net tech

XICHANG, April 26, (Xinhua): China successfully sent a new set of test satellites promoting internet technology into space from the Xichang satellite Launch Center in the southwestern Sichuan Province on Friday.

The satellites were launched at 2:35 p.m. (Beijing Time) aboard a Long March-2D carrier rocket and have entered their preset orbits.

These satellites will be mainly used to carry out technology tests and verifications, including direct satellite-to-phone broadband connectivity and space-ground network integration.

Friday's launch was the 639th flight mission of the Long March series carrier rockets.

Also:

TAIYUAN: China launched a Pakistani satellite from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shanxi Province on Saturday.

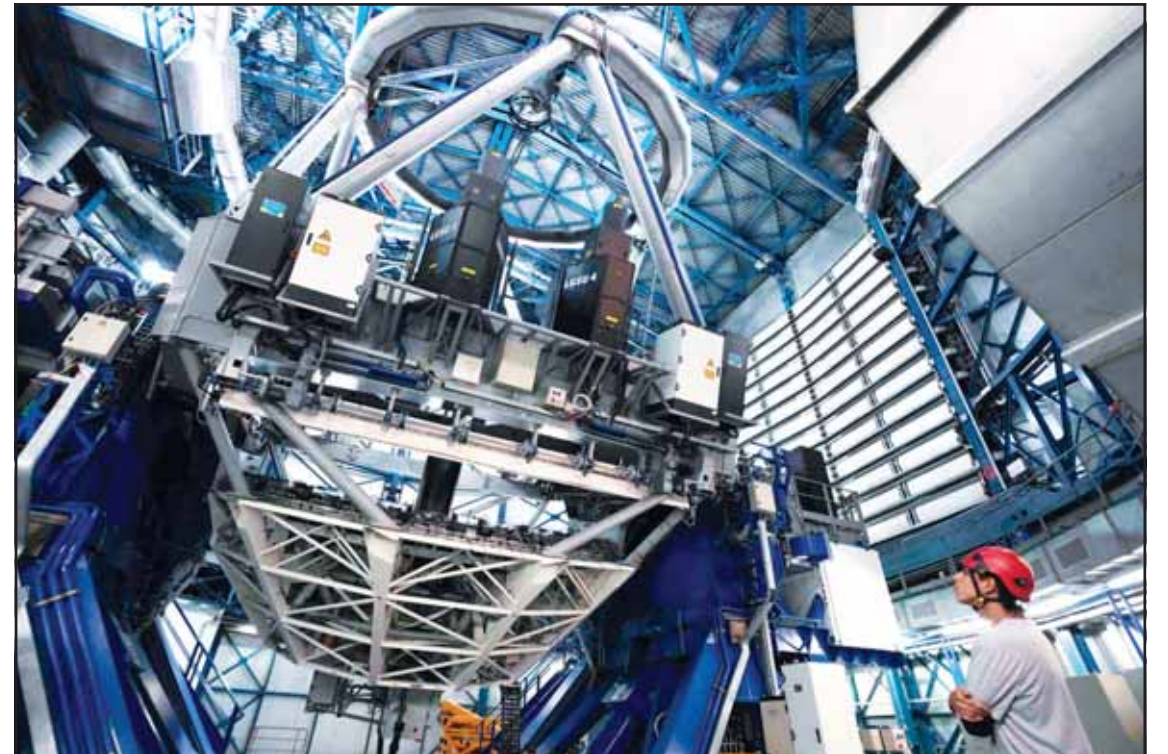
The satellite, named PRSC-EO3, was lifted off at 8:15 p.m. (Beijing Time) by a Long March-6 carrier rocket and successfully entered its planned orbit.

This launch marked the 640th flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

□ □ □

CHENGDU: China released its first commercial space standard system on Friday, aiming to leverage standardization's guiding role in the development of the space industry and promote high-quality development of commercial space activities.

The new standard system was issued by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and the State Administration for Market Regulation in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, at the launch ceremony of the country's 11th Space Day that fell on Friday.



An operator looks at a Very Large Telescope at the Paranal Observatory operated by the European Southern Observatory in the Atacama Desert, Chile on April 13. (AP)

'Landscape has changed drastically'

Threat of light pollution puts world's darkest skies in Atacama Desert at risk

THE ATACAMA DESERT, Chile, April 26, (AP): It takes a moment for the eyes to adjust. A faint spark appears in the darkness; then another, brighter one. Soon, stars, planets and entire constellations emerge. Before long, a whole galaxy stretches across the sky, visible to the naked eye.

In Chile's Atacama Desert, the night sky feels infinite. Considered the driest place on Earth, its darkness is also one of the clearest windows to the universe.

A rare combination of dry climate, high altitude and, crucially, isolation from urban light pollution, makes the Atacama an unrivaled hub for world-class astronomy and home to the world's largest ground-based astronomical projects.

"The conditions in the Atacama Desert are unique in the world," said Chiara Mazzucchelli, president of the Chilean Astronomical Society. "There are more than 300 clear nights per year, meaning no clouds and no rain."

But the world's darkest skies may be at risk.

Last year, the desert became a battleground between scientists and an energy firm proposing a green power complex just kilometers (miles) from the Paranal Observatory. Managed by the European Southern Observatory, ESO, the site also is the future home to what is to be the most powerful optical telescope ever built.

Although the energy project was canceled in January following a massive appeal from astronomers, physicists and Nobel laureates, it exposed deep concerns that existing sky preservation laws are lax, outdated and unclear. Since then, several environmental regulations have come under review, including one from Chile's science ministry targeting protected astronomical zones.

"We are working to ensure the new criteria are strict enough to guarantee that there will be no impact on astronomical areas," said Daniela González, director of the Cielos de Chile Foundation, a nonprofit founded in 2019 to protect the quality of Chile's night skies.

The Associated Press spent three days visiting the Paranal facilities in the heart of the so-called Photon Valley. In this high-altitude corridor, several observatories operate side by side using some of the most sophisticated instruments ever engineered.

"Many of these large facilities are located in Chile, and ESO's telescopes

in particular are the most powerful astronomical facilities on the planet," said Itziar de Gregorio-Monsalvo, the intergovernmental organization's representative in Chile.

Paranal is one of nearly 30 astronomical sites in northern Chile, most of which are managed by international organizations. Every year, the Atacama Desert draws thousands of astronomers and scientists from around the world to investigate the origins of the universe.

"We are lucky to be here," said Julia Bodensteiner, an assistant professor at University of Amsterdam, noting that the chances of being selected as a visiting astronomer at Paranal are just 20% to 30%.

Walking across the Atacama's rocky, uneven terrain is no easy task. At altitudes exceeding 3,000 meters (10,000 feet), oxygen becomes a luxury, while scorching days give way to relentlessly cold nights. But for space observation and exploration, these more than 105,000 square kilometers (40,500 square miles) of desert are the perfect setting.

The exceptional conditions of the Atacama have enabled some of the most ambitious astronomical projects ever conceived, like the Extremely Large Telescope, ELT - a \$1.5 billion endeavor by ESO scheduled for completion in 2030.

With 798 mirrors and a light-gathering area of nearly 1,000 square meters (a quarter of an acre), the ELT will be 20 times more powerful than today's leading telescopes and 15 times sharper than NASA's Hubble Space Telescope.

All the data compiled at these observatories play a fundamental role not only for life on Earth, but also for the possibilities of its development beyond our planet. Preserving these research spots is essential.

With the ELT, said ESO astronomer Lucas Bordone, "we should be able to see Earth-like planets in what we call the habitable zone, so basically the planets which are candidates towards life."

Twenty years ago, the Atacama Desert was "an ocean of darkness," recalled Eduardo Unda-Sanzana, director of the Astronomy Center at the University of Antofagasta. "It was just you and the universe."

Over the years, however, the landscape has changed drastically.

Driven by urban sprawl, industrial development, and the arrival of mining and wind farms, the desert has become a coveted territory where balance is not always easy to reach.

In Paranal, specialists live like moles in an underground residence designed to keep their presence almost undetectable. Windows must remain covered, hallways stay dark, and any outside movement is guided only by flashlight. Even the faintest light can interfere with the telescopes.

The announcement last year of an imminent green energy project sent shock waves through the international scientific community. Experts pressured authorities to protect Chile's night sky from the proposed site, which was slated for construction just 10 kilometers (6 miles) from Paranal.

The case raised the alarms due to its impacts, such as increased light pollution, micro-vibrations and dust, as well as greater atmospheric turbulence. These conditions would make astronomical activities unviable.

"If you place the ELT next to a city, it doesn't matter that its diameter is 40 meters long. It's just the same as having a tiny telescope," Gregorio-Monsalvo said.

Although the company canceled the project in late January, scientists warn that without new, updated regulations, similar projects could be proposed at any moment.

"Despite all the media hype in 2025, we find ourselves exactly where we were last year," said Unda-Sanzana, who is also part of a ministerial advisory commission that recently delivered recommendations to Chile's government following the incident.

There is no shortage of precedents. The first international heliophysics observatory in Chile - a major solar station operated by the U.S. Smithsonian Institution in the early 20th century - was forced to shut down operations in 1955 due to environmental pollution caused by the expansion of mining activity in the area.

"We've had 70 years to learn from history and avoid repeating those same mistakes," Unda-Sanzana said.

Tick season seems to be off to a fast start, some experts worry about future illnesses

NEW YORK, April 26, (AP): Tick season seems to be off to a fast start, with an unusually high number of bites already reported across the country.

Some US doctors are worried about the potential for a bad year for tick-borne diseases.

"If you have a lot of exposures, there will probably be more cases of tick-related infections," said Dr. Alina Filozov, an infectious disease doctor at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, Connecticut.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an early advisory to the public this week to guard against ticks.

Tick bites typically spike in May, but "the data are telling us now is the time to take action," said Alison Hinckley, a CDC Lyme disease expert. "Ticks are out and people are getting bitten."

Current data is very limited, but the early signs are not good.

The CDC's tracking system shows that weekly rates of ER visits for tick bites are the highest for this time of year since 2017. That's true in all regions of the country, except the south-central United States.

About 85% of U.S. hospital emergency departments send data to the surveillance system, but it doesn't capture people who didn't go to a hospital.

It will take months for systematic tick sampling by researchers to chart changes in tick populations. And because not every bite results in an infection, it will also take time for medical experts to know whether there's an actual surge in Lyme disease or other illnesses.

Ticks are small, eight-legged blood-sucking parasites - arachnids, not insects - that feed on animals and sometimes people.

Tick populations vary throughout the year, and their numbers depend on a few factors. Climate change is widely believed to be having an effect: Ticks like warm, humid weather, and more can be seen after a mild winter. The more deer and mice available for



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows a blacklegged tick, also known as a deer tick. (AP)

them to feed on may also factor.

Some ticks are infected with germs that can cause serious diseases, including Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and alpha-gal syndrome, a red meat allergy. Lyme disease is the most common, with an estimated 476,000 people treated for it each year, according to the CDC. Infections are commonly treated with antibiotics.

So far this year, most ticks seen in the Northeast have been large adult ticks. But in the weeks ahead, juvenile nymphs will become more common. The emergence of nymphs, along with more people spending time outdoors, are among the reasons tick bites tend to be highest in May. Worse, tiny nymphs attached to people are harder to see - and often are there longer - leading to an increased risk of infections, experts say.

Connecticut has a connection to tick-borne disease - Lyme disease is named after a town there. And earlier this month, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station reported that residents were already submitting an average of 30 ticks per day for testing.

State officials also said an unusually high percentage of the submitted ticks - 40% - tested positive for the bacteria

that cause Lyme disease.

Several factors have been helping tick populations expand, including unusually high numbers of mice in the last two years, said Scott Williams, a tick researcher at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

All we have so far is an early snapshot, said Megan Linske, a wildlife biologist with the same agency. She expects the problem to continue to worsen, with more ticks spreading over more areas.

Experts advise that if you go outdoors, note any wooded areas and grassy properties that start bleeding into wooded areas. Ticks tend to perch on ankle-level vegetation with their upper legs outstretched, waiting to latch on to an unsuspecting dog or human.

Try to walk in the middle of paths. Wear light-colored clothing treated with the insecticide permethrin. And use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents.

If you do find a tick, remove it immediately. It's not necessary to go to a doctor unless you think the tick has been on you for days or if you develop a rash or other symptoms, experts said.

Chinese medical team donates supplies to boost healthcare in Cameroon

YAOUNDE, April 26, (Agencies): The 25th batch of the Chinese medical team in Cameroon on Wednesday donated a consignment of medical supplies to the Mbalmayo District Hospital, located about 50 km from the Cameroonian capital, Yaounde.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, Zhang Chao, chief of the Chinese medical team in Mbalmayo, said the donation was carefully selected to include antimalarials, antibiotics, antihypertensives, antidiabetics, as well as surgical supplies, protective equipment, and acupuncture instruments from traditional Chinese medicine.

"The medications will eventually be used, but the friendship will remain. Missions will follow one another, but love and hope will endure," Zhang said, stressing the long-standing friendly relations between Cameroon and China.

Nkongo Victorine, director of the Mbalmayo District Hospital, commended the Chinese team for its consistent contributions to Cameroon's healthcare system and said the medical supplies were "a significant contribution."

"These donations specifically consist of medications and supplies that will be used to care for patients. In short, all patients will benefit," she said.

The first Chinese medical team arrived in Cameroon, in the town of Mbalmayo, in 1975. For more than 50 years, China has dispatched 25 medical teams to Cameroon.

Also:

LIBREVILLE: The Chinese Embassy in Gabon donated a batch of climate aid to Gabon's Ministry of Water and Forests, Environment, Climate, in charge of Human-Wildlife Conflict, on Friday.

Developing clean energy is an important component of Gabon's national strategy, and China's aid fully reflects the two countries' shared vision for promoting sustainable development, said Maurice Ntossui Allogo, head of the ministry, at a handover ceremony in Libreville, capital of Gabon.

Thanking China for the donation, the minister said the aid will help Gabon reduce dependence on fossil fuels and enhance its capacity to address climate change.

Chinese Ambassador to Gabon Zhou Ping said the donation, mainly solar power generation equipment, aims to alleviate electricity shortages in Gabon's remote areas and contribute to local economic development and people's well-being.

China is ready to continue strengthening cooperation with Gabon in clean energy to enhance the country's green and low-carbon transition and sustainable development, Zhou said.

In April 2023, China and Gabon signed a joint statement establishing a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, under which China pledged to provide Gabon with climate change assistance within the framework of South-South cooperation.

Damage to Gaza health sector exceeds \$1.4 bln says WHO

GENEVA, April 26, (KUNA) The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday said that the scale of destruction in Gaza has reached "shocking levels" with damage to the health sector alone estimated at around 1.4 billion dollars and more than 1,800 medical facilities either partially or completely destroyed.

Speaking online from Jerusalem during a press briefing in Geneva WHO Representative for the occupied Palestinian territory Reinhilde Van de Weerd described the devastation firsthand.

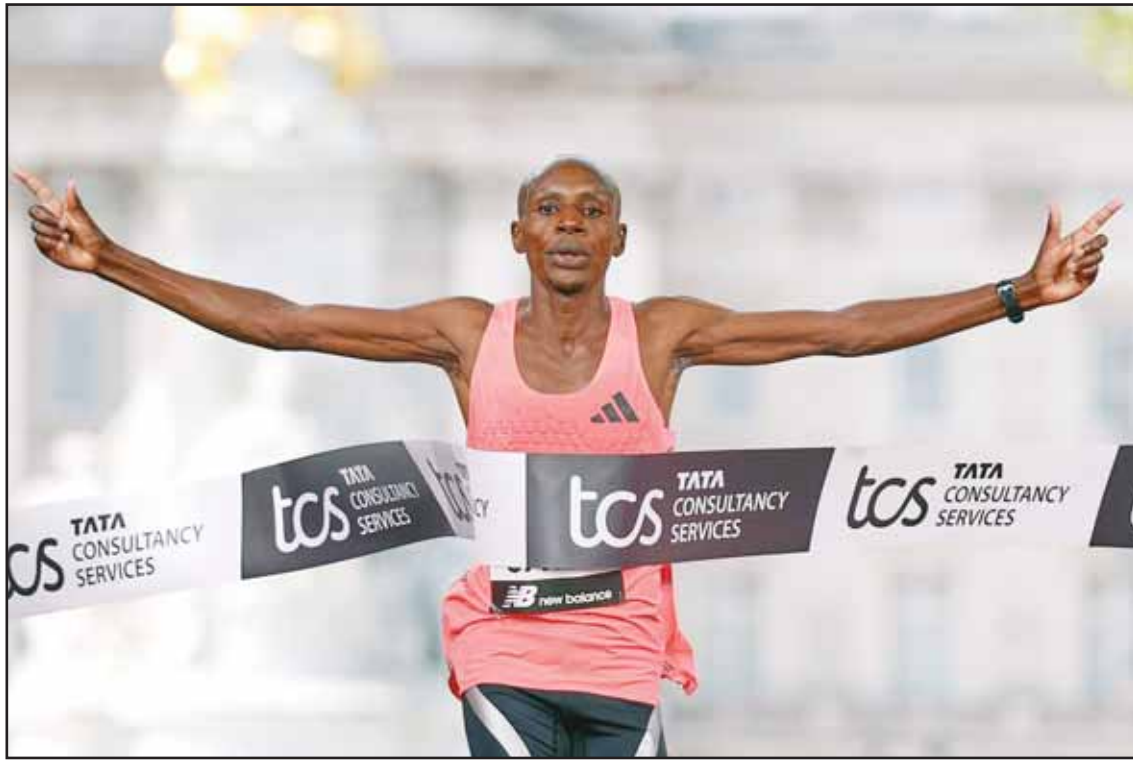
She said that the total recovery needs for Gaza's health sector are estimated at about USD 10 billion over five years according to a recent joint report by the World Bank the European Union and the United Nations.

She explained that recovery plan includes covering reconstruction and restoration of health services and the growing medical needs particularly among children and those with permanent disabilities and amputations.



A group of toddlers return to Gaza more than two years after being evacuated as premature infants for medical treatment in Egypt, arriving at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip on March 30, 2026. (AP)

World record falls, Sawe storms past 2-hour marathon barrier



Sebastian Sawe from Kenya crosses the finish line to win the men's race at the London Marathon in London. (AP)



Tigst Assefa of Ethiopia celebrates winning the women's race at the London Marathon in London. (AP)

Ethiopia's Assefa defends title in style

LONDON, April 26, (AP) — The fabled 2-hour barrier for a marathon has been broken, officially, in an once-inconceivable achievement in sports.

Not by one runner, but two.

In a race for the ages, Sebastian Sawe of Kenya won the London Marathon in 1 hour, 59 minutes and 30 seconds on Sunday, shattering the previous men's world record by an astonishing 65 seconds.

"What comes today is not for me alone," the 29-year-old Sawe said, "but for all of us today in London."

Just 11 seconds further back was Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha, who — running in his first-ever marathon — also covered the 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) course in under 2 hours.

Completing the podium was Uganda's Jacob Kiplimo, who broke the previous world-record time — set by Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum in Chicago in 2023 — by seven seconds, finishing in 2:00:28.

In an exhilarating sight, Sawe ran quicker as the marathon went on, covering the second half of the race in 59 minutes and 1 second. He pulled clear with Kejelcha after 30 kilometers and then made his solo break in the final two kilometers, sprinting along the finish on The Mall to loud cheers.

Sawe, who retained his title in London, said it was a "day to remember for me" and thanked the huge crowds who lined the streets of the British capital

to witness what might be regarded as a feat marking the peak of human physical achievement.

"I think they help a lot," he said, "because if it was not for them you don't feel like you are so loved ... with them calling, you feel so happy and strong."

Breaking two hours in a marathon has been a long time coming — and has been done before.

However, when Eliud Kipchoge — the Kenyan long-distance great — achieved the feat in Vienna in 2019, it was in a specially tailored race called the "1.59 Challenge" that was arranged by British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe in favorable conditions, on a 6-mile (9.6-kilometer) circuit, and using rotating pacemakers.

That meant it wasn't classed as an official race setting, so Kipchoge's time of 1:59:40 didn't go in the record book.

In any case, Sawe surpassed that time by 10 seconds on a mostly flat course across London in dry, sunny conditions.

"The goalposts have literally just moved for marathon running," Paula Radcliffe, a former winner of the London Marathon, said during commentary of the race for the BBC.

At the turn of the century, the world's best time for the men's marathon was 2:05:42, set by Khalid Khannouchi in Chicago in 1999.

Khannouchi broke his own record by four seconds in 2002 — the last time

the fastest men's marathon was run in London — and it has been whittled down gradually over the last 24 years by a succession of Kenyan and Ethiopian runners, including Haile Gebrselassie, Wilson Kipsang, Kipchoge and most recently Kiptum.

A record was also set in the women's race, with Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa pulling away with about 500 meters remaining to win in 2:15:41 and defend the title in the fastest-ever time in a women's-only marathon.

However, it was 16 seconds slower than the course record set by Radcliffe in 2003 when it was a mixed race.

Kenya's Hellen Obiri was 12 seconds back in second place in a personal-best time on her London debut and compatriot Joyciline Jepkosgei was third, a further two seconds adrift. It was the first time three women have run under 2 hours, 16 minutes in a marathon.

"I screamed when I finished because I knew I was breaking the world record," Assefa said.

"I felt much healthier today and have worked really hard on my speed and all my training has paid off."

In the wheelchair races, there was a Swiss double with Marcel Hug powering to a sixth straight men's title — and eighth in total — and Catherine Debrunner beating Tatyana McFadden in a close finish to defend the title.

Italy blows away Scotland

France survives feisty Ireland test to stay on England's heels

LONDON, April 26, (AP) — France survived a feisty challenge from Ireland 26-7 to keep pace with unbeaten England halfway through the Women's Six Nations.

France's physicality prevailed in the match of the championship so far, a breathless contest in which Ireland had three tries disallowed at a raucous Clermont-Ferrand.



Mwayembe

Meanwhile, world champion England defeated a spirited Wales 62-24 in Bristol, and Italy rose to third place after blowing away Scotland 41-14 in Parma in its first appearance at home in the campaign.

A new total attendance record in a single championship was set. More than 151,000 people were attracted across the entire 2025 tournament. That figure was easily eclipsed by the sold-out crowd of 26,247 for England-Wales at Ashton Gate. By the end of the third round on Saturday, total attendance was at more than 194,000 with two rounds to go.

For a third straight match, France followed a scrambling first half with a dominant second.

From a spiky 7-7 at halftime, France snatched the momentum from Ireland with huge carries from halftime replacement Charlotte Escudero, player-of-the-match prop Ambre Mwayembe, lock Madoussou Fall Raclot and mid-fielder Teani Feleu.

Ireland could resist only so long and French tries followed for Carla Arbez and Anaïs Grandto to the delight of the 17,000-strong crowd. France kept the heat on for the bonus-point fourth try and No. 8 Lea Champon got it with two minutes to go.

The Irish have never beaten Les

Bleues in France but they talked themselves up this week and rattled the French. But in 12 visits to the French 22, only Clíodhna Moloney-MacDonald was awarded a try.

Ireland played all the rugby, led by Aoife Wafer, in the first half but tries were disallowed for double movement, being held up, and a knock-out that ruled out a Moloney-MacDonald brace.

France's defense was desperately decisive, especially flanker Axelle Berthomieu, whose team-leading 25 tackles made up for her biting suspension against Ireland in the Rugby World Cup quarterfinal last September.

England racked up its 36th straight test victory after changing half the team from the 84-7 thumping of Scotland last weekend. Even with its sixth- and seventh-choice locks, England was too good.

Some British bookmakers refused to take bets on a Wales win. They had good reason: Wales hadn't beaten England in 10 years, losing by an average margin of nearly 49 points.

But Saturday's game was far more competitive than the scoreline appears. Wales deserved its highest ever score against England and a four-try bonus point at the death through Seren Lockwood, the backup scrumhalf and second replacement on the right wing.

"Wales gave us a tough game," said England's Marlie Packer, the player of the match. The award showed Packer still has it at age 36. Making her first start since the Rugby World Cup, her bustle was rewarded with two tries, the second in the 69th minute with legs pumping in a rolling maul and with a Welsh arm crushing her neck.

England scored 10 tries and Packer and Jess Breach reached 55 career tries together, third all-time in team history.

Huge cross-field passes by Holly Aitchison and captain Megan Jones frequently gave the wings overlaps, including for debutant Millie David, who touched down early but failed a head check by the 20th minute.

Messi and Inter Miami settle for another home draw

MIAMI, April 26, (AP) — Lionel Messi and Inter Miami are still waiting for their first win in their new home.

German Berterame scored off a rebound in the 76th minute and Inter Miami finished in a 1-1 tie with the New England Revolution, keeping the defending MLS Cup champions winless in three matches at their new Miami stadium.

The Herons are 0-0-3 in the new building — compared with 5-1-1 in MLS road matches this season. Inter Miami is now unbeaten (5-0-4) in its last nine MLS matches following a season-opening loss at LAFC, and unbeaten in its last 11 matches (5-0-6) across all competitions.

Former MLS MVP Carles Gil scored in the 56th minute for New England, which had lost each of its last four meetings with Inter Miami.

Gil's goal started when Will Sands' long throw-in into the box was settled by Dor Turgeman — who basically just left the ball where the charging Gil could get it. Gil chipped the ball past Inter Miami goalie Dayne St. Clair, opening the scoring.

That goal came just a couple minutes after Inter Miami thought it had struck first, but Tadeo Allende's right-footed blast was waved off by an offside call.

Sam Surridge scored two goals, Hany Mukhtar and Ahmed Qasem each added a goal, and Nashville SC beat Charlotte FC 4-2.

Surridge has nine goals this season, tied with Dallas' Petar Musa for most in MLS.

Nashville (7-1-1), which won 2-1 at Charlotte on April 11, remains atop the Eastern Conference with 22 points.

Mukhtar finished from the center of the box off an assist from Ahmed Qasem in the 19th minute. Qasem added a goal of his own in the 25th minute, scoring from the right side of the box to give Nashville a 2-0 lead.



Vancouver Whitecaps' Thomas Muller, left, and Colorado Rapids' Hamzat Ojediran, right, vie for the ball during the first half of an MLS soccer match in Vancouver, British Columbia. (AP)

Morrison Agyemang scored with a header off a cross from Ashley Westwood, his second goal in as many matches, in the 42nd to make it 2-1 at halftime.

Surridge extended Nashville's lead in the 60th minute with a shot from outside the box.

Louis Munteanu scored his first career goal late in the second half to tie it, and Kye Rowles followed with his first goal for the winner as D.C. United rallied to beat Orlando City 3-2.

DC United (3-4-3) jumped in front in the 10th minute when Jackson Hopkins took a pass from first-year defender Keisuke Kurokawa and scored his first goal of the season. Hopkins scored the first three goals of his career last season in 17 appearances. Kurokawa's first assist comes in his 10th league match.

Max Arfsten scored in the fifth minute, Patrick Schulte had three saves, and the Columbus Crew beat the Philadelphia Union 2-0.

Schulte had his second shutout

this season for the Crew (3-4-3).

The Union (1-7-2) had its three-game unbeaten streak snapped.

Kévin Denkey scored twice in the first half to back Roman Celantano and FC Cincinnati blanked the New York Red Bulls 2-0.

Denkey scored with assists from Pavel Bucha and Gerardo Valenzuela in the 40th minute. It was only the third time Cincinnati scored the first goal in a match this season. It was the third assist for both Valenzuela and Bucha. Valenzuela has already matched his career high set in 30 appearances in 2024.

Jayden Nelson scored in the 13th minute, and Myrto Uzuni added a goal in first-half stoppage time as Austin FC shut out the Houston Dynamo 2-0.

Austin (2-4-4) took the lead early when Nelson finished from the left side of the box off an assist from Facundo Torres.

Austin doubled its advantage in the second minute of first-half stoppage time when Uzuni scored from

outside the box. The strike, assisted by Joseph Rosales, found the bottom-left corner.

Philip Zinckernagel and Hugo Cuyper scored two goals apiece, Maren Haile-Selassie added a goal and an assist, and the Chicago Fire beat Sporting Kansas City 5-0.

Chicago (5-2-2) is unbeaten in its last five games, with four wins. Kansas City has lost five consecutive games.

Sporting (1-7-1), which has been outscored 18-3 during its skid, has a minus-18 goal differential this season, the worst in MLS.

Timo Werner had two goals and an assist — his third consecutive game with multiple goal contributions — on Saturday night to help the San Jose Earthquakes beat St. Louis City 3-2 and extend their win streak to six games.

Alex Bonetig scored his first MLS goal in the sixth minute of stoppage time, Kevin Kelsy added a goal and the Portland Timbers beat San Diego FC 2-1.

San Diego (3-5-2) has lost five in a row and is winless in seven straight.

Jordan Morris had a goal and an assist. Jesus Ferreira scored a goal, and the Seattle Sounders beat FC Dallas 2-1.

Seattle (6-1-1) is unbeaten, with five wins, in its last six games. Andrew Thomas had five saves for the Sounders.

Brian White scored twice, including an 85th-minute goal, and the Vancouver Whitecaps beat the Colorado Rapids 3-1.

Vancouver (8-1-0) won its fourth straight match and has 24 points, second in the Western Conference behind San Jose (27 points).

Prince Owusu scored an early goal for CF Montreal and Thomas Gillier made it stand up for a 1-0 victory over New York City FC on Saturday, extending the club's winless streak to six.

Hyderabad seals five-wicket win despite Sooryavanshi blitz

Another top-order failure for Chennai in 8-wicket defeat to Gujarat

CHENNAI, India, April 26, (AP) — Sai Sudharsan continued his fine form with 87 runs off 46 balls as Gujarat Titans strolled to an eight-wicket win over host Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League.

Sudharsan, who scored a hundred in the previous game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, hit seven sixes and four fours as Gujarat finished its successful chase on 162-2 in 16.4 overs in reply to Chennai's 158-7.

Apart from undefeated opener Rituraj Gaikwad (74 not out off 60 balls), it was another top-order failure for Chennai, which was put in to bat and reduced to 37-4 in 8.2 overs. Despite Gaikwad's resistance, the hosts were unable to recover. Kagiso Rabada picked up 3-25 in four overs for Gujarat.

Gujarat moved to fifth in the standings with its fourth win in eight games. It was a fifth loss for Chennai in eight games as it slipped to sixth with six points.

Rabada struck first when Chennai in-form batter Sanju Samson was caught behind for 11 in the fourth over. Urvil Patel was caught for four three balls later.

Sarfraz Khan fell to Mohammed Siraj for a golden duck, with left-arm spinner Manav Suthar claiming Dewald Brevis for two. Chennai's powerplay yielded only 28-3.

Gaikwad fought his own poor form to reach a sedate 50 off 49 balls,



Sunrisers Hyderabad's Ishan Kishan plays a shot during the Indian Premier League cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad in Jaipur, India. (AP)

but he was not able to gain any scoring momentum. Shivam Dube's 22 and Karthik Sharma's 15 helped push the score past 150.

Gujarat's top order made short work of the chase. Shubman Gill scored 33, putting on 58 for the opening wicket with Sudharsan, who hit 50 off 33 balls.

Jos Buttler contributed 39 not out, adding 97 off 60 balls with Sudharsan, as the Titans polished off the easy win with 20 balls to spare.

Meanwhile, Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Rajasthan Royals by five wickets at Jaipur, as Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's 103 off 37 balls went in vain.

The 15-year-old Sooryavanshi hit his second IPL hundred as Rajasthan put up 228-6. He hit 12 sixes to get to his century off 36 balls.

Hyderabad replied with 229-5 in 18.3 overs.

For company, Sooryavanshi had Dhruv Jurel, who scored 51 off 35. They added 112 off 62 balls for the second wicket. Donovan Ferreira's 33 off 16 balls pushed Rajasthan past 200.

For Hyderabad, Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan put on 132 off 55 balls for the second wicket.

Sharma scored 57 off 29 with 11 fours and a six. Kishan reached 50 off 24 balls. He also hit 11 fours and three sixes.

Hyderabad climbed to third in the table, with its fifth win in eight games. Rajasthan was fourth, also with five wins but trailing on net run-rate.

Kett's absence leaves big gap to fill in return league

Bayern sees red for hair pull in Champions League semifinal draw with Barça

MUNICH, April 26, (AP): Bayern Munich goalscorer Franziska Kett was sent off for pulling hair in a 1-1 draw with Barcelona in the first leg of their Women's Champions League semifinal.

Kett canceled Ewa Pajor's early strike but was shown a red card in the 79th minute after she pulled Salma Paralluelo by the hair when the Barcelona substitute was getting away from her.

Bayern coach José Barcala was also shown red by referee Ivana Martinčić for his protests, which were futile because a VAR check confirmed Kett's foul.

Both will be suspended for the second leg in Barcelona on May 3.

Klara Bühl, who returned together with Giulia Gwinn from injury for Bayern's Bundesliga-clinching win on Wednesday, said Kett's absence will be a blow.

"She has speed, she has power, good left and right foot," Bühl said. "It's really hard for us that she cannot be there but we have a great squad. We have some players that can play there and they will be also amazing."

Kett preserved Bayern's hopes of making the final for the first time when she equalized after a well-worked team move in the 69th.

The match pitted newly crowned champions against each other after both teams clinched their domestic championships.



From left, Barcelona's Irene Paredes, Bayern's Vanessa Gilles and Barcelona's goalkeeper Cata Coll compete for the ball during the Women's Champions League semifinal first leg soccer match between Bayern Munich and Barcelona in Munich, Germany. (AP)

But Barcelona won 7-1 on their previous meeting in the league phase and Bayern's supporters must have feared the worst when Pajor scored with the visitor's first shot on target in the eighth minute.

Esmee Brugs easily cut inside Gwinn to deliver the cross for Pajor to score with a volley.

"I'm happy because I can help the team with this and that is the most important thing. Of course, Esmee played a very good ball," said Pajor after her eighth goal in as many appearances in the Champions League this season.

Despite conceding, Bayern improved as the half progressed. Kett drew a good save from Cata Coll before the break.

Brugs struck the post after the interval as Barcelona regained its earlier dominance, only to be caught out when Kett leveled.

Bayern held on after Kett's sending off to leave the tie finely poised. "We worked hard. We know it's difficult to play against a team like Barcelona that's good at finding spaces," Bayern forward Pernille Harder said. "We worked really hard, found our moments to go in transitions and we also got a goal. Then the red card and then we just had to fight the last minutes."

The final will be in Oslo on May 23. Barcelona is bidding to reach it for the sixth straight year.

Suns running out of answers as SGA powers Thunder to 3-0



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) steals the ball from Phoenix Suns forward Haywood Highsmith (19) during the second half of Game 3 of a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series in Phoenix. (AP)

Timberwolves push Nuggets to brink

PHOENIX, April 26, (AP): Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 42 points in a brilliant shooting performance, Ajay Mitchell added 15 in place of the injured Jalen Williams and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the Phoenix Suns 121-109 to take a 3-0 lead in the Western Conference first-round series.

Gilgeous-Alexander - the league's reigning MVP - hit 15 of 18 shots on a variety of tough looks, frustrating a Suns defense that actually played decently for much of the game. Alex Caruso added 13 points off the bench while Chet Holmgren had 10 points, seven rebounds and two blocks.

The defending champion Thunder will go for the sweep in Game 4 on Monday in Phoenix.

Dillon Brooks led the Suns with 33 points on 11-of-21 shooting while Jalen Green added 26.

Oklahoma City took an 87-79 lead after three quarters and never trailed in the fourth. Gilgeous-Alexander hit a difficult fallaway 19-foot jumper to put the Thunder up 102-87 with about five minutes left, deflating the Suns crowd and pretty much ending any hope for a comeback.

The Thunder were leading 69-60 early in the third quarter when Suns guard Devin Booker hurt his



New York Knicks forward Og Anunoby (8) shoots against Atlanta Hawks guard Dyson Daniels (5) during the first half of Game 4 in a first-round NBA playoffs basketball series in Atlanta. (AP)

left ankle on a drive to the basket. He stayed on the floor for a few seconds in obvious pain before getting up and hobbling back to the locker room.

The five-time All-Star returned a few minutes later to huge cheers from the home crowd, making a short baseline jumper and a 3-pointer to cut the Thunder's lead to 75-69.

Oklahoma City scored the next six points to turn back the rally. Booker finished with 16 points and seven assists.

The Suns took an early 24-15 lead but the Thunder erased the deficit in a hurry, hitting four 3-pointers during a 16-3 run. The game was tight throughout the rest of the first half with Oklahoma City surging ahead late in the second quarter for a 62-53 lead.

Gilgeous-Alexander made all seven of his shots before the break

to lead the Thunder with 17 points. Brooks scored 13 for the Suns.

The Thunder were without Williams, the high-scoring guard who hurt his left hamstring in Game 2. Mitchell started in his place and shot just 5 of 20 from the field, but added six rebounds and two assists.

The Suns were without center Mark Williams (foot) and guard Jordan Goodwin (calf). Grayson Allen returned from a hamstring injury and scored seven points in 17 minutes.

Timberwolves 112, Nuggets 96
In Minneapolis, Ayo Dosunmu scored a career-high 43 points, stepping up after leg injuries to Anthony Edwards and Donte DiVincenzo with the highest-scoring playoff performance by a reserve in 50 years, and the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the Denver Nuggets. The Timberwolves took a 3-1

lead in the series in a game that ended with the ejections of Denver's Nikola Jokic and Minnesota's Julius Randle after Jokic became angry when Jaden McDaniels made a meaningless layup with 2.1 seconds remaining and confronted the Wolves' swingman near his bench.

The story before that was Dosunmu, who had the best performance by a sub since Fred Brown scored 45 off the bench for Seattle in a 116-111 loss to Phoenix on April 15, 1976.

The Wolves have won the last three games and can end the series in Game 5 on Monday in Denver.

Dosunmu made 13 of 17 shots, including 5 of 5 from behind the arc, and all 12 of his free throw attempts, providing even more than the Wolves could have imagined when they acquired him from Chicago in February.

Naz Reid had 17 points and nine rebounds for Minnesota, while Randle added 15 points and nine boards.

Jamal Murray led Denver with 30 points. Jokic added 24 points, 15 rebounds and nine assists for the Nuggets, who were just 6 of 27 (22%) from beyond the arc.

Magic 113, Pistons 105
In Orlando, Paolo Banchero and Desmond Bane each scored 25 points, and the Orlando Magic blew a 17-point fourth-quarter lead before rallying to beat the Detroit Pistons for a 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

Banchero had 12 rebounds and nine assists. Franz Wagner scored 17 points for Orlando, which got 15 from Jalen Suggs and a 14-point, 17-rebound game from Wendell Carter Jr.

Roma restores calm as Malen stars in Bologna win

PSG holds off Angers to move six points clear despite late red card

ANGERS, France, April 26, (AP): Paris Saint-Germain boosted its hopes of retaining the Ligue 1 title after it eased to a 3-0 win at Angers on Saturday.

The result moved PSG champion six points above second-placed Lens, which was forced to rescue a dramatic 3-3 draw at Brest.

PSG hosts Bayern Munich on Tuesday in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal.

Lee Kang-in got PSG going early when he fired in a rebound in the seventh minute after Achraf Hakimi's attempt was parried by Angers goalkeeper Hervé Koffi.

Senny Mayulu finished off a counter-attack shortly before halftime to double the advantage and Lucas Beraldo headed home Lee's corner shortly after the break.

PSG defender Gonçalo Ramos was sent off in the 74th following a second yellow card.

Lyon enhanced its chances of qualifying for the Champions League with a 3-2 win over relegation-threatened Auxerre.

Roman Yaremchuk scored twice for Lyon, and Corentin Tolisso also got on the scoresheet. Sinaly Diomandé ensured the first half ended 1-1, while Bryan Okoh reduced the deficit in the 87th to set up a nervy finale.

Auxerre remained in 16th place, which is the promotion-relegation playoff spot.

Monaco slipped to six points behind Lyon after it relinquished a two-goal lead and drew at Toulouse 2-2.

Roma put a turbulent week behind it to win at Bologna 2-0 in Serie A and continue its push for the Champions League.

Roma fired special adviser Claudio Ranieri this week after his very public clash with coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

However, it put issues off the field to one side and took the lead after less than



PSG's Pedro Fernandez Sarmiento, center, follows the ball during the French League One soccer match between Angers and Paris Saint-Germain in Angers, western France. (AP)

seven minutes. Malen took one touch to control Neil El Aynaoui's through ball before firing past the onrushing goalkeeper and into the bottom right corner.

It was Malen's 12th goal for Roma in 16 matches since joining on loan from Aston Villa in January.

Malen repaid the favor in first-half stoppage time by crossing the ball into the area for El Aynaoui to volley in from close range.

Hellas Verona and Pisa can hold on to hopes of Serie A safety for another week.

Last-placed Pisa lost at Parma 1-0 early on Saturday to leave it hoping for a favor from Verona to avoid mathematical relegation. Verona managed a 0-0 draw against Lecce.

Those results left Pisa 11 points below 17th-placed Lecce and safety, with four rounds remaining. Verona inched a point above Pisa.

At Parma, substitute Nesta Elphege got the only goal eight minutes from time, controlling a header with his back to goal and turning to sweep in from close range.

That made Parma mathematically safe, setting off a party atmosphere on a sunny afternoon at Stadio Ennio Tardini.

Salah injury sparks concern over possible final games for Liverpool

LONDON, April 26, (AP): Mohamed Salah may have played his last game for Liverpool after he was injured in the win against Crystal Palace.

Salah is leaving Anfield at the end of the season and Liverpool coach Arne Slot said he did not know how long it would take for the club icon to recover from what appeared to be a hamstring issue.

The Egypt international was replaced after 59 minutes of the 3-1 home win and he applauded the home fans as he left the field.

Slot was asked afterwards if Salah would be able to play again this season. The last Premier League round is on May 24.

"We simply don't know, but what we do know is the season is in four weeks over, so there are not a lot of games being played," he said. "We have to wait and see how his injury is and if he is able to return to play."

"What I do know about Mo is throughout all of these years he has taken such good care of his body that he will have the minimum time required to recover from an injury."

Salah has endured a troubled season that saw him engage in a public row with Slot after being dropped and score only seven Premier League goals - his lowest total since joining the club in 2017.

Clark makes winning return as Fever tops Liberty

NEW YORK, April 26, (AP): Caitlin Clark was excited to get back on the court and play in a WNBA game, even if it was just the preseason.

Indiana's star played in her first game for the Fever in nine months after injuries derailed her second season, limiting her to 13 games. She received a warm ovation from the crowd when she was introduced in the starting lineup.

Clark said she had some nerves, but they didn't show early in Indiana's 109-91 win over the New York Liberty. She scored the first basket of the game and then a couple of possessions later hit her signature step-back 3-pointer from deep. After making her first two shots, Clark missed her final eight of the game. She finished with seven points, four assists and three rebounds in just under 17 minutes of play.

"Honestly, my shot felt really good and I was

missing long, which is what you want to see," Clark told The Associated Press after the game. "But it felt good. I felt fast, so that was definitely a positive. I think I struggled in that area last year, but my body felt great. I felt like I was moving well. So overall really happy."

Before the game Clark said she was happy to just be out there playing again.

"I think anytime you get to put on your uniform and lace up your shoes you don't take that for granted, especially after coming off last year when I didn't get to do that very much," she said.

Fever coach Stephanie White noticed a difference in Clark this preseason as opposed to her first two in the league.

"I think that's the thing, watching her play with joy," White said. "In practice her energy

is different, she's carrying herself in a different way."

This wasn't Clark's first basketball game since suffering a season-ending injury last July. She played for USA Basketball in a World Cup qualifying tournament last month and earned Most Valuable Player honors.

"She was itchy and antsy before training camp started," said White, who coached her in USA Basketball as well. "Glad she had those games with USA Basketball and came into training camp having played. ... Now it's fine tuning some of those things. She's in a great place."

While Clark played, a few of the Fever's others didn't. Aliyah Boston was out while still recovering from a lower-leg injury. Lexie Hull is also working her way through a hamstring issue.



Kuwait's No.1 English Newspaper

For Subscriptions and Complaints

Please Call

51508991 51526559





In this file photo, Referee Gianluca Rocchi holds the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Juventus and Roma, at the Allianz stadium in Turin, Italy. Rocchi, the head of referees in Serie A and Serie B, has been placed under criminal investigation for alleged sports fraud and will appear in court in Milan on Thursday. (AP)

Sports

Kuwait Club resumes training ahead of Challenge League final

Kuwaiti clubs scramble for plans after decision to resume sports training

By Hassan Mosa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Kuwaiti clubs have begun a series of urgent meetings to draw up action plans following the Public Authority for Sport's decision to resume training sessions, as approved by the Joint Committee chaired by Minister of State for Youth and Sports Affairs Dr. Tareq Al-Jalahma. Training was set to restart yesterday according to a daily schedule from 5:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Club administrations are now reviewing the readiness of their football teams in anticipation of any possible return of official competition.

Kuwait Club has confirmed it will resume training this evening as it prepares for a major assignment against Cambodia's Svay Rieng on May 13 in the final of the AFC Challenge League.

Meanwhile, Kazma Club secretary-general Omar Al-Mulla con-



Kuwait Club players celebrate after qualifying for Challenge League final.

firmed that training remains on hold pending the outcome of a late board meeting held yesterday.

Most clubs continue to face challenges following the departure of foreign coaches and players to

their home countries since the suspension of sports activity on February 28. Several clubs have also ended contracts with their foreign professionals after losing competitive hopes in the Zain Premier League and exiting domestic cup competitions.

The return of competition remains complex, with nine league rounds still to be played alongside the quarterfinals, semifinals, and final of the Amir Cup. Additionally, a global pause in sporting activity is expected on May 24 to allow national teams to prepare for the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

On the international front, Kuwait's national team is scheduled to play two friendly matches during the FIFA window from June 1 to 9. The technical staff will require at least 10 days to two weeks of preparation, particularly as players have been out of training since late February, with the exception of Kuwait Club and Qadsia players.

Zaki set to take over Burgan as Asian Championship preparation intensifies

By Khaled Al-Enezi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 26: Burgan Club has begun intensive preparations for the upcoming Asian Club Handball Championship, set to take place in Kuwait from June 6 to 16 under the hosting of Kuwait Club, with the club close to appointing Egyptian coach Hussein Zaki to lead the first team.

Zaki, one of the most prominent names in Egyptian handball history, is expected to bring significant experience to Burgan, both as a former international player and a successful coach. His career includes spells with Zamalek in Egypt, Al Ain and Al Ahli Dubai in the UAE, Al Sadd in Qatar, and Real Zaragoza in Spain. As a coach, he previously guided Egypt's youth team to the 2019 World Championship title in North Macedonia after defeating Germany in the final.

If the deal is finalized, Zaki will focus on rebuilding Burgan's physical and tactical readiness following a long interruption in training activities, which only recently resumed after weeks of suspension. A high-intensity preparation program is expected to be implemented to ensure the squad is fully prepared for both domestic competitions and the continental challenge.

The new technical staff is also expected to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the team's fitness levels and tactical organization, as part of a broader restructuring phase.

Meanwhile, former head coach Hussein Al-Mousawi has concluded his



Egyptian coach Hussein Zaki

tenure with Burgan after guiding the team through a difficult period marked by exceptional circumstances and the suspension of sporting activity, which limited consistent training and long-term planning.

The developments come as Kuwaiti clubs ramp up preparations for the return of competitive action, aiming to regain rhythm ahead of important regional and continental commitments.

Burgan has also arranged the loan of Japanese player Yasuhira to a Macedonian club, with his return scheduled ahead of the Asian Championship.

Elsewhere, Kuwait Club has resumed training under Algerian coach Saeed Hajjaj, with the full squad expected to be completed in the coming days following the return of foreign players.

Al-Ahli retains Champions League Elite title

Machida falls short despite numerical edge in first final appearance

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, April 26, (AP): Al-Ahli of Saudi Arabia successfully defended the AFC Champions League Elite crown after beating first-time finalist Machida Zelvia of Japan 1-0.

It took an extra-time goal from Saudi international striker Firas Al-Burikan to settle a bad-tempered final in front of 60,000 mainly Al-Ahli fans in Jeddah.

Al-Ahli played with 10 men for almost an hour but Machida was unable to make the advantage count.

"It's amazing," said Al-Ahli winger Riyadh Mahrez, who won the UEFA Champions League with Manchester City in 2023. "It was difficult for us again. We like to make it difficult for ourselves. Ten against 11 is nearly impossible. I don't know how we found the strength and the energy. ... After the red card we stuck together, we fought more, we ran more until we scored."

There were few scoring opportunities in the first half although Al-Ahli, owned by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, should have taken the lead when Brazilian winger Galeno broke free of the Machida defense only to see his low shot saved by goalkeeper Kosei Tani. Just before the break, Merih Demiral's close-range effort was blocked on the line.

Al-Ahli was reduced to 10 men midway through the second half when Zakaria Hawsawi was sent off for head-butting Tete Yangi as the two came together in front of the referee.

The dismissal shifted the momentum. Machida forced Al-Ahli goalkeeper Edouard Mendy into several saves. Normal time ended with Al-Ah-



Al-Ahli players celebrate the trophy of AFC Champions League Elite after winning the match against Machida Zelvia, at King Abdullah Sports City Stadium, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. (AP)

li substitute Mohammed Abdulrahman also shown a red card while on the sidelines.

The deadlock was broken in the sixth minute of extra time when former Barcelona and AC Milan midfielder Franck Kessie laid the ball off for Al-

Burikan to fire high into the net from close range.

Al-Ahli became the first team to win back-to-back Asian titles since city rival Al-Ittihad in 2005.

"We are very happy to have reached the final," Machida coach Go Kuroda

said. "Al-Ahli is a team that possesses experience in the championship and we conceded a goal at a difficult time and couldn't get back into the game."

The tetchy final reflected issues throughout the tournament.

All games from the quarterfinal

stage onward were staged in Jeddah, and only 395 spectators attended Machida's semifinal win over Shabab Al-Ahli of the United Arab Emirates.

The war in the Middle East postponed round-of-16 matches in West Asia from March to April and reduced

them from two legs to one.

There were doubts over whether East Asia teams would travel to Saudi Arabia for the knockout rounds, but Tokyo Metropolitan-based Machida, which has never won the J1 League, made club history.

Arsenal goes top of Premier League

Chelsea beats Leeds to set up FA Cup final meeting with Man City

LONDON, April 26, (AP): Chelsea's season might be unraveling but it will still include an appearance in the FA Cup final.

Enzo Fernandez's 23rd-minute header secured Chelsea a 1-0 win over Leeds in the semifinals, setting up a meeting with Manchester City in the May 16 title match.

Chelsea's run in the FA Cup is salvaging a campaign that has veered off the rails after a humiliating exit from the Champions League - 8-2 on aggregate to Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16 - and five straight losses in the Premier League that marks the team's worst run of league results in 114 years and led to the midweek dismissal of manager Liam Rosenior.

Calum McFarlane, Rosenior's unheralded assistant, has taken control of Chelsea until the end of the season and will now be leading the team back out at Wembley Stadium next month, in search of a ninth FA Cup title and a first since 2018.

Fernandez met a right-wing cross from Pedro Neto with a firm header low into the net for the only goal. The Argentina midfielder recently courted controversy by speaking publicly about wanting to live in Madrid, earning him a two-match suspension by the team.

Leeds, seeking to reach a first FA Cup final since 1973, piled on the pressure in the second half and Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez notably produced a stunning, one-handed save to stop a piledriver from Anton Stach.

City rallied to beat second-tier Southampton 2-1 on Saturday to advance to the final and stay on course for a domestic treble. Pep Guardiola's team already has won the English League Cup and is battling with Arsenal for the Premier League.

Chelsea was most recently in the final in 2022, when it lost to Liverpool on penalties.

Manchester City is back in another FA Cup final. Arsenal is back on top of the Premier League.



Chelsea's Joao Pedro shoots by Leeds' Ao Tanaka during the FA Cup semifinal soccer match between Chelsea and Leeds in London, England. (AP)

City will play in a record fourth straight Cup final after surviving a scare to beat second division Southampton 2-1 at Wembley. Nico Gonzalez's 87th-minute winner completed a comeback after going a goal down in the second half.

Victory kept up City's bid for a domestic treble of trophies, having won the English League Cup and being locked in a race with Arsenal for the Premier League title.

"No team has made four finals in a row. It's extraordinary and hopefully we can

arrive with a good momentum," City manager Pep Guardiola told the BBC.

Arsenal took advantage of City's semifinal commitments to move three points clear at the top of the standings with a 1-0 win against Newcastle. Eberechi Eze's brilliant first half strike helped Mikel Arteta's team bounce back after defeat to City last week.

"We knew after last week what we have to do, we have to win every game. We can't focus on other people, we can only focus on ourselves," Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice said.

Guardiola is chasing a second treble of English domestic trophies after achieving the feat in 2019. A semifinal against Championship side Southampton was not expected to trip up his City team.

But when Finn Azaz curled a shot from outside the area into the top corner in the 79th, a famous Cup upset was on the cards.

Instead, City turned on the style. Jeremy Doku leveled with a deflected shot three minutes later and Gonzalez powered a long-range effort past Daniel Peretz shortly after.

"It was amazing to score at the end. In this amazing stadium, with this atmosphere, an amazing feeling," Gonzalez told the BBC. "It has been a really important week for us. We are alive in the league and in another final."

Despite being a serial Cup finalist, City's only win during that run was in 2023, having lost in each of the last two seasons.

An early goal was just what Arsenal needed to ease the nerves in a crucial title clash against Newcastle. Eze delivered just that when whipping home from outside the box in the ninth.

But it was another tense day for Arsenal fans at Emirates Stadium as the Gunners ground out the win.